



Drumoak & Durris NEWSLETTER

Published Independently.
Distributed by Drumoak-Durris Church of
Scotland

Issue 91

December 2017

Welcome to the Christmas edition of the Drumoak and Durris Newsletter.

[Park Shop Update](#)

As many residents will know, we lost the utility of a small shop at Park at the beginning of 2017. Despite an appeal in the Deeside Piper for a new tenant there was little interest. Having been a resident of Drumoak for over 25 years, I was disappointed to see another local business close, following the Irvine Arms in 2015, so I decided to do something about it. A close friend in the retail trade offered to help me turn Park Shop into something special and we are now in the process of completely refitting the premises into an outlet which we hope will become a destination for locals and visitors alike.

There's no escaping the fact that the shop had seen better days. The proximity to big-name stores in Banchory and Peterculter makes it difficult to sell similar products in low volumes and remain a sustainable business. The continuing demise of printed newspapers in favour of online media means the outlook for traditional paper-shops is not favourable. However, we believe there is still a market for niche products, quality brands, and local produce, which cannot generally be found in the supermarkets.

So what's the plan? The first thing to point out is that we're not investing in this shop to make loads of money. We'd obviously like to recover the refurbishment costs over the course of the lease but we have no illusions that it will be wonderfully profitable. Thankfully that's not the driver for us. If we can build something that's viable, perhaps providing some employment locally, and have some fun doing it, that will be reward enough. It's not a big shop but we hope to provide a pleasurable experience for customers who will choose to visit us for the essentials (such as good local eggs) as well as more distinctive produce. When the refit is complete, you might even see the inclusion of a barista-grade coffee machine for those who appreciate craft brew.

When is it opening? Projects inevitably shift to the right and this one is no exception. The original plan was to be ready by October but that was before we discovered the rotten window frames needed to be replaced, and the sunken concrete floor had to be raised. These are now being attended to.

We hope to be welcoming customers (old and new) with a fresh perspective in early 2018. More to follow... Charles Clark

Drumoak-Durriss Church of Scotland



Services are held every Sunday morning at 10-00am in Durriss Church on the first and third Sunday of each month, and in Drumoak Church Hall on the second, fourth and fifth Sunday. Everyone is welcome to join the Minister and congregation at any of the services, and to stay afterwards for tea, coffee and biscuits. There is always a crèche facility for younger children, and the opportunity for older primary school children to join in with some activities during school term times. Both Drumoak and Durriss Churches have a wheelchair available for use on arrival at any of the services.

You don't have to be a member of the Church to come along to any of our services, everyone is welcome to join us



Christmas worship at Drumoak-Durriss Church O Come let us Adore Him



Sunday, 10th December 10-00am in Drumoak Church Hall
2nd Sunday in Advent

Sunday, 17th December 10-00am in Durriss Church
3rd Sunday in Advent

Sunday 24th December 10-00am in Drumoak Church Hall
4th Sunday in Advent

Sunday, 24th December 6-00pm in Drumoak Church Hall
Traditional Nativity Service with refreshments served afterwards

Sunday, 24th December 11-15pm in Durriss Church
Candlelit Watchnight Service

Monday, 25th December 10-00am in Durriss Church
Christmas Day Service

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DRUMOAK-DURRIS FRIENDSHIP CLUB



On 5th June, 53 members of the group met at Inchmarlo Driving Range and enjoyed each other's company over lunch and a chat. After the summer recession we met again on 2nd October to celebrate our 21st Birthday. We had a great turn out and were entertained by Couthy Company. Our cake was cut by Isobel Alexander and Helen Davidson. We also recalled memories of other speakers, entertainment, etc. from over the years; also how it all began with Rev. Jim Scott getting a few folk together for ideas. We look forward to our Carol

Service led by Rev. Jean Boyd on Monday, 4th December, when the Primary 7 pupils from Drumoak School will be joining us.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the committee members for all their support throughout the year. Also to those who give lifts, help with the washing up and tidy the hall. We are always happy to welcome new members. If you wish to get in touch, please telephone Amy Wilson on 01224 732575





