

# BLACKHALL BULLETIN

December 2021

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

No. 166





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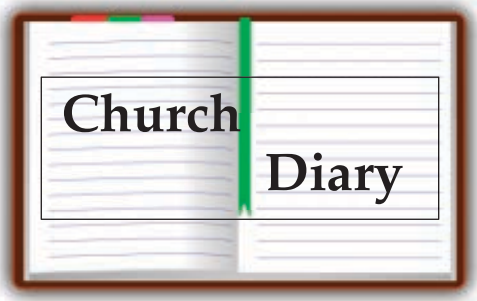
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**CHRISTMAS SERVICES**

**NOVEMBER**

28<sup>th</sup> 10.30 am Morning Worship  
1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent

**DECEMBER**

5<sup>th</sup> 10.30 am Morning Worship  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent  
12<sup>th</sup> 10.30 am **Family Gift Service**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent  
12<sup>th</sup> 4.00pm Blue Christmas Service  
(Annual bereavement service)  
19<sup>th</sup> 10.30 am Morning Worship  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent  
Friday 24<sup>th</sup>  
6.00pm Family Christingle Service  
11.30 pm Watchnight Service -  
Carols, mince pies etc from  
10.00 pm  
Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>  
10.30 am Christmas Day Family Service  
Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>  
10.30 am Carol Service

**JANUARY 2022**

2<sup>nd</sup> 10.30 am Morning Worship  
9<sup>th</sup> 10.30 am Morning Worship  
16<sup>th</sup> 10.30 am Morning Worship  
23<sup>rd</sup> 10.30 am Morning Worship  
30<sup>th</sup> 10.30 am Morning Worship

**FEBRUARY 2022**

6<sup>th</sup> 10.30 am Morning Worship  
13<sup>th</sup> 10.30 am Morning Worship  
20<sup>th</sup> 10.30 am Morning Worship  
27<sup>th</sup> 10.30 am Morning Worship followed  
by service of Holy Communion

**Music @ St Columba's**

If you enjoy hearing Christmas music, please do come along to the Church on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December at 7 p.m. to hear and perhaps join in with St David's Brass Band



*Thank You*

*Morag and Jo Mitchell wish to thank everyone who kindly sent cards, beautiful flowers, plants, and lovely treats following Ian's death.*



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



# CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

We are happy to say we will once again be able to hold our Christmas Tree Festival this year. Approximately 40 trees, decorated by local businesses or church groups, will grace our church – the first time since our new sanctuary has opened.

We would love it if you would come along to see them.

The church will be open to view the trees on:

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December 4p.m. – 7 p.m.

Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December 11a.m. – 4 p.m.  
and  
6 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> December 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.



Entry (including refreshments) is £5.00 for adults and £1.00 for children with proceeds going to Church Funds.



## DECORATE OUR CHURCH FOR CHRISTMAS

This year we are going to decorate the church for Christmas on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> December from 10:00 am. We would be delighted if you would like to come along and help to decorate our beautiful church. We don't do complicated stuff and we have all sorts of decorations hiding in our Flower cupboard to choose from. The Team would be delighted to welcome you to fun and Coffee/tea and maybe a mince pie or two.

If you have any questions, please get in touch.

Alison ([rajahewat1@btinternet.com](mailto:rajahewat1@btinternet.com) or through the church office

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Greetings to all in the Blackhall Community.

## 'Christmas is the Spirit of giving without a thought of receiving'

Are you thinking about giving presents this Christmas? If you are (and I'm sure most people are), have you thought about giving a present to someone you don't know? Christmas time is a wonderful opportunity for helping others and, of course, it is also known as a time when people share gifts.

Have you ever wondered why Christmas time is the perfect opportunity for giving to others? To understand why Christmas is a time for giving, it's important to know the history and tradition behind Christmas.

One of the main reasons why Christmas is known as a time for giving is that we are reminded, obviously, of the Christmas story which is all about giving. Of course, it was Jesus who received three gifts from the wise men who came from the East. That part of the story is told in the Gospel according to Matthew where, in chapter 2 at verse 11, it says; *“On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”*

Although to us nowadays, these three gifts may seem strange to give to a baby (apart for the gold perhaps), the three gifts had a highly significant spiritual meaning: gold was a symbol of kingship on earth, frankincense (which is an incense) was a symbol of deity or godliness and myrrh (an embalming oil) was a symbol of death. Whilst each of these particular gifts has its own meaning for Christians, there is additionally, of course, the most important gift of all -Jesus himself. Jesus is considered by Christians to be a gift from God to the world. Jesus came to teach the world about the true nature of God and, by following his teachings, anyone can be reconciled to God and have a relationship with Him.

The concept of giving gifts has evolved into the receiving of gifts from the Christmas gift bringer, Kris Kringle, Santa Claus, Father Christmas -he goes by various names around the world. In Italy, it's an old woman who delivers the gifts while the Spanish believe that it's the Wise Men themselves. The only thing everyone seems to have in common is that gifts or treats are brought by someone.

Interestingly, as well, presents are left in different places and opened at different times throughout the year. It all depends on where you reside in the world. For instance, in Mexico, some gifts won't be opened until 6<sup>th</sup> January for a Christian celebration known as the Epiphany.

Of course, the Christmas season of giving also provides us with the chance to help those who are less fortunate than ourselves and who need more support. Donations to charities are often more popular during the festive period. The reason for this is perhaps once again because we remember Jesus and how he helped those around him regardless of their wealth or status. It could also be because Christmas is about celebrating what and who you have and so, it is consequently important to remember those who may have very little or who could need your help at Christmas.

On a very personal note, I have, for a couple of years, told the congregations with which I have been working that I would not send out any Christmas Cards but, instead, would, in the congregation's name, 'twin' one of the Church toilets through a charity called Tearfund. This means that somewhere, in an underdeveloped part of the world, a poor community will have a toilet built for them. Quite apart from the dignity that this provides, it is also proven to make a big difference to health and to the prevention of disease. This is one way, I feel, in which I say thank you to all the people in the congregation with whom I have been working.



There are many reasons for us to be grateful and that is especially true in this country. Therefore, this year, the Church of Scotland has decided to initiate a National Giving Day for its Churches.

