

BLACKHALL BULLETIN

December 2024

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

No. 176

Come to our *Christmas Fair!*

Saturday 7th December 2024, from 2pm

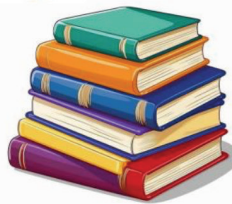
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YOU HAVE TO WORK FOR IT!

There was once a farmer who used to say to his children when they were young, 'When you all reach the age of 12, I will tell you the secret of life'.

One day, when the eldest boy turned 12, he anxiously asked his father what the secret of life was. The father replied that he was going to tell him but that he should not reveal it to his brothers. "The secret of life is this. The cow does not give milk."

"What are you saying?" asked the boy incredulously.

The farmer replied, "As you hear it, son. The cow does not give milk, you have to milk it. You have to get up at 4 in the morning, go to the field, walk through the field, full of muck and manure, tie the tail, hobble the legs of the cow, sit on the stool, place the bucket and do the work yourself. That is the secret of life, the cow does not give milk. You milk her or you don't get milk!"



We live in a time when certain generations think that cows GIVE milk and that many things are automatic and free. Some people's mentality seems to be that 'I wish, I ask..... I obtain.' Many people are accustomed to getting whatever they want the easy way. Many of the luxuries we enjoy today were not readily available to previous generations. For the vast majority of people, their grandparents would not have grown up knowing the simple pleasure of a hot shower and now they are taken for granted. Similarly, I remember as a youngster having coal delivered to the house and having to make up a fire which only seemed to heat the area around the fire and not the whole room. Central heating is a great development but it is also a luxury.

Despite the relative comfort and ease of most peoples' lives, comparatively speaking, we have never seen so many people struggle with their mental health or find themselves lacking in direction for their lives. We, as a society, have become used to getting everything quickly and easily. We can go on the internet and order just about anything and have it delivered to our doorstep the next day. Whilst this is very convenient, it doesn't always bring the same satisfaction that used to be had from putting some effort into finding something. Life should not be just a matter of wishing, asking and obtaining. The things that one receives should be the deserved consequence of the effort one makes. True happiness is often the result of effort and a lack of effort can create frustration. I know that some of the best presents I have received from my children were things that they made or put some real effort or thought into getting. The best cards I have ever received have been home made ones from children who have put real love and effort into their creation.

Whilst I have been speaking of material things, I believe the same is true of our spiritual life. Many people seem to want an easy fix for all their problems even those of a spiritual nature. In the gospel according to Matthew, Jesus said; *"Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened."* (Matthew 7:7-8)

Despite how easy this might sound at first, the asking must be done continuously, the seeking is an ongoing process and the knocking is a repetitive action. For most people, finding faith is the work of years. Even those who have found faith need continually to nurture it, continually to explore and think about it. When we think about quick, easy faith, we should remember some of the Old Testament stories such as the birth of Isaac. Sarah, Abraham's wife, had been barren for many years and scholars suggest that she was 90 and Abraham was 100 at the time of Isaac's birth. Of course, the whole concept of time, as it is understood in the modern age, may have had little or no relevance to the authors of the Bible and the societies from where they came. However, we can be sure that Sarah and Abraham held faith with God for a prolonged period before the eventual birth of their son.

As we approach Christmas, why not share with your children, from a young age, the secret of life so that they don't grow up with the mentality that the government, their parents or their cute little faces are going to give them everything they need in life. Whether it is food, a physical gift or more importantly faith, if it is worthwhile, it takes time and effort. Remember, "cows don't **give** milk; you have to work for it."

God bless all
Fergus

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Funds raised from all donations to the Virtual Gift Shop will go directly to someone who needs our support.

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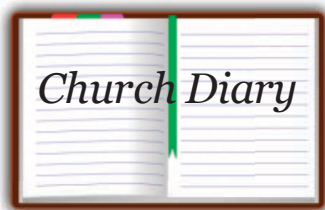


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DECEMBER

1 st	10.30 am	Morning Worship
8 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship with St David's Brass Band
15 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship
	4.00 pm	Blue Christmas Service
22 nd	10.30 am	Morning Worship
	7.00pm	Choir lessons and carols
24 th	6.00 pm	Christingle Service
	11.30pm	Watchnight Service
29 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship Favourite Carols

JANUARY

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

FEBRUARY

2 nd	10.30 am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion
	3.00pm	Afternoon Communion
9 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship
16 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship
	10.30 am	Morning Worship
23 rd	10.30 am	Morning Worship

If, for whatever reason, you find yourself unable to attend any service in person you can join with us on line when the service is happening (i.e. at 10.30am) or watch later if you cannot do that. Go to:

www.youtube.com/@blackhallstcolumba

Merry Christmas

Wishing all our readers a Merry Christmas

And a very Happy New Year

*From the Minister and congregation
of Blackhall St Columba's*



The Prayer Circle



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

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

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

Alternatively, please put your request slip into the locked box marked "Prayer Requests" on the table at the back of the Church.