Greetings from the Manse

From Jean Boyd
Minister Drumoak-Durris Church

Isaiah 9:6

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Seasons change and so the season of Advent is upon us and we are getting ready to celebrate Christmas. It seems strange this year to be celebrating Advent and Christmas in the Church Hall in Drumoak and in the Church building at Durris, instead of the church buildings at Drumoak and Durris as usual. (Check out the dates and times of the services over this month in this newsletter). We are in the Hall for some of the services instead of the Church building because change is afoot in the Drumoak Church building. This building is undergoing a much more extensive refurbishment project than we had initially planned for at this point and you can read more about this exciting project overleaf. It is a great opportunity, but also a big change for many of us.

I wonder how many changes you have experienced this year. Some of these are significant changes; the loss of a partner, an illness, a change of house or perhaps family members leaving home. Some changes have other significance; a new pet, the end of a friendship, a new hobby or a change of car. Change seems all around us and yet we are told that God is unchanging. The verse above tells us that we were promised that God's own Son would come to earth as a baby and that he would be a 'wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.' In a time when so much changes, God does not and so whether you change or a building changes, God is constant and ever waiting for you with open arms.

So whether you are regularly in Church for services or other activities, or rarely in Church, we welcome you and God awaits you. You are never too far from God to come by and be part of it, in whatever capacity and that never changes.

Eternal God, when all around changes
Help me to know you are reliable.
Help me to trust in you because you are faithful
To take that little step, to know you more.
Courage for today. Hope for tomorrow
Amen.

Merry Christmas and a very happy and prosperous 2018 to you all.
God bless, Jean - Minister of Drumoak-Durris Church



S.P.L.A.T. is an informal group, supported by the local church. We meet every Wednesday during term time for a noisy time of musical fun between 2-00 and 3-15pm. We sing, play instruments, dance and march together. We explore music and begin to recognise contrasts in music, such as fast/slow and high/low. Some of the songs stay the same every week, and others frequently change. We aim to be a friendly group, who can get to know one another through chatting during coffee time. At 2-45pm we serve the children juice and snacks, then they have a craft activity, and we put out toys for them, while the adults have a welcome cuppa. Come along on a Wednesday afternoon, and join in the fun after the school summer holidays!!

For more information, ring Mary 01330 811593, or Fiona 01330 811900

So, just what was Messy Church Christingle?



Just like *Messy Church* the answer is in the question!

It is just like *Messy Church* but different. It was on the first Friday of this month,

1st December 2017, and it was a very special time for children, parents, carers and volunteers to encounter the love of Jesus. It was a special *Messy Church* to enjoy together. We used our time to make our Christingle lights

and some Christmas decorations. We enjoyed some songs and learnt a little more of the place of Jesus in our lives and world. Then into the darkness we brought the light of God's love into our own little part of the world as a procession of children moved slowly around the Church Hall. Afterwards we enjoyed supper together. What a lovely *Messy*

Church Christingle!!!

*And now we have the Christmas Eve Family Nativity
Service to look forward to!!*

On Sunday evening, 24th December at 6-00pm - just a short while before Santa comes - there is going to be a very special family service in the Church Hall at Drumoak. It is going to be a traditional Nativity Service with all the familiar Christmas songs and stories, BUT with some unusual, unexpected and interesting twists and surprises FOR EVERYONE! Then enjoy a special time together afterwards. Absolutely everyone is welcome to come along and see just what those surprises and twists might be. After the Nativity mince pies, tea, coffee and soft drinks will be served.



Aims:

- to provide an opportunity for people of all ages to worship together
- to help people of all ages to feel they belong in church and to each other
- to have fun and be creative together

- to introduce Jesus through hospitality, friendship, stories and worship

*Love God and love your
neighbour as yourself*

Calendar for 2018 - Messy Church will meet in Drumoak at 5-00pm on Fridays 2nd February; 2nd March; 4th May and 1st June. Messy Church will meet in Darris at 2-00pm on Sundays 4th March @ 6th May. There will be no Messy Church in January @ April as we shall all be on our school holidays!