The Church of Scotland website said; *“Congregations are being encouraged to participate in a National Giving Day on the day of their choosing between Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September and Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021. This will provide people of all ages an opportunity to reflect on God's presence with us through these challenging times and to offer gifts of thanksgiving back to God.*

*Money received through this initiative will remain with participating congregations who will choose how to use these gifts.”*

As I indicated, there are many reasons why people might wish to say thank you either to the Church in particular or to God in general. As we continue with our progress towards learning to live with COVID, we can be grateful for our vaccination programme, and we can be grateful also for the work that has been done in keeping people connected through the live- streaming of worship services etc. Individuals may have cause to give thanks for recovery from illness, for a new opportunity or for merely having not been as affected by the ongoing situation as they might have been. Everyone's reason for being grateful may be different.

Blackhall St Columba's Parish Church had its National Day of Giving on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021. That was also the day when we marked the 1500<sup>th</sup> birthday of our namesake, St Columba, which you can read about in another article, and we, at the Church, had cause to give thanks for that. There are, of course, many ways to thank God for all that he has done for us whether directly or through the work of people of faith who act in His name. We, at Blackhall St Columba's, try to follow our mission statement of 'glorifying God, proclaiming Christ and serving others.' The Church provides many different types of service to the local community and so, if, for any reason, you feel you would like to show your gratitude for the blessings you have received, I have included below some details of how you could consider making a gift to further benefit your community.

God bless all  
Fergus

If you wish to make a gift to Blackhall St Columba's Church, there are two simple ways to do so. Firstly, you can hand a cheque made payable to Blackhall Parish Church in to the church office. Please write on the back "National Giving Day". Secondly and this is our preferred method, you can make a bank transfer. Our account details are: Account Name – Blackhall Parish Church, Account Number – 00584961, Sort Code – 80-02-22. Please use the reference, "National Giving Day". Thank you.





# St Columba

I begin by paraphrasing Paul's greeting in his letter to the Romans when I say to all God's beloved in Scotland, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Although we, in the Church of Scotland, do not place a great emphasis on 'saints', we, at Blackhall St Columba's Parish Church, are obviously connected to St Columba if for no other reason than we have adopted his name. Although we have taken his name, we do not, as far as I am aware, have any history of marking his achievements. For example, 9<sup>th</sup> June is listed as the feast day of Columba, but I certainly wasn't asked to pay any particular attention to it.

However, there is a particular reason for marking St Columba's life and legacy this year as it is believed to be the 1500th anniversary of his birth. Although we can be more precise about the date and place of his death – 9th June 597, on the island of Iona, scholars think it is probable that he was born in 521, possibly in early December, in the Loch Garten region of Donegal in north-west Ireland.

Professor Ian Bradley, who is Emeritus Professor of Cultural and Spiritual History at the University of St Andrews, says that **Columba is; “arguably Scotland's most popular saint and certainly its most adaptable, ecumenical and all-purpose one, equally beloved of Roman Catholics and Wee Free Presbyterians.”**

**Although it** is with Iona that Columba is most frequently associated, Columba actually lived less than half his life on Iona. His first four decades were spent in Ireland where he followed a monastic vocation and founded several monasteries. Columba left Ireland in 563, at the age of 42, for reasons about which scholars disagree. Three of the most common hypotheses are that he left voluntarily as a pilgrim, was banished for some crime or mis-demeanour or was simply sent on the request of the ruler of Dal Riata (modern Argyll) to found a church there.

We are fortunate to know as much as we do about Columba. He is unusual among Celtic saints in that he was written about soon after his death. Much of what we know comes from a hagiography *Vita Sancti Columbae* (Life of Saint Columba) written by Adomnan who succeeded to the abbey of Iona in 679 A.D. {A hagiography is a type of biography that treats its subject with undue reverence.} There are a number of more modern books about Columba which often paint him as a complex and even sometimes contradictory character. Some suggest this can even be inferred from his two Gaelic nicknames, Crimthann (the fox) and Colmcille (the dove of the church), the Latin version of which provides his commonly used name, Columba.

Again, turning to the words of Ian Bradley; “*He had a hasty temper and an autocratic manner and was known in Irish tradition as the bad-tempered saint, but he was also a man of prayer and had remarkable pastoral gifts which he exercised with the many people who came to visit him on Iona seeking spiritual counselling. Portrayed as priest, poet, mystic and miracle worker, he clearly had a charisma and played a key role in championing and legitimizing the claims of the Gaels of Dal Riata.*”

Although largely based in Iona, Columba is known to have travelled throughout Scotland spreading the word and seeking to convert the Picts in different areas. Whatever one thinks of the various miracles attributed to him, there is no question that he was influential in the spread of the Gospel in Scotland at that time. Numerous churches, schools and other institutions bear his name including, of course, ourselves and St Columba's Hospice here in Edinburgh.

Fergus Cook



The photo is of the statue of St Columba within our Church

## *Spaces to remember the people we miss and loved*

During the pandemic many people were unable to hold funerals in the usual ways.  
The churches below extend a warm welcome for those in the area who would like  
**time and space to remember and honour all those who have died.**  
You are welcome to come to whichever date, time and place works for you.

<i>Church</i>	<i>Time, date and information about the services planned</i>
<p><b>The OLD KIRK and MUIRHOUSE PARISH CHURCH</b></p> <p>Old Kirk and Muirhouse Facebook page Church Office - 0131 467 2922</p>	<p><b>2pm on Sunday 31 October</b> A time for peace and reflection for those who have had a bereavement. Join us, all welcome</p> <p><b>10 to 12 midday on Wednesday 27 October</b> Making Memories Time</p>
<p><b>DRYLAW PARISH CHURCH</b></p> <p><a href="https://e-voice.org.uk/drylawparishchurch/">https://e-voice.org.uk/drylawparishchurch/</a> Church Office - 0131 332 6863</p>	<p><b>1 to 3pm on Sunday 7 November and 5 to 7pm on Thursday 11 November</b></p> <p><b>Space to Remember</b> A 20 minute service on each hour and in between space for reflection and memories with music. A chance to light candles, remembering, memory tree, and a chance to talk. Stay for as long or as short as you want.</p>
<p><b>CRAMOND KIRK</b></p> <p><a href="https://cramondkirk.org.uk">https://cramondkirk.org.uk</a> Church Office 0131 336 2036</p>	<p><b>Sunday 14 November</b> Special reception for those bereaved after our 10.00am Sunday service</p> <p>See also our Community Covid Commemoration project, offering the chance to plant bulbs or trees in remembrance of loved ones</p>
<p><b>DAVIDSON'S MAINS PARISH CHURCH</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.dmpe.org.uk">https://www.dmpe.org.uk</a> Church Office 0131 312 6282 Oasis Wellbeing Centre (counselling &amp; prayer ministry) 0131 312 6238</p>	<p><b>2.30pm on Sunday 21 November</b> Bereavement service A reflective service of thanksgiving and remembrance with an opportunity to light a candle in memory of a loved one.</p>
<p><b>BLACKHALL ST COLUMBA'S Church of Scotland</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk">https://www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk</a> Church Office 0131 332 4431</p>	<p><b>4pm on Sunday 12 December</b> Blue Christmas Service A time 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</p>
<p><b>GRANTON Church of Scotland</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.grantonchurch.org.uk">https://www.grantonchurch.org.uk</a> Church Office 0131 552 2159</p>	<p><b>Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> January Bereavement Service</b> For more information, please call the Church office or check their website.</p>





# “I Want to Hold Your Hand”

This refrain from the Lennon and McCartney song of 1963 voices a desire we have all felt at different stages throughout life. Hand-holding is a natural way of relating to another person, a response already evident in the strong grasp reflex of a baby in the first hours of life and so comforting in the final hours when we sit with a loved one.