PEACE SERVICES

Peace Services meet every two weeks in the small hall. We start with a short act of worship and then enjoy a lunch of home made soup. This is followed by a speaker as noted below:

11th December - Christmas Celebration – Shona Cook

PEACE services will resume in 2025 at 12.00 noon on

8th January – Pastoral Care – Fiona Cooke

22nd January – Chaplain to the Royal High School – Rev. Dan Robertson

5th February – Pioneers UK – Ruth Box

19th February - Church Planting – Rev. Alan Childs

We are always looking for volunteers to make and serve the lunch and extra drivers to add to our pool. If you think you might be able to help in either capacity please contact Ruth Laidlaw on ruthlaidlaw@gmail.com or 07513967974

We look forward to welcoming you.

Shona Cook & Ruth Laidlaw



This year's **WATCH** charity is **BLOOD CANCER UK**

Leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma and all types of blood cancer caused by changes (mutations) in the DNA within blood cells. This causes the blood cells to start behaving abnormally. In almost all cases, these changes are linked to things we can't control. Research that is on going in Edinburgh and other centres in the UK means that it can in some cases be detected early and treatment provided. It affects both adults and, sadly, many more children than you would think. So, we decided **BLOOD CANCER UK** was our charity for this year and all your help and support in raising funds is much appreciated. The money we raise will help continue the research and also sustain the Nurses and Support workers who are based in Anderson Street, Leith they provide help and advise to those who have been diagnosed.

We started our fund raising with the **summer coin collection** each Sunday. Next we had a **very successful Craft/Coffee** morning thanks to those who contributed to the stalls and those who came to purchase from them and enjoy a coffee and cake. New this year is **Our Pets Calendar 2025**. Featuring photos of our furry friends and bubbles it is now on sale at £8. It can be ordered from a team member or purchased after Sunday Service.

You will have seen on the cover, our next and biggest event **THE CHRISTMAS FAIR**. All the details of the day there. Santa will be with us and hopes to see lots of children in his new Grotto. And for adults and children alike there are lots of stalls where spend your money. Don't forget the magnificent hampers and tombola. Be sure to come early there's so much to see. There will also be coffee, mince pies and soothing music in the sanctuary. If you have any items to donate to the fair, please see the list of stalls and details of when we will be there to accept donations.



CONGRATULATIONS



BLACKHALL'S EVE NAIRN-MAGNANTE SHINES IN INCLUSIVE CHILDREN'S PUBLISHING

The North Edinburgh community is beaming with pride over the remarkable achievements of 15-year-old Blackhall resident, Eve Nairn-Magnante. A talented young author, Eve has made waves with her enchanting children's book, *Santa Steals Christmas!*, a heartwarming festive tale that champions inclusivity. Despite her youth, Eve has already won several accolades and is leading the charge in ensuring that all children, regardless of ability, can enjoy the magic of reading.

Eve's book, *Santa Steals Christmas!*, is a whimsical Christmas mystery with a clever twist. The story follows Santa, Rudolph, and the elves as they race against the clock to unmask a mischievous imposter stealing presents on Christmas Eve. While it's an engaging and light-hearted tale for children, the book's underlying message—highlighting the true spirit of Christmas through friendship, family, and inclusivity—resonates with readers of all ages.



What sets *Santa Steals Christmas!* apart is its "accessibility-first" approach. Eve and her father worked alongside various charities, including Dyslexia Scotland, Deaf Action, and Seescape in Fife, to ensure her story could be accessible to all children. It is available in dyslexia-friendly print, braille, audiobook, eBook, video book, British & International Sign languages, as well as multiple foreign languages to help cater for a variety of different needs. As Eve explained, "I think anyone should be able to access things that other people can access, and I find it unfair that many children's books are written in a way that other people can't read."

Her efforts haven't gone unnoticed. *Santa Steals Christmas!* has received rave reviews and accolades for her innovative approach. Although too young to be eligible to enter most literary competitions, Eve's work has been recognised by all 3 competitions she was allowed to enter. Her book recently won the Children's Literature Festival Children's Book of the Year Award (voted for by children), the Ink Book Prize Children's Fiction Award and Eve is now the youngest ever person to be Highly Commended by The Herald Scotland's Diversity & Inclusion Awards (in the Design for Diversity category).

In addition to earning her recognition from the literary community, Eve's work has been celebrated for its generosity. Last Christmas she donated over 2,000 copies of her books to local schools, charities and hospitals. In addition to this, 5% of the book's sales are donated to Dyslexia Scotland, Seescape, Deaf Action and Scottish Autism, which aligns perfectly with the book's inclusive ethos.

Despite her success, Eve remains humble, preferring to let her story and its message take centre stage. She hopes that *Santa Steals Christmas!* will inspire other authors and publishers to adopt a more inclusive approach to children's books, ensuring that every child can enjoy the magic of storytelling, regardless of their abilities.

As one local fan said, "*Eve's book is not just a great story for Christmas, but a symbol of what can be achieved when inclusivity and creativity come together.*"

As Blackhall celebrates the achievements of this young star, Eve Nairn-Magnante stands as a shining example of the power of local talent, proving that no dream is too big, and no author too young to make a difference. Her work is not only a gift to readers this Christmas but a lasting contribution to the world of children's literature, one that ensures no child is left behind. For those looking to support Eve's journey or pick up a copy of *Santa Steals Christmas!*, the book is available on Amazon, Audible, and other major platforms in multiple accessible formats. It's a stocking filler that promises to spread joy and inclusivity this holiday season. www.santastealschristmas.com **Eve's Book will be on sale at the Christmas Fair.**



CONGRATULATIONS



From time to time we like to celebrate things going on in our community. This time we have two very different stories here and another elsewhere in the Bulletin. All show the variety of talents in Blackhall. If you know of any other, please let the Bulletin know.