A Burns Supper and Entertainment

Come and share an evening of entertainment, fellowship and a two course supper

Thursday, 25th JANUARY 2018

7-00 for 7-30pm

Mains of Drum Garden Centre

Tickets are available from Norma Menzies - telephone 01330 844542
£20-00 including a donation to the Drumoak Church Refurbishment Fund

Gardening & Odd Jobs



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Gordon**

07951 992701

01339 882429

gordonmcwilliam@outlook.com



What's happening at Drumoak Church?

Following the move to the Church Hall in early August, the essential preparatory work for the refurbishment programme of Drumoak Church was started. A small team was formed and the pews removed. All the pews have been sold, and have generated a modest income. Our thanks go to everyone who bought one of the pews. We hope you are enjoying them!

Work then began to remove the pulpit, the organ and the raised Chancel area. Unfortunately, this revealed the wall plates, which support the floor joists and in turn the floor, were generally in a poor state of repair due to the lack of any damp proof material. In addition it was found some of the joist ends were also affected; as was the base of some of the dado panelling. Much of this had been hidden by the raised floor of the Chancel, and the organ. As a result of these findings, it was agreed the best option was to replace the entire ground floor with an insulated concrete floor incorporating underfloor heating. In addition a damp proof membrane will be carried up the external walls to a height of 400mm.

This decision raised the issue of the next stage of the works in that the foundations for the upper floor would need to be incorporated within this ground level concrete floor. In addition, the supporting structure for the upper level would need to be constructed, and this necessitated the removal of the balcony. Similarly the final layout for the ground floor needed to be agreed because the position of the lift shaft and lift pit needed to be finalised. Previously the plan had been to provide temporary kitchen and toilet facilities. However following consultation with the architect and builder, and due to the amount of preparatory work now required within the building, it was decided these should become the permanent facilities on the ground floor level. This decision was made taking into account the potential savings in costs of initially providing temporary facilities, which would later be replaced during the subsequent stages of the refurbishment programme. At this time, it was agreed the upper level floor/lower level ceiling should be built across the whole of the building.

As this preparatory work progressed, areas of the internal plasterboard were removed, and further evidence of dampness was discovered. Many of the original wooden fittings, which held the plasterboard to the outer walls were found to be completely rotten. This in turn led to the stripping out of all the internal walls, and the discovery of problems with the original fitting for the windows of the Church building. Each of these windows had been fitted directly into the stonework of the external walls, and are unframed. Currently advice is being sought as to how the windows can be more suitably and securely fitted, and ensuring adequate insulation is incorporated.

As a result of this drastic change to the original plans for this stage of the refurbishment programme, some additional 'dirty' works have been undertaken in further preparation for the next stage. The internal doorway between the vestibule and the main building has been widened, and access through the wall alongside made in preparation for the planned extension to the southern aspect of the Church. This work necessitated not only the removal of the staircase and upper landing in the vestibule area, but also revealed further evidence of water ingress. Inspection of the roof of the Church building has ascertained only minor work is required to remedy this problem. A similar opening will be made on the northern wall of the Church (beneath the stained glass window) in readiness for the extension planned there. All of the openings, which relate to future stages of the project, will be temporarily covered by internal plasterboard and insulation until the access is required at a later stage.

The implications of all this are of course obvious. The work is going to take longer than we first thought, and just as importantly there will be an inevitable impact on the costings for the work. However it also has to be recognised that, although much of what has been discovered has been unsettling for the plans we have, it has given us the opportunity to ensure the work we are now undertaking will sustain this Church building in Drumoak well into the next two hundred years – and that was always the goal we had in mind when we proposed and started this refurbishment programme.