We hold hands for a whole variety of reasons. It's a way of bonding, of showing friendship or affection. Young children do it so naturally, developing early relationships with their peers; and, of course, at nursery and primary school, classes are taken from one activity to another with the instruction “take your partner's hand”.

Holding a trusted adult's hand is especially important as a toddler discovers the wider world that opens up with being independently mobile. Even though my wee grandson is not just walking but running confidently, he still relies on a helping hand. With his little hand firmly held in mine, I can both encourage him to go along with me in the right direction - to get to Ravelston Park - and protect him from heading towards things that would harm - the stream of cars that are so interesting as we walk down the pavement. At home, I can guide him gently away from things that are “no touch” - those dangly plants, with leaves that look so tasty, and the controls of the cooker that are now enticingly within his reach. Then, as we arrive at the hall for Toddler Group, it just takes a brief handhold to give him the confidence to run in to his favourite play area. It works both ways, of course. So often during the day he will reach up to take me in the direction HE wants to go - the door to the garden where he loves to play whatever the weather, or the snack drawer in the kitchen where his fruit bars are kept, out of reach. Whatever the reason, his outstretched hand brings me such joy and reminds me of the privilege I have in sharing his wee world.

Even as adults, independent and confident in making our own way in the world at large, there are times when we feel the need to reach out for support from others. When we face life's challenges, especially if we live alone, we realise how much easier it is if someone comes alongside. We can almost feel the strength being shared, as our own hand is clasped by another. “I'm with you” it suggests; “we can do this together”. Just that simple, wordless gesture speaks so loudly into our anxiety, offering assurance that someone else is there for us.

As we come to the end of what has been one of the most challenging years - not just because of Covid and the varying measures for social distancing, but facing many other uncertainties in our personal and communal lives - we might choose to look beyond our own circumstances for support. Speaking to his people centuries ago through the prophet Isaiah, God assured them: “I the Lord your God will hold your right hand, saying to you, ‘Fear not; I will help you’.”

This was the same assurance offered by King George VI in his Christmas address to the nation in 1939, when he spoke the words of a little-known poet, Minnie Haskins, now universally quoted as the writer of:

*“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.’”*

His advice is just as relevant now, as we celebrate this Christmas while looking forward to 2022. What we seldom hear is the poet's own response to the words she had written, but Haskins goes on to conclude:

*“So I went forth, and finding the hand of God, trod gladly into the night.”*

It's a response open to each of us as we look towards the challenges ahead, some known, some unknown.

I can speak only from my own experience, but I'll be forever grateful to those who have been there for me throughout my life, sharing the adventures, steering me away from sources of harm, and reminding me to trust that my hand is ‘held’ by a stronger hand than theirs. MS



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✉ [info@blackhallmoving.co.uk](mailto:info@blackhallmoving.co.uk)

📍 40 Granton Road, Edinburgh EH5 3QS

Find us on  

# CAMEO (Come And Meet Each Other) CLUB

Members will be glad to know that we intend starting our fortnightly meetings again from **Friday 14<sup>th</sup> January 10.30 – 12noon** in the large hall at Blackhall St Columba's church. This may be subject to change depending on government advice and church regulations nearer the time.

If you have not been to a meeting before, or wish to volunteer as a helper, you are welcome to join us. There is no charge for meetings which are run for the community. If you live in the area and require transport, we can provide car uplifts to and from the halls. Those who already receive lifts will be collected as before.

Our first meeting will be refreshments and meeting-up only. An entertainment programme will start from January 28<sup>th</sup>.

We look forward to seeing you all again.

Margaret Brown (Convener) 332 5957

Fiona Drinnan 343 6762 [fionadrinnan6104@btinternet.com](mailto:fionadrinnan6104@btinternet.com)

## KNIT AND NATTER

We are very much enjoying being able to meet in person again and are delighted with our new home in the Sanctuary.

As well as our usual donations to Pregnancy Counselling and Care we have a few other projects on the go. Definitely a very busy time.

I hope you enjoyed The Knitvity Trail around Blackhall last year. Please look out for it again and see if you can spot the additions we have made to it. We have also been knitting poppies which at the time of preparing this article are being used to make a display for the inside of the church. Last but not least, we are again going to be decorating a tree for the Christmas tree festival. This will be very different to our previous one as we have been given the very topical theme of reusing and recycling.

If any of this sounds like your cup of tea (which we always make sure we still have time for along with a biscuit of course) please do think about joining us on Monday evenings from 7.30pm.

More details can be obtained from Lilian Cockburn at [stcknitnatter@gmail.com](mailto:stcknitnatter@gmail.com)



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The Art Club started up again in late August and the numbers attending are gradually getting back to pre-Covid numbers. It still seems a bit different as we do not stop at 11.00 to crowd round the coffee trolley for a chat and I think that is missed by most. However, we do hope that will be a feature of the club in the not-too-distant future. Meanwhile, being at the club has driven us all to get back to drawing and painting and producing some lovely paintings.

If you visit the church halls, the art club notice board in the large hall has been updated with photos of paintings done during lockdown and while the club was not meeting. Do have a look at them – the originals may even be for sale.

Having missed being able to hold exhibitions over the last two years, we are pleased to say that we will have a small exhibition in the Blackhall Library from 11<sup>th</sup> December 2021 to the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022. The library is now being used as a dual site with the Asymptomatic Testing Centre so even if they are there at these times the library will still be open, and this will not impact on the public being able to view our exhibition. All paintings in this exhibition will be for sale.