Firstly, Well Done to the Maidencraig residents who held a MacMillan tea and cake afternoon on 29th September. All the baking was done by the residents. It raised the huge amount of £1,020! It just goes to show that with everyone working together each contribution results in an enjoyable event that raised a lot of money for a very worthy cause.

I'm sure readers will agree it looks a delicious spread and maybe we will have more stories like this in 2025??



Our second Congratulations go to our own Rev Fergus Cook, who has been going through the process to become a Naval Chaplain for some time now. He has become what they think is the oldest person to 'pass out' and receive a commission in the Royal Naval reserve at Britannia Royal Naval College on Sunday 3rd November.

Chaplains play an important role offering not just religious support but important pastoral support to all faiths and none within a ship's company. Royal Navy chaplains are unique compared to their Royal Air Force and Army colleagues in that they don't hold a military rank and are referred to solely as Royal Navy Chaplain, or more commonly Bish!

Fergus says it has been a real challenge to get through to this stage and says he has been blessed with a huge amount of support from his Kirk Session and congregation. He went on, "in the Navy the role of the Chaplain is to be 'a friend and adviser to all'. Throughout my training I have had opportunities to share my faith as the people I work with ask about my role and the job I do. It is a fantastic opportunity to work alongside a great bunch of dedicated men and women who are all there to serve others. Many of the core values of the Royal Navy dovetail nicely with the Christian faith and it is great to speak about faith with people who may not have had much to do with it before."



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LIST OF STALLHOLDERS FOR CHRISTMAS FAIR - SATURDAY 7TH DECEMBER 2024



All proceeds will be donated to Blood Cancer UK Edinburgh office

<u>STALL</u>	<u>ORGANISATION</u>	<u>CONTACT PERSON</u>
Books	Church Book Club	Shona Cook
Bottle	Badminton Club	Linda Finnie
Bric-a-Brac Large & Small CDs and DVDs	Kirk Session	Dorothea Mair
Cakes	Cameo Club	Fiona Drinnan
Children's Books	Brownies	Brownie leaders
Craft	Congregation	Isobel Potts Ann Weston
Fashion Accessories (as good as new)	Kirk Session	Christine Denham Kirsty Denham
Hampers	Congregation	Ann Wood
Santa's Grotto	Congregation	Elinor Lowrie
Sweets	Tuesday Topics Toddler group	Lyndy Paton
Teas	Waƒch Committee	Anne Hamilton
Tombola	Waƒch Committee	Rosi Watt
Toys, board Games and Jigsaws	Congregation	Adrian & Catriona Johnston Donald & Libby Cameron

All donations for the stalls will be gratefully received in the church hall on:

Friday 6th December 10am – 12noon 2pm – 4pm 7pm – 9pm

Saturday 7th December 10am – 12noon

Donations for the Hampers can be left in basket as you enter the church. There is also a box available for completed Hamper envelopes on table at rear of church.

For further information please contact Lynn Bunney 07742 27187 or Rosi Watt 332 4027 / 07533 955025

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and enjoy our Christmas Tree Festival as well!

THURSDAY 19TH DECEMBER 2024 (5.00-7.00pm)

FRIDAY 20TH DECEMBER 2024 (4.00-7.00pm)

**SATURDAY 21ST DECEMBER 2024 (10.00-12 noon -Tree Festival
only)**



Take a moment or two to be reminded of the Good News of Christmas amid all the hurly burly of Advent. Let yourself relax and enjoy the real meaning of Christmas. If you have little ones yourself or 'grand' little ones or if you find it hard to suppress your own inner child still, just make your way along to Blackhall St Columba's Church this Christmas to experience something very special that is happening in the heart of our community - our "Follow the Star Nativity Trail" which, this year, focuses on Mary's Journey to Bethlehem - on Thursday 19th or Friday 20th December. In addition, this year, we have a wonderful Christmas Tree Festival running at the same time (note the extra morning timings of this, above).

On the last Thursday and Friday before Christmas (the last week of school before it closes for the holidays), throughout the late afternoon and early evening, Blackhall St Columba's is hosting an interactive exploration of the Greatest Story Ever Told using the church itself and all its halls and buildings. (If you haven't seen the church since its renovation a couple of years ago, why not take this opportunity to come in and have a look around?)

Find out the true meaning of Christmas in a novel and exciting way as you hear the Angel Gabriel's message and go, with Mary, on a journey to Bethlehem. You will follow the star and discover the shepherds, King Herod and some busy innkeepers on the way until you finally reach the stable with Mary and Joseph and discover for yourselves the most wonderful gift we have ever been given.

As if that wasn't enough, we are also offering a Christmas Nativity Escape Room for the older children who come along. In addition, there will be lots of Christmas crafts, some seasonal musical entertainment and, of course, plenty of Christmas treats and refreshments. This year, we also have a wonderful Christmas Tree Festival running at the same time in the sanctuary. Come along and find out its theme and see for yourself the beautiful, inventive and creative decorations. There couldn't be a better way to start your Christmas celebrations!

Our doors are open from 5.00 -7.00pm on 19th December and 4.00 -7.00pm on 20th December for the Trail and the Festival and from 10.00am - 12 noon on 21st December for the Tree Festival (Christmas crafts and a tearoom will be available as well then). All are welcome.