Although much of what has happened over these past few weeks has been distressing to those of us closely involved, there have been moments of sheer amazement at the craftsmanship and ingenuity of those men who first built the Church. Just this week, the staircase was being removed and it was discovered each one of the stairs, which wound up the three walls of the entrance vestibule, had been carved from solid blocks of granite, which had been built into and supported by the outer walls of the Church itself. As the balcony was removed, it was found to have been supported by two massive wooden supports – each of which were also built into the walls of the Church. All the metal fixings and nails had been individually handmade. Just imagine all of that work without the benefit of electric light and our modern machinery.

Marion McNeil, Session Clerk

Garden Advice for Winter from The Mains of Drum

Plant Expert Dr Jane Bingham



Christmas Trees galore and more

Our beautiful Nordmann Fir and Fraser Fir Christmas trees

have been grown in Scotland on The Black Isle and in Tayside.

Nordmann Fir have soft, glossy, dark green needles that are very slow to drop, making them an ideal choice of Christmas tree. They have a symmetrical shape and strong, evenly-spaced branches.

Fraser Fir foliage is dense and soft with a delicious fragrance of oranges, making them a delight for the whole family to decorate. They are more characterful than the Nordmann Fir with a slight kink to their branch tips.

Our trees are displayed individually on stands under the shelter of our festive Plant Area canopy to make it easy for you to choose your perfect tree. We can trim it if you wish, and net it ready for you to take home, help you to your car, or if your tree is too large, we can deliver it to your door.



We also have plenty of other colourful seasonal plants to choose from, many of them in attractive containers, which make great gifts. Christmas tree stands, kindling and logs, sledges, snow shovels, salt and sand are also available under the Plant Area canopy.

Reminders for your winter garden

During mild spells:

- Continue with the weeding.
- Dig over the veggie plot.
- Move and plant non-evergreen shrubs and trees.
- Prune non-evergreen shrubs and trees.
- Lift and divide herbaceous perennials.
- Check tree stakes, windbreaks, cloches and fleece coverings, making sure they are secure.

When the temperature plummets:

- Avoid walking on the lawn when it is frosty or covered with snow as this can easily damage the turf
 - Brush snow off conifers, box topiary and hedging
 - Cover spring bedding displays with fleece during very cold weather
 - Insulate outdoor taps and store drained hoses and watering attachments in a shed or garage if possible.

Happy Christmas from The Mains of Drum Plant Team!

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The Sun Always Shines On The Glebe!

Deeside Thistle Cycling Club Youths Fun Day and BBQ – 16th September 2017

It was just about the wettest possible run up to the inaugural DTCC Youths BBQ which we decided to hold in the Glebe, Drumoak – because the sun always shines on the Glebe! Whilst manpower on the day largely came from the club, the Drumoak Community were fantastic offering help, generators, tables, gazebos and hands to get everything set up. The location was perfect for our bbq and we were able to offer so much more with bike racing, stand up paddle boards, coffee, ice cream, bike jumble and a duck race to keep everyone busy. Local bike shops and friends of the club such as Bert McIntosh (Knockburn) were generous in donating some fantastic raffle prizes and the bouncy castle from Banchory Fire Brigade was a massive hit.



The highlight of the day for me was seeing the Glebe set up with a cycle circuit that the children and adults had endless amounts of fun on thanks to club member, coach, Dad of youths and cyclocross

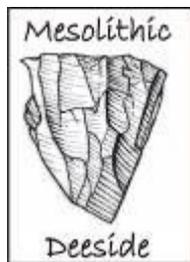
guru Gordon Watt. It was the perfect spot for our bike lovers to race around and they even managed a Devil (Elimination) race to round it all off.



Despite the terrible weather in the run up ... the sun did shine! There was the odd shower but that just added to the day as a fabulous rainbow framed the tidy up. A massive thank you to everyone who helped on the day and to all of you for allowing us to use the wonderful Glebe for our Fun Day – we're so lucky to have such a great space in the area.