Valerie Gordon

## TUESDAY TOPICS

Tuesday Topics has not met since early March 2020, but we are delighted to announce that we expect to start up again on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

Our first session will run from then until 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022. We meet on alternate Tuesdays starting at 7.30pm with a talk / presentation, then coffee, tea and biscuits. The group is mainly ladies of all ages. Visitors, including men, are always very welcome. Membership is £15, and visitors pay £2 per visit.

The speakers we have booked include two who were cancelled in March 2020. Rosie Ellison of Film Edinburgh will give her presentation 'Edinburgh on the Screen', and Fred Daniels will do his 'Golden America - Part 2' presentation.

Returning speakers include Peter Thomson from St. George's School Music Department giving us his presentation about Robert Burns, and Roy Johnstone who will give another of his excellent historical talks.

For further information the full programme will be available on the Church website at [www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk](http://www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk) under Community Activities.

We are looking forward to meeting up with members, friends and visitors in 2022. In the meantime we send you all our best wishes for good health, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Jacky Cowie, Secretary,  
Eleanor Lowrie, President.

## SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING CLUB



I can't believe I'm writing this for the December 2021 issue of the Blackhall Bulletin. The months seem to have flown past!!

I'm pleased to report that country dancing in the church hall of Blackhall St Columba's has started up again. On Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> September we met at 7.30 pm for a socially-distanced get-together (no dancing!). It was so good to see all our members and hear how everyone has coped over the last 17 months!!!

We started dancing on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September, with an average of 16 (two sets) per night, under the guidance of our new teacher - Muriel Stenhouse. Our last date for 2021 will be Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December when we will have a very low-key Christmas Party (providing our own eats!).

Hopefully, the new term will commence on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022 in the large hall, 7.30 - 9.00 pm. Why not come along and join in the fun? You will be made most welcome.

Margaret Brown. Tel 332 5957

## EDINBURGH FLORAL ART CLUB

We are pleased to have been able to restart our meetings. Our first was a demonstration by Dawn Weaver from Chester who came on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> November to show us her arrangement entitled "Wildwood".

Karine Murray from East Kilbride will be joining us on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December and the title for her arrangement is "Christmas Joy".

We don't have a meeting in January and February in an in-house meeting.

Isabel Ingram

## NORTH WEST HERITAGE

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021

**The World's First Football Club (1824): John Hope and the Edinburgh Footballers**

Speaker: John Hutchinson

Davidson's Mains Parish Church Hall at 7.30 pm

~

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022

**William Speirs Bruce Scotland's Polar Explorer**

Speaker: Simon Bendle

St. Columba's Church, Blackhall at 8 pm **note change of time**

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022

**Women, Work and the First World War** Speaker: Ruth Boreham

Davidson's Mains Parish Church Hall at 7.30 pm

The group is following the guidelines recommended by each church principally wearing of masks while moving about but they may be removed whilst seated if the audience is comfortable with this.



As we move out of restrictions and into what will hopefully be happier, more joyous times spent with loved ones, we must remember that so many people out there are still feeling the after effects of the pandemic. Many people’s working lives have simply not returned to what they were and are struggling financially to make ends meet this festive period.

A time that should be spent with precious friends and family will be spent worrying about how they are going to provide their family with their next hot meal or how to store those precious food supplies with lack of amenity in their homes.

This is where you can help! Any donation, big or small, will go to help those who are struggling financially by providing them with a cooker and other essential white goods for their homes. Help to take the stress and worry out of this festive period and donate to our Cookers for Christmas Appeal 2021! Thank you for your generosity and support. Please go to our website at [www.freshstartweb.org.uk](http://www.freshstartweb.org.uk) or contact our office on 0131 476 7741 or e mail to [admin@freshstartweb.org.uk](mailto:admin@freshstartweb.org.uk)



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# 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 2022! However, it has been a busy year behind the scenes for the Board of Directors. Key achievements in 2021 are set out below.

- We were fortunate to have been awarded grant-funding from the Scottish Government's Strengthening Communities Fund to recruit a Development Officer who will support our events, activities and communications – as well as work on the Trust's fundraising strategy.
- The Inverleith Neighbourhood Network also awarded the Trust a grant to further develop drawings for a new Ravelston Park Pavilion and home for Blackhall Nursery.
- A grant for specialist VAT advice for building works was made too.
- Architect Malcolm Fraser of Fraser Livingstone has continued to work with the Trust's Board on designs which were shared at an online presentation to members of the Blackhall community. The designs, which took on board previous comments and concerns from residents, were really well received. These will be shared more widely in the coming months. Malcolm has kept our spirits up with his inspiring vision and positivity!

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

At the time of writing (end of October), the Community Asset Transfer of Ravelston Park Pavilion from the City of Edinburgh Council to Blackhall Community Trust has still not been completed because of COVID-19 delays. The Board of Directors very much hope the transfer will take place before the end of 2021!

One of our Board members, Peter Allan, is standing down after five years as a director, during which time he has shared his extensive planning knowledge and experience. We are pleased to be joined by Irene Hamilton. Thank you, Peter, and welcome, Irene! We would very much benefit for more director/trustees – if you feel able to volunteer, please email [blackhallcommunitytrust@gmail.com](mailto:blackhallcommunitytrust@gmail.com).

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](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk), select Blackhall Community Trust as your preferred cause to raise funds at no extra cost to you.

All Blackhall residents are warmly invited to show their interest and support by joining Blackhall Community Trust (free). Blackhall is defined by the Blackhall Primary School boundary. Email [blackhallcommunitytrust@gmail.com](mailto:blackhallcommunitytrust@gmail.com) for more information about membership. Also email us and let us know if you would like to sign up for our newsletter. Visit our website [www.blackhallcommunitytrust.org.uk](http://www.blackhallcommunitytrust.org.uk) or follow us on Facebook [@blackhallct](https://www.facebook.com/blackhallct) or Twitter [@BlackhallCT](https://twitter.com/BlackhallCT).

I would like to thank the hardworking Board of directors/trustees of Blackhall Community Trust (a limited liability company and a charity) as well as our loyal Trust members.

Tina Woolnough, Chair, Blackhall Community Trust, Winter 2021

## **STOP PRESS:**

Craigleith Blackhall Community Council has kindly agreed to provide a grant for the Christmas tree and Cloudberry is hosting the electricity supply. Catalyst Event Production Services are kindly installing the lights.

Exact time of installation of the tree still uncertain – check our website for details.

# NEWS FROM THE OUTREACH TEAM

## Murder Mystery Quest

The word “murder” does not often appear in this publication, and we are all grateful for that. However, during the summer, you could see adults, sometimes with children leading the quest, in 2 or 3 to a group with either a paper copy or on their phone working themselves round Blackhall following the clues. The delight on the faces of the children and adults when they solved a clue thereby moving closer to revealing the “murder”.