There will be no charge, but you can, if you wish, make a donation which will be divided between covering costs and charity.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Shona Cook



**Nativity Trail
&
Christmas Tree Festival**
at
**Blackhall
St Columba's**
Admission Free



**All welcome to
both events on**
Thursday 19th December 17.00-19.00
Friday 20th December 16.00-19.00
&
Saturday 21st December 10.00-12.00
(Tree Festival only)
Tearoom, Crafts & Escape Room



Our new season began in September with lots of activity, and we welcome three new members. Artists all have their individual projects while our tutor, Diana Jackson provides those interested with a Still Life weekly challenge.



After our exhibition in May, with the help of visitors voting, we were delighted to present the *People's Choice Award* to the favourite painting chosen by visitors to Evran Dogan (left) who painted 'Meeting at Teuchter's Landing'

Some members recently painted gift cards to contribute to the WATCH Committee Craft and Coffee Morning on 5th October in aid of Blood Cancer UK. They proved to be popular, and it's hoped some may be available at the Christmas Fair on 7th December.

Others have been busy preparing illustrations for the 'Lessons and Carols' service on 22nd December at 7.00pm. Along with other groups who use our church halls we hope to decorate a Christmas Tree for the Festival in the church at Christmas.

Following on from success last year, we hope to have a model to come along for Figurative drawing in December.

Finally on a social angle, we are finishing our term with a Christmas meal at Toby Carvery in Silverknowes. We will resume on 13th January 2025 and wish everyone a Happy Christmas.

Marge Whiteside.



Dee@Breath-Works and Yoga with Esme have joined forces to create a supportive yoga community within the heart of Blackhall.

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CAMEO CLUB

To find out when Cameo Club meetings are on, you can find the details on the website – blackhallstcolumba.org.uk. There is a calendar of events for each month. There is also a very attractive page for Cameo which describes what goes on. Simply click *Hall Hire/Groups* followed by choosing *Church groups* from the dropdown menu. Ordinary meetings are free every second Friday 10.30-12.00 noon when you can enjoy coffee and entertainment.

Members will not be in the church halls on Friday 29th November as they will be having a Christmas Lunch at the Leonardo Hotel, Clermiston. The only meeting in December will be on Friday 13th and will be Christmas themed. We start again in 2025 on Friday 10th January.

In the past few months Cameo has welcomed the (fabulous) Rock Choir, when approximately thirty singers gave a rousing performance of their light music programme. We have had familiar favourites such as Jenny Logan with pianist Margaret Donaldson, and also new acts such as Take2/Elaine and Izzy.

Anyone in the local community can join us – new faces are always be welcome.

Fiona Drinnan 343 6762

NORTH WEST HERITAGE

North West Heritage is a local history group. We have talks every month from September to April excluding December. If you wish any details about the group email the secretary Charlotte Cowe on charlotte@dmains.co.uk or phone 336 2494

Wednesday 22nd January 2025

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

Wednesday 19th February 2025

Recent Archaeological Discoveries at Cammo
Speaker: Christine McPherson Chair, Edinburgh
Archaeological Field Society

Wednesday 19th March 2025

The History of the Innocent Railway (Built to carry coal from the Dalkeith area to Edinburgh)

Speaker: James Waugh

Wednesday 23rd April 2025

Trains and Trams in Edinburgh's Southside

Speaker: Kenneth Williamson

Followed by AGM

TUESDAY TOPICS

We had an excellent start to our new session of Topics. There was a good turnout for our first meeting when we were treated to some beautiful photos of the Butterflies which can be found in the Pentlands. Bob Douglas thought he was looking for 19 but they found 22 different species. He also brought some lovely cards which many of our members bought.

The next meeting had Professor Anthony Busuttil speaking about Malta, Paul's Island, and its George Cross. As Anthony is Maltese this was a really fascinating evening.

November 26th sees us move to the Sahara and its story with Henry McMeekin who spoke to us last year about his life in Alaska.... quite a change! (We may have had this by the time you read about it.)

We then take a holiday over the Christmas season and resume again on 7th January 2025 for our post Christmas lunch at Howies. This will be at 1.30pm, limited to those who have already booked.

On 27th January means we are off again but this time to St Kilda to hear about the last days on the island and why it happened with Katherine Hay

As I announced in the last Bulletin, we are only meeting monthly now so the next meeting will be on February 25th when John Jeffrey will tell us all about Beekeeping. Keeping to the animal theme, on March 25th, Rebecca Parr from Edinburgh Zoo will bring all her enthusiasm for Wildcats and tell us of the efforts that are being made to re-establish the Scottish Wildcat in its natural habitat in Scotland.

Meetings start at 7.30pm in the small hall and all are most welcome. After the talk of about 45 minutes, we have time for questions and tea and coffee and chat. So please do come along. Non-members are £3 per session which makes joining a bargain as it is only £20 for the year. You don't have to be a member of the Church - we just offer friendship and interesting talks.

For more details contact either:
Lyndy Paton on 07460212174 or
Sheila Mackintosh. on 0131 336 1357

EDINBURGH FLORAL ART CLUB

We send good wishes to all for the festive season. The sign-up deadline has now passed for our December workshop but we look forward to welcoming guests and new members at our first meeting of the new year on 14th February 2025. More details in the next Bulletin.

Suzie Stark

Chairman EFAC



SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING

Thanks to the interest shown in our article in the autumn Bulletin, the Scottish Country Dance class has welcomed several new members; and it is good to have the hall filled each Thursday evening.