Fiona Thomson

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Stories, Stones and Bones: Ancient Deeside: investigating the early communities along the river Dee 10,000 years ago celebrates £10,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant as part of the Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology 2017

Mesolithic Deeside has received a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Stories, Stones and Bones grant, it was announced today. This exciting project, Ancient Deeside has been given £10,000 to enable the group to extend fieldwalking along land bordering the River Dee, to analyse the flints collected and cascade information from the finds to local people. This project is part of Scotland's Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology.

This pilot project, Ancient Deeside, part of the wider Mesolithic Deeside group, focuses on the Mesolithic period, 8000-4000BC, immediately after the last Ice Age. The inhabitants of Scotland at the time comprised mobile groups of hunter-fishers who left little trace of their passing so that the archaeological evidence is formed mainly of stone tools of flaked flint.



The River Dee, in Aberdeenshire, runs from the mountains and glens of the Cairngorms to the coast at Aberdeen. Ancient stone tools found along its length attest to 10,000 years of human settlement from the earliest hunter-fishers of Scotland onwards. Archaeological work has involved academic research as well as community-led fieldwalking, but there has been no systematic study to combine information into an overview of the early activity along the river.

The Ancient Deeside Project aims to combine the study of known Mesolithic material with new material obtained from fieldwalking, thereby adding to our understanding of the period. The project will involve volunteers including local people, students and schoolchildren. The aim is to train participants in fieldwalking, finds analysis, recording, photography, archaeological cataloguing, the Mesolithic period and archaeology in general. We are hoping to involve local primary and secondary schools and will host open events to pass on our findings to the wider community.



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Bowling club news

Our 25th Anniversary Year has almost come and gone. How time has flown. Our outdoor season from April to September was a very successful one for the club. We had several new members this year and a number of events to

encourage even more. Our winter Deeside Indoor League season has got off to a very good start with one loss and three victories at the time of writing.

A 'ladies only' evening was held in October in order to encourage new membership and more of this type of event will take place in the new year. Male members outnumber our ladies by a large margin at the moment and we need to address this imbalance. So come on you ladies out there YOUR BOWLING CLUB NEEDS YOU, with apologies to Lord Kitchener.

The Club Concert was a highlight of the year with good attendance from the community, much appreciated by the club and we thank Dr Don Carney for providing us with great entertainment that evening. He is worth looking up on Google as he has a wealth of information on the life and times of yesteryear in the north-east of Scotland.

At the time of writing we are preparing for our Open Pairs Competition at the end of November, when we hope to have a large number of teams taking part. We are also looking forward to our Christmas Party Night on Friday 22nd December when the usual festivities will ensue.

The club will be pleased to welcome any new members at our bowling evenings at 6pm and 8pm on Tuesdays, 7pm on Fridays and also at 2pm on Wednesdays and Saturdays. So come along.... we will provide the bowls, just bring along a pair of flat soft shoes or trainers.

Our Club Pavilion is also available for hire. Please contact our Club Secretary Lena Sim. Telephone 01330 811374 for details.

On behalf of our Club, may I wish you all A Very Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year.

Dave Stuart



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DURRIS KIRKTON HALL

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

AT THE KIRKTON HALL, DURRIS

WEDNESDAY 13TH DECEMBER 2017 AT 7PM

IN THE UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM

REFRESHMENTS SERVED

ALL WELCOME

The Committee needs new members with fresh ideas and an interest in looking after a great hall for the community. If you are interested in joining the Hall Committee, please come along or contact any member of the hall committee. Meetings are held once a month and are generally quite short.

For further information contact – Melissa Coutts - email megaroc@aol.com

DURRIS SWI

In our May meeting we had our AGM and voted in the new committee. The members and visitors were treated to a taste and try evening with a wide selection of main courses and desserts.

The committee this year are

President – Liz Hirst, Secretary – Carol Melvin, Treasurer – Sarah Holtom, Minutes - Linda Robb
Press secretary – Maggie Simpson, Raffles and prizes- Sandra