Although only a small number submitted their answer to the church office, all the names with the correct answer were put in the hat and an independent judge picked the winner - the Waller family of Blackhall !

Congratulations to the Waller family and we hope you enjoy the £25 Amazon voucher.

To all those that started the quest but did not finish it and are looking for something to do on a crisp autumn day, our website still has all the details available. It still will be fun but sorry, no more prizes. However, you still can solve the quest - surely that is a prize in itself.

## Music @ St Columba's

On Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> October Miss Jia Ning Ng, a masters student from Glasgow Conservatoire, entertained an audience of 80 people to a fantastic classical piano recital. Due to Covid-19 restrictions this was her first “public” performance which with the quality of her playing was very hard to believe. Look out for the name as I am sure she will be a future star of the Edinburgh International Festival. Miss Ng was most grateful for the warm welcome and the opportunity to play for us and, being a Christian, herself ended the evening with a resounding personal favourite hymn. Following the performance and while tea/coffee was served Miss Ng circulated around the audience giving a personal and heartfelt “thank you” to all.



The two autumn concerts have proved popular, and we look to further “Music@St Columba's” in 2022.

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# Blackhall

## Nursery News

### December 2021



Blackhall Nursery is situated within the wonderful nature resource of Ravelston Park and Woods. At Blackhall Nursery, we respect the children's rights, encouraging them to choose, to play and to voice their opinion. We are currently reviewing our Nursery Vision, Values and Aims to ensure that they reflect the United Nations Rights of the Child and up to date research on how children learn.

The Nursery year has started in a whirl of activity, with some children returning after the summer for their second year and others starting with us for the first time. They have all been busy learning through their play, both indoors and out. We are outdoors in all weathers and after the October holiday we head out in small groups to explore Ravelston Woods too.

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](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

You can place your child's name on the Nursery waiting list from their 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday by downloading an application form at [www.blackhallnursery.co.uk](http://www.blackhallnursery.co.uk) or by contacting the Nursery for an application form on 0131 332 8296.

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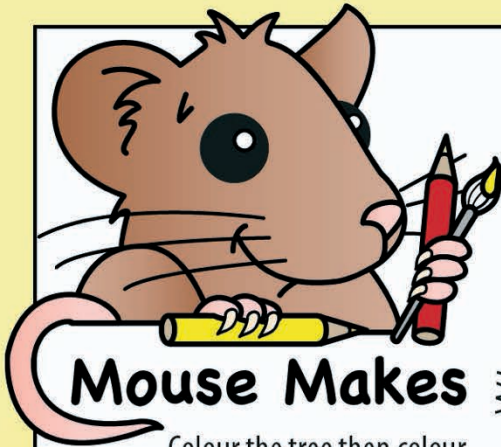


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**Mouse Makes**  
 Colour the tree then colour  
 in one star each day until Christmas.  
 Leave the large star at the top of the  
 tree to colour in on Christmas day!

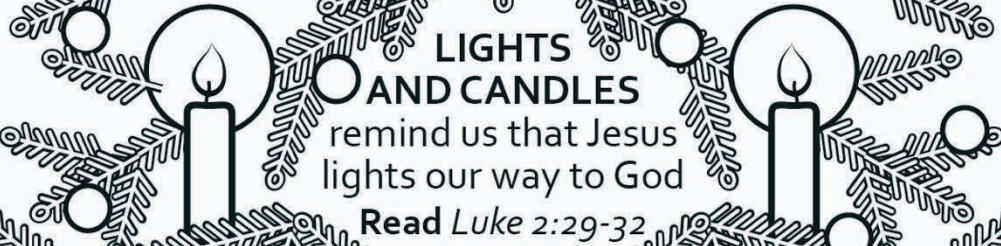
What's on the Christmas Tree?



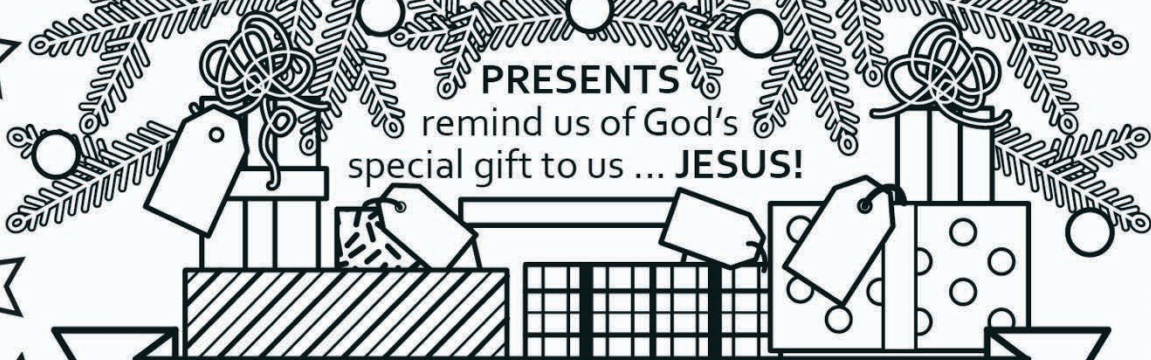
**A STAR**  
 shows the way  
 to Jesus  
 Read  
 Matthew 2:1-12



**ANGELS**  
 bring messages from God  
 Read about Gabriel's message in  
 Luke 1:26-38      Read the shepherd's story in  
 Luke 1:26-38



**LIGHTS  
 AND CANDLES**  
 remind us that Jesus  
 lights our way to God  
 Read Luke 2:29-32



**PRESENTS**  
 remind us of God's  
 special gift to us ... **JESUS!**

Presents at Christmas  
 under the tree,  
 A red Christmas stocking  
 waiting for me,  
 But what really is Christmas,  
 What is it about?  
 Just look and the Bible  
 and you will find out!  
 It's about **JESUS**  
 - the best present of all,  
**JESUS** our Saviour,  
 God's gift to us all!