We began with a programme of very straightforward dances - to allow some of us to revise, and others to learn, the formations on which the reels and strathspeys are based. We have also enjoyed trying out some seasonal dances, celebrating the colours and the leaves of Autumn.

Now, of course, we are learning the dances that will make up our party programme for Christmas, when we look forward to having Matthew McLennan, one of Edinburgh's local accordionists, to play for us. The Blackhall dancers' buffet is always a memorable part of the evening, and we will have our usual "bearded guest" to distribute the gifts we bring.

As a class, we are fortunate to have both men and women taking part; and, although most of us are retired, we do have a few dancers who bring the age range down a little.

In December, however, we will be sad to bid farewell to one of our most experienced ladies. Helen Gall was taught to dance by the renown Miss Allie Anderson, a founder member of the RSCDS Edinburgh Branch who worked as a PE teacher at James Gillespie's High School. Helen has danced in the Blackhall St Columba's Hall for more years than she can actually remember and, even at 94 years old, is still one of our most enthusiastic members, travelling by taxi each week because her reduced vision makes a bus trip too challenging.

We'll miss Helen – and her daughter, Fiona, who often comes to our party nights – but we wish her well in her new life in Thailand, with her son and his wife. No more frosty mornings or slippery pathways and, even when it rains, that wonderful warmth all year round! What a positive way to start 2025.....



Meanwhile, from all of us at the country dancing, Happy Christmas and all the best for the New Year.

Classes start again on 9th January and that would be a great time to take up a new activity that works out both body and brain!

Muriel Stenhouse 07908805364



KNIT AND NATTER

This year we decided to make smaller poppies and turn them into brooches to help raise funds for Poppy Scotland. They were available for a donation in the Sanctuary.



Our mystery item, above, will be revealed at a Christmas service. It will make sense on the day. We hope you will also be coming along to the Christmas Tree Festival where you can try to guess which Carol our tree represents.

As well as these special projects we have been continuing to knit for Pregnancy Counselling and Care Scotland. So as you can see, never a dull moment.



If you would like to join us, any ability or none, we meet on Monday evenings at 7.30pm in the Sanctuary.

For further details please contact
stcknitnatter@gmail.com

Lilian Cockburn

SOUP 'N' CHAT

After the summer break, Soup'n'Chat is well back in action. Soup'n'Chat is open to all in the community and church members, every meeting every second Friday (Cameo one week Soup 'n' Chat the next and so on) at 12 noon on the dates below.

Please note there will be no Soup 'n' Chat in December due to events in the Church Halls.

We open again on Friday 3rd January at 12noon and finishes when the soup runs out and chat exhausted. Do come along and enjoy the soup, warmth, chat and company! We look forward to seeing you there.

Michael
Lead Volunteer.
cockburn_carfrae@yahoo.co.uk

Friday 3rd January 2025

Friday 17th January 2025

Friday 14th February 2025

Friday 28th February 2025

Friday 14th March 2025



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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 forty, we will be meeting this coming session on the first and third Thursday of the month through to 3rd April 24 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 (including Christmas) to which partners are invited, Quiz, Pie and a Pint sessions after a couple of the talks as well as local walks lead by one of our members.

Talks planned for the remainder of this session include “Scottish lighthouses”, “*On the buses*”, “*Surgeon’s Hall Museum*” and “*The history of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service*”, all of which bode well for a diverse, interesting and entertaining series.

We are always pleased to welcome new members, so if you would like to join us, please contact the Secretary for more details or come along to one of our meetings this month on either 5th or 19th December.

We look forward to meeting you.

Keith Gilroy, Secretary, Blackhall Probus Club.

Phone: 0787 327 5854 Email: ksgprobust@icloud.com



CRAIGLEITH PROBUS

In the most recent edition of the Bulletin the talk to be given by Alice Soper on Wednesday, **December 18th** was highlighted and how, while tidying she came across an old suitcase full of papers and photos which she, after collating, was the basis of her book ‘The Piper of Tobruk’. All are welcome to pop along to our meeting and hear more about her remarkable father as well as purchasing this most interesting book. In a similar vein on **March 5th** Leona Thomas will be joining us to tell the story of the Arctic Convoys, and about which she has a direct family connection.

However, in case anyone thinks we just look back at WW2, our talk on **January 15th** (*we only meet once in January*) is about Giraffes - these Gentle Giants and we will welcome a member of the outreach team from Edinburgh Zoo. Why don’t you visit us and hear more? There is also a live cam of them which can be found at <https://www.edinburghzoo.org.uk/animals/animal-inhabitants/nubian-giraffe>.

A month later, on **February 19th** we continue the animal theme when hearing from Rob Hiltly about Vets Stories and Captive Breeding Programmes.

Hearing from James Waugh on **March 19th** about Coal Mining and the Twin Tub Washing Machine will be a flight of past memories. It is hard in 2024/25 to imagine the numerous coal mines that were in the Lothians and their rich industrial heritage together with how the landscape has been transformed. Perhaps a theme for autumn 2025?!

If any of our themes sound interesting do just join us at Blackhall Bowling Club at 10am for a warming cup of coffee or tea, especially in this winter weather with the talk starting at 10.30am.

As most of our readers know Probust is a worldwide association of clubs for semi-retired or retired people (*our club is geared for male retirees*) from all walks of life. Guests are always welcome and just let me know if you would like more information by dropping me an email.

John MacLennan - Past President: johnmacleannanuk@gmail.com

JUNIOR SINGERS





On 6th October '24, the Junior Singers performed “Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” to a large audience in Blackhall St. Columba’s Church. The licencing company had stipulated that they had to perform either the abridged version or the full version of the show – with nothing left out! Given that there were only sixteen children in the choir with the youngest member only seven years old and the oldest still only twelve years old, it was quite an ambitious decision, made unanimously, by the children to do the full version. And so, the hard work began.

Rehearsals turned out to be great fun with the children responding in their own individual ways to the catchy lyrics and melodies. For the actual performance, BStC’s senior choir member, Jenny Logan, delighted the audience by singing three of the more difficult songs while Malcolm Wood provided his usual brilliant accompaniment throughout the show. The cherry on the cake was literally – a cake! A beautifully decorated cake was provided as a surprise for the children (and their leaders) and was enjoyed by all after the performance.

It was an ambitious project, but the children rose to the occasion. The memory of this evening will stay with them for a long time.



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EXPLORERS

When the scouts move on from this Group (23rd Blackhall) at age 14, they head off to join Scouts from Comley Bank and D'mains as part of the Explorers. This year the explorers took on a grand tour of Europe when 55 of them inter-railed through Holland, France and Germany for a week camping all the way. The final destination was the international scout centre at Kandersteg in Switzerland where they met representatives from around 20 different nations. As well as international hospitality / games and exploring Switzerland, they experienced over-night hikes to mountain huts with some of the group being able to head up past 3000m and get experience of walking and crevasse recovery on the glacier. A truly epic trip building a lot of memories for young people and leaders.

BLACKHALL NURSERY NEWS WINTER 2024/25



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.

We began our new term in August, welcoming new families as well as lots of returning ones. We spent the term getting to know the children and their families. After the October holiday we began our woodland walks, where the children explore Ravelston Woods in small groups, looking out for the changing seasons, building shelters and learning how to take appropriate risk by climbing trees, balancing on logs etc. We play outside everyday supporting the children to develop their gross motor skills and to stay physically active. We have learned about Diwali, St Andrew's Day and took part in World Nursery Rhyme week. December brings great excitement. We enjoyed a trip to St Columbas Church to hear the Nativity story, told with wonderful knitted props, we raised money through the Christmas jumper day and we are looking forward to our Christmas party.

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

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. We recommend applying as early as possible -there is no cost or obligation by doing so.

BEAVERS

We welcomed our new members to both Monday and Friday colonies and took advantage of the few light nights by getting out and about for mini beast hunts and woodland walks.

Tested ourselves and team working skills with some “silly Olympics “

As summer turned to autumn the beavers headed to Perthshire for a 2 night adventure camp at Dalguise: Raft building, survival skills, 3 G swing. Lots of fun was had (not so much sleep though)

cubs

Recently been working on getting traditional scouting skills up to scratch with sessions on using knives and axes safely.

Dabbled into the world of science with a variety of experiments to gain scientist badge, this was backed up with a fun competitive session designing and building “egg landers “

Time spent out outside included taking on wide games in Ravelston woods and community action by litter picking across Ravelston park.

Both packs have just returned from their autumn camp over at Fordell Firs.

Lots of classic adventurous activities such as archery, abseiling, crate stacking and pioneering.

Some new experiences were also enjoyed such as caving and team building low ropes.

Scouts

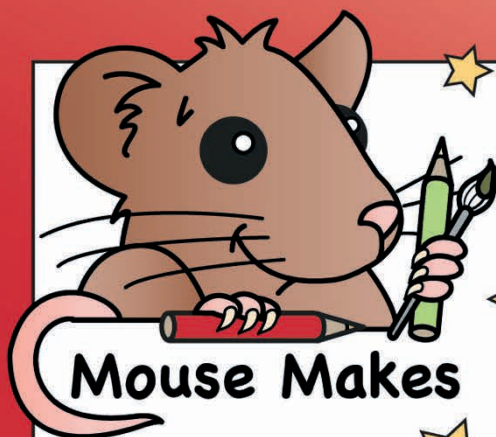
Scouts kicked off the season looking at some of the issues that affect the local community, they looked at the data and consultation results for the proposed Roseburn tram corridor. Visited the location, looked at and discussed the local environmental impact of the proposed changes against the need for mass transit systems as an alternative to the ever increasing vehicles in the city.

They have been out at Cammo working towards their orienteering badge and had a specialist along to talk to them and demonstrate cycling techniques and maintenance.,

This was followed up with a Saturday trip out through Dalmeny to South Queensferry.

The scouts also made a trip up to Dalguise with raft building, team problem solving, 3G swing and high ropes all conquered.





Mouse Makes

"Jesus said,
I am the ____ Y
and the ____ U ____
and the ____ I ____.
No one comes to the Father
except through me."
John 14:6

"The child to be born
will be called
H ____ , the
____ of ____"
Luke 1:35

"For unto you is born
this day a
S ____
who is
____ R ____
the ____ R ____"
Luke 2:11

THE GREATEST GIFT

"She will bear a son,
and shall call his name

for he will save his
people from their sins."
Matthew 1:21

"Jesus said,
I am the

and the life."
John 11:25

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

O H O L Y O R C R T U
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N L S H E P H E R D U
O Y A E P E R G I F T G
C H R I S T M A S T H S
R E S U R R E C T I O N

JESUS
—
THE
GREATEST
GIFT
OF ALL!