**"For God loved the world so much that He  
 gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes  
 in him may not die but have eternal life." John 3:16**



# Blackhall Guiding

157th Rainbows have been learning about money, making fruit kebabs and special treats for ducks. One evening our meeting was turned into a recycling centre where we made our own recycled paper. **Claire Slaine – 157<sup>th</sup> Rainbow Leader**

202A Rainbows have been indoors and doing some Skills Builders and made some puppet pals. **Barbara Bon – 202A Rainbow Leader**



202 and 202B Brownies have had an action-packed term from learning about climate change then doing a litter pick around the park and woods. Some girls got the chance to enjoy our first brownie camp back since covid for a fun filled weekend at Dalguise. We have had weekend adventures Paddle boarding and a trip to Foxlake in Dunbar. There was lots of excitement when we went to the Edinburgh Chocolatarium to taste and make our own chocolate. We are looking forward to ending the term with a sleepover in the Loch Lomond Sealife centre and another outdoor silent disco. **Nicole Harland – 202 and 202B Brownie Leader**

202c Brownies started back in mid September and enjoyed exploring the area whilst completing the church mystery trail 'The Ghost of Ravelston Woods'. Thanks very much to all who organised the trail as we had a lot of fun! **Eilidh Hamilton – 202C Brownie Leader**

202 Rainbows have completed the Explorer badge while meeting in the park- tree rubbings, making passports and magnifying glasses. They then explored the Zoo during their Halloween Spooktacular trail. **Nicola McDermid – 202 Rainbow Leader**



157A and 202 Guides have been meeting together in the park, getting to know each other and working together in patrols, each running their own Skills Builder activities. We volunteered at Race for Life at Hopetoun House and finished our term with a celebratory visit to Sprinkles for ice cream 🍦. **Lorna Kelly – 202 Guide Leader**



## Volunteer with Girlguiding Edinburgh?

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

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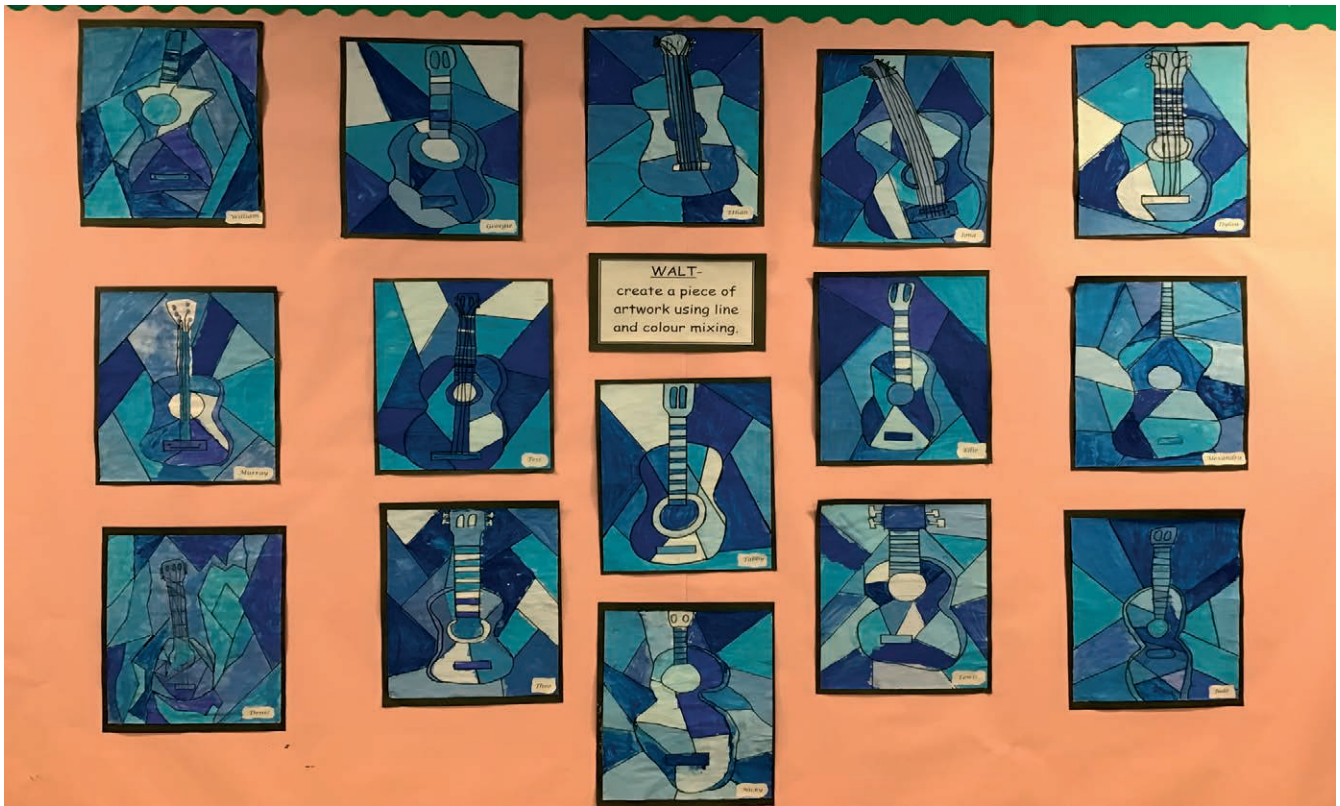
<https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/get-involved/become-a-volunteer/>

[GGUKBlackhallDistrict@outlook.com](mailto:GGUKBlackhallDistrict@outlook.com)



# BLACKHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

P6/5 have been inspired by Pablo Picasso's "Blue Guitar" as part of their learning about Europe and looking at European artists. They enjoyed using a 'cubism' style to create fantastic paintings, focussing online and colour. Here is a selection of their amazing paintings.



P5B made Koinobori fish as part of their topic on Japan. Koinobori is an element of traditional celebration in Japanese history. These beautiful carp streamers have been used as a way to symbolise and wish success and advancement for children. The word 'Koinobori' is made of two words – 'koi' meaning carp, and 'nobori' meaning flag.





# Blackhall Primary P7

## Lagganlia: 4<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021

### **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> of October**

On Monday we arrived at Lagganlia after the nearly 3 hour bus journey. When we arrived, we went into our activity groups, they told us where our dorms were and we got our lunches. Groups 1 and 2 ate in the dining room and groups 3,4 and 5 ate in the common room. After lunch we went back to our dorms to make our beds. Then group 1 and 2 went with Nick - the manager- and groups 3,4 and 5 had Scrutts to tell them what to do. We did a practise fire alarm and Scrutts sent us off with our instructors. The instructors were called: Cameron, Stewart (who likes to be called Stew), Fiona, Martin and Rafa. When we had met our instructors they took us on a tour of the centre and then we had our dinner which was chicken fajitas and for dessert we had strawberry ice cream. In the evening we did a scatter course. We were all exhausted by the end of the day and excited for tomorrow.



### **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> of October**

On Tuesday all the groups did different activities like: Gorge walking, Snowboarding, Skiing, Archery, Abseiling and Biking. For dinner we had baked potatoes and for dessert we had cheesecake. For our evening activity we did a night line.

### **Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> of October**

On Wednesday all the groups did full day activity. Group 1,2 and 3 did canoeing, Group 4 did hill walking and Group 5 did biking. For dinner we had penne pasta and meatballs and for dessert we had Victoria sponge cake. For the evening activity we did a scavenger hunt.

### **Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> of October**

On Thursday all the groups did different activities like abseiling, archery, bush craft, skiing, gorge walking, hill walking and snowboarding. For dinner that night we had hot dogs and for dessert we had an amazing chocolate fudge cake. Our evening activity was a bonfire. We roasted marshmallows over the fire and once we were finished with the marshmallow sticks we took turns to throw them into the fire and said something we enjoyed about the week.

### **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> of October**

On Friday we were told to strip our beds and pack our bags. Next, we went onto the bus and said our goodbyes. Lagganlia was extremely good and we really enjoyed it. We all had so much fun.

Thank you to the staff who came with us and who helped us have a great week.



## CRAIGLEITH MEN'S PROBUS CLUB



It was with an element of in trepidation that, in early October, Craigleith Men's Probus started to meet again after all these months of lockdown and restrictions. However, with our grateful thanks to Blackhall Bowling Club, and their team, we were able to reconvene, almost like normal, but with our masks at the ready and hand sanitizer sprays on hand.

Our two initial talks showed the variation of themes that Probus embraces from Noel Coward to Murder behind the Compost Heap, and in the case of the latter introducing us to numerous poisonous plants such as Monkshood and Ricin but remembering also the skin damage a brush against giant hogweed will give.

In the spring months we will be enthralled hearing from Peter Kendrick about James Cagney - the song & dance man. Who can forget the energy Jimmy Cagney exuded in Yankee Doodle Dandy! We are also looking forward to welcoming back Ian Campbell, Emeritus Professor Scottish & Victorian Literature, University of Edinburgh whose theme will be "Living with Change drawn from 19th century Scottish novels". Another highlight in the spring months will be hearing about Sistema Scotland; this project originated in Raploch, Stirling, now has several bases throughout Scotland with newest, starting in spring 2022 in Wester Hailes being our nearest. The principle is their innovative Big Noise programme. They will be working in partnership with City of Edinburgh Council and with Clovenstone, Canal View and Sighthill Primary and Nursery Schools. And what is Big Noise? Take a look at <https://www.makeabignoise.org.uk/news-events/big-noise-wester-hailes> for more information.

For exact themes please contact us as our talks may be subject to covid restrictions such as those that affect our speakers!

Why not pop into one of our regular meetings, which are held on the 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month, but, if possible, for covid passport issues can you email us first, and remember to bring your mask Do remember that no Probus meeting is ever complete without a mug of coffee (or tea) and just a few chocolate biscuits with the chance of chatting face to face a major priority with the underlying message that Craigleith Probus is still at the beating heart of the Blackhall community.

John MacLennan: Past President [infocpc21@gmail.co](mailto:infocpc21@gmail.co)  
<https://craigleithprobus.myfreesites.net>.



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## Blackhall Probus Club



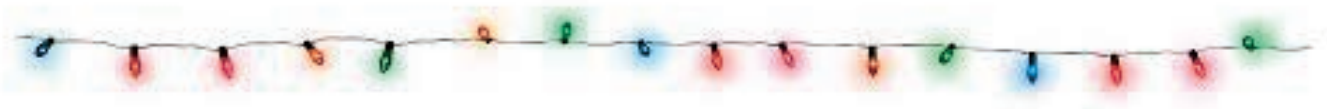
The Blackhall Probus Club is part of a UK-wide group which organizes social events for retired gentlemen in the local area. With a membership of around fifty, we normally meet on the first and third Thursday of the month from October through to May at the Blackhall Bowling Club on Keith Row at 10:00 to chat over tea/coffee/biscuits before listening to a talk given by experts and enthusiasts across a diverse range of subjects. We also organise two lunches and a summer outing each year to which partners are invited.

Due to Covid-19, our programme last year was curtailed somewhat but we still had regular meetings via Zoom which were well received by our members. Talks included topics as diverse as “*The life and times of Deacon Brodie*”, “*Attitudes to illegitimacy*” and “*The preservation of ancient human remains*”.

We hope to re-start face-to-face meetings in January subject to Government restrictions with a talk on 20<sup>th</sup> January entitled “*The Grassmarket Project*”. However, if this is not possible, we will continue our presentations via Zoom. Other planned talks for 2022 include “*Spitfire Women*” and “*Conservation of the Stone-built Heritage*”.

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: 0131 312 6060 Email: [ksgprobus@virginmedia.com](mailto:ksgprobus@virginmedia.com)



## MURRAYFIELD CRAMOND PROBUS CLUB

Probus is a club for retired business and professional men. Our branch was formed in 1989 and meets in the Edinburgh Room of the Royal Burgess Golfing Society building, overlooking the beautiful setting of its course, on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from October to March.

We meet at 10.30 am for coffee and a chat followed by an illustrated talk at 11.0 am. There is the option of lunching together in the Burgess dining room after every meeting and we have three fixed lunch dates, at the beginning of each session, pre-Christmas and at the session’s end.

Our speakers this session range from the National Museum of Scotland to “Behind the locked cockpit” and The Beatles! Something for everyone in fact.

We also organize occasional trips, to which wives and partners are invited, to interesting venues during the session.

We are a very friendly bunch and would love you to come along and give us a try.

Contact Donald Ross, Secretary, 0131 339 3116, [ross200ross@virginmedia.com](mailto:ross200ross@virginmedia.com)  
Bruce Lowe, President, 0131 336 5115, [bruce.lowe@btinternet.com](mailto:bruce.lowe@btinternet.com)

# Tints and Fallen Leaves - A Range of Gardening Thoughts

What a gardening year 2021 has been! At the time of writing, I can see numerous autumn tints in the foliage and yet there are crocus and cyclamen in flower - really! Do you consider the value of *Cyclamen coum* and *C. hederifolium* to give that splash of purple amid the fallen leaves? To tell the difference between these two autumn/winter flowering *Cyclamen* species is quite easy as the flowers of *C. coum* are dumpy while *C. hederifolium* are more elongated plus the leaves are more pointed in the latter. There is also some confusion over autumn crocus, also known as *Colchicum autumnale* and meadow saffron, and one of autumn flowering *Crocus* species, *Crocus sativus*, the source of the herb, Saffron; however, there is little scope for a 'get rich quick' project producing commercial quantities as to produce a pound of saffron over 65,000 plants are needed! The main differences include *Colchicum* being poisonous, and the flower structure with crocus having three stamens and three styles, while *colchicums* have three stamens and one style.