P R O P H E T I
R E D E E M E R
I E M I L I G
E M E S S I A H
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T E A C H E R E

E V E R L A S T I N G
K I N G O F K I N G S
I N K I G W F D O U
S E S O N O F G O D D
S E W O C O U W O R D
C O U N S E L L O R U

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SON OF MAN • EVERLASTING • SHEPHERD • PRIEST • PROPHET • TEACHER
LIGHT • BREAD • VINE • DOOR • LAMB • COUNSELLOR • CHRISTMAS • GIFT

Find the words from the Bible verses too!

Dec24 © deborah noble @ parishpump.co.uk

Girlguiding **Blackhall Guiding**

202 and 202B Brownies have been thinking of others this term. They did good turns at home from washing dishes, washing the car, hoovering, gardening and much more to raise money for Cash for Kids Mission Christmas. They had a visit from someone who works for the charity who told them about all the help they are giving makes a difference. They then all took a trip to B&M working in small groups to pick gifts for different age groups. They learned about budgeting, money and helping others less fortunate than them. They then went and dropped all their gifts off at Mission Christmas HQ. The girls were all very enthusiastic throughout and have all gained their Charity badge. **Nicole Harland– 202&202B Brownie Leader**



Nicole Harland 202 and 202B Brownie Leader was honoured to be nominated by our local MSP Alex Cole-Hamilton as the local hero for Edinburgh Western for all she does for the youth in Blackhall. She attended The Scottish Parliaments 25th anniversary celebrations.

Rangers reminisced about being Rainbows, learnt to crochet, enjoyed a visit from The Animal Man and went ice skating. **Claire Slaine - Ranger Leader**

202 Guides (& Rangers) camped in the fog for a weekend at Bonaly, sent shoeboxes of gifts to children in eastern Europe & sang for residents at Murrayfield House carehome. They also enjoyed starring in and watching the gang show and going ice skating. **Matilda Lomas - 202 Guide Leader**

2 157th Rainbows took part in the District sleepover in October. We visited Drumbrae library in November and were excited to have a visit from The Animal Man. Leader **Claire Slaine- 157**

202 Rainbows - many girls enjoyed the Space Themed district sleepover & we have lost a group of older Rainbows as they move up to Brownies but we were delighted that many got their Gold Awards. **Nicola McDermid – 202 Rainbow Leader**



The Brownies became fashion designers and turned old trash into outfits as part of their Take Action theme award.

202c brownies have had a very busy term with the explore theme. We have learnt about space, local history and mindfulness. They also enjoyed watching our girls at the Gangshow. **Helen Abbott – 202C Brownie Leader**

202A Rainbows have been working on the express myself theme. Some of the girls attended the rainbow sleepover and the girls are looking forward to ending the term with a boogie beats party. **Barbara Bon – 202A Rainbow**

Volunteer with Girlguiding Edinburgh?

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

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

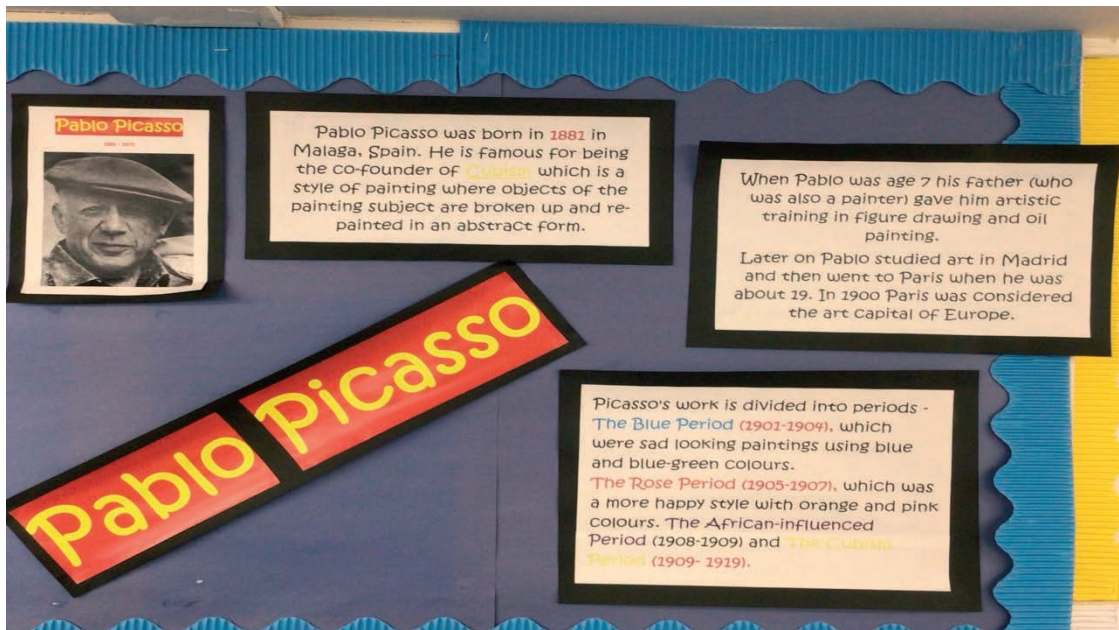
Full training and support provided. See our website or register online for more information:

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

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BLACKHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

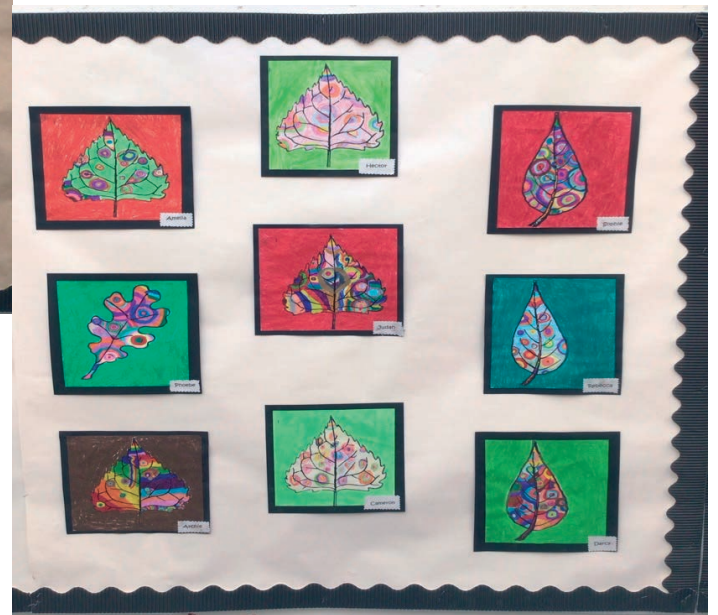
Primary 4 have been learning about some famous artists and have also created some artwork in their style.





Wassily Kandinsky

Russian Artist inspired these paintings of autumn leaves in his style





BLACKHALL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY



We are now well into autumn with the clocks having gone back and our gardens closed down for a few months. You may have tidied up the borders, swept up the leaves and planted out your bulbs. Now is the ideal time to come to our monthly meetings. The 24/25 season started off with a fascinating talk and demonstration of gardening techniques by Caroline Mathias. Caroline has worked in a number of gardens, including on the Balmoral Estate.

The October talk on Low Maintenance Gardening included a lively discussion led by Chantal Fenton, a landscape gardener. Members and visitors were asked about which gardening tasks were the most difficult and time consuming and there were many suggestions! The programme continues as shown below:

9 th December	- Social Event
13 th January	- Introduction to Permaculture
10 th February	- Cacti & Succulents
10 th March	- Rhododendrons
14 th April	- Dahlias
13 th May	- AGM and Seed to Vase



The group meets at 7.45pm 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 Tesco's and Sainsburys and on the church notice boards. You can also check out our facebook page which can be found at www.facebook.com/groups/211472892232483.

Talks are open members and non members, we look forward to seeing you at one of our meetings.

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



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PUZZLE PAGE

Two suduko puzzles this month. The one on the left is easier than the one on the right.

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

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		1		7				3
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1				4			3	
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	9				4			
4				8		7		

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

Wordsearch for Christmas 2024

Father Christmas is based on St Nicholas, who was born in the 3rd century in the Greek village of Patara, on what is today the southern coast of Turkey. His family were both devout and wealthy, and when his parents died in an epidemic, Nicholas decided to help people. He gave to the needy, the sick, the suffering, and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. As a bishop, he suffered in prison with other bishops under the emperor Diocletian's persecution of Christians.

One story of his generosity explains why we hang Christmas stockings over our mantelpieces today. There was a poor family with three daughters who needed dowries if they were to marry, and not be sold into slavery. Nicholas heard of their plight, and tossed three bags of gold into their home through an open window – thus saving the girls from a life of misery. The bags of gold landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. Hence the custom of children hanging out stockings – in the hope of attracting presents of their own from St Nicholas - on Christmas Eve. That is why three gold balls, sometimes represented as oranges, are one of the symbols of St Nicholas.



BORN
CENTURY
CHRISTMAS
DAUGHTERS
DEVOUT
EMPEROR
FAMILY
FATHER
GREEK
NEEDY
NICHOLAS

POOR
PRISON
SICK
STOCKINGS
SUFFERING
THIRD
THREE
VILLAGE

can you find all the words?



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

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

Session Clerk
Eddie Thorn
Telephone 332 5702

Church Secretary
Church Office
Tues-Thurs 9-12 noon
Tel: 332 4431 or email
secretary@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

DEADLINES

Kirk News (February edition) **Friday 17th January**

Please send all items to the Editor;
Judith Mair, c/o Church Office
or by e-mail to: judith.mair@hotmail.com

Blackhall Bulletin (March edition) - **Sunday 26th January**

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

Written by Eve Nairn-Magnante
Illustrated by Nicholas Child

Santa STEALS CHRISTMAS!

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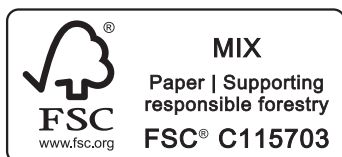
Proud to be supporting the following charities:

25 of Santa Steals Christmas! (Paperback edition) will be donated to Dyslexia Scotland via Work for Good

25 of Santa Steals Christmas! (Paperback edition) will be donated to Scottish Autism via Work for Good

25 of Santa Steals Christmas! (BSL Video format) will be donated to Deaf Action via Work for Good

25 of Santa Steals Christmas! (Audiobook edition) will be donated to Seescape via Work for Good



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READING THE BULLETIN FOR THE FIRST TIME?

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

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