As noted above this is the season of mellow fruitfulness and mists but it is also the time to note down the best trees and shrubs for autumn tints by visiting the Botanic Garden. When trees are mentioned, the usual comment is about the tree's final height, and of course in an urban location it is not advisable to plant forest trees but rather something that grows fifteen feet or less. My suggestions include one of the Rowans, such as *Sorbus 'Joseph Rock'* with its yellow berries amid tinted autumn leaves, or, for shape, *S. asplenifolia* with its fine dissected fern like leaves; an alternative could be one of the dwarf maples with a vast range of bark colours and textures. Their highlight must be the autumn tints - from reds through to yellows with the peeling ruddy bark of *Acer griseum* or the snake bark effect from *A. pensylvanicum* visible through the leaf canopy. Nearby to Blackhall is Lauriston Castle where, in mid-October, the City of Edinburgh Council launched its "Edinburgh Million Trees" project and three *Ginkgo biloba* trees were planted from seed gathered at Hiroshima, as part of the Green Legacy Hiroshima, and grown on at the Botanics for six or so years. For more about the project go to:



<https://theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2021/10/edinburghs-ambition-to-be-a-million-tree-city>.

As well as plant hunting at the Botanics and Lauriston Castle and noting the preferences for planting in spring 2022, it is also time to tidy up some of the fallen leaves and associated debris. Of course fifty years or so ago the keen gardener was encouraged to sweep every leaf away and cut back the shrubs and herbaceous perennials; however nowadays bearing in mind the need for overwintering habitats for numerous small animals that overwinter in our garden, cleanliness in the garden is not next to godliness - in other words leave some of fallen leaves and suchlike for the ground beetles, bumblebees <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/nature/what-happens-bees-winter>, and hopefully hedgehogs.

But with the recent autumnal changes you may still be able to sit in the garden and consider Keats' words and his thoughts 'To Autumn'.

John the Gardener

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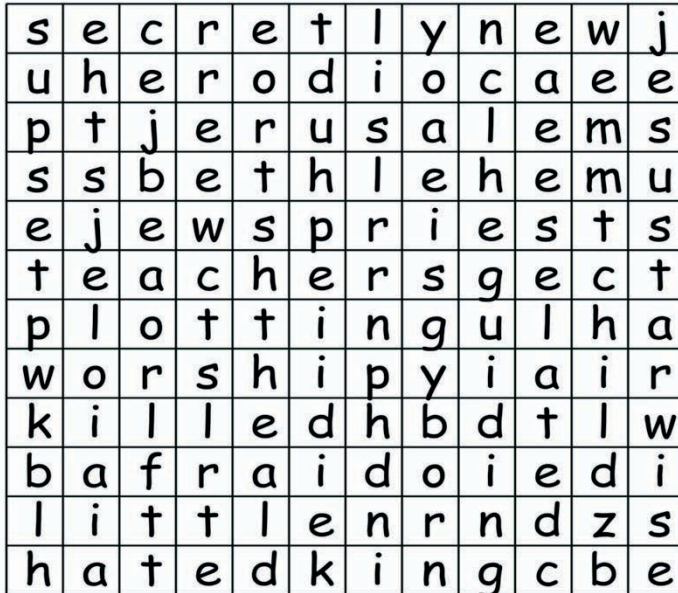
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# PUZZLE PAGE FOR ALL AGES

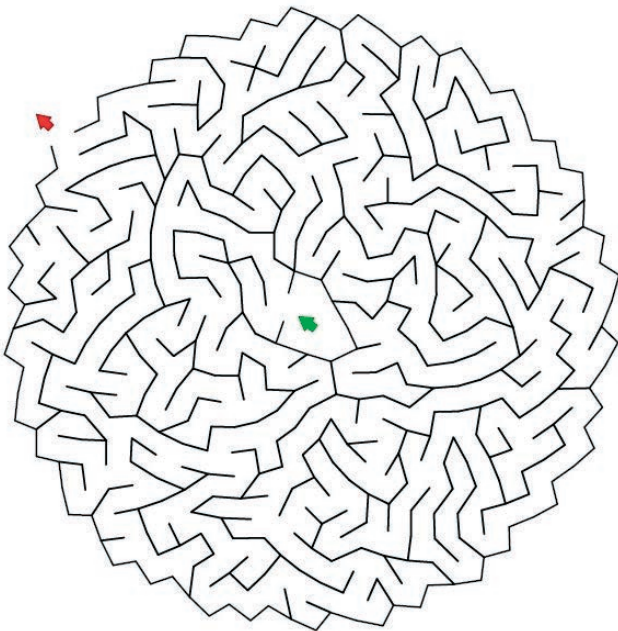
For this issue we have a word search, a sudoku, a maze and a little touch of Christmas humour. We hope you enjoy them.

## A CHRISTMAS WORDSEARCH



Can you find the words from the Christmas Story in this wordsearch ?

- |            |           |          |
|------------|-----------|----------|
| afraid     | Herod     | plotting |
| Bethlehem  | Jerusalem | priests  |
| birthplace | Jesus     | secretly |
| born       | Jews      | star     |
| child      | killed    | teachers |
| elated     | King      | upset    |
| guiding    | little    | wise     |
| hated      | new       | worship  |



			8	2				
						3		7
	4				3	8	5	
		6	3	5		7		2
5				1				3
1		3		7	9	5		
	2	9	5				6	
6		5						
				9	2			

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### Angel Tidings



The little boy was to be an angel in the Christmas play and his one line was: "Behold, I bring you good tidings." He asked what tidings were and his mother explained that the word meant news.

On the night of the play, the youngster had stage fright and, after a long silence, blurted out: "Hey, have I got news for you!"



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

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

**Session Clerk**  
 Eddie Thorn  
 158 Craigleith Road  
 Edinburgh EH4 2EQ  
 Telephone 332 5702

**Church Secretary**  
 Ms Joy McGonigal-Paget  
 in Church Office from  
 Tues-Fri 9.00 – 12 noon  
 Tel/fax 332 4431

## DEADLINES

### Kirk News - Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December

Please send all items to the Editor;  
 Christine Denham, c/o Church Office  
 Home tel: 336 5943 or e-mail:  
[kirknews@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk](mailto:kirknews@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk)

### Blackhall Bulletin - Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:bulletin@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk)



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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](http://www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk) or contact the office by phone (see above) or e mail [secretary@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk](mailto:secretary@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk) or



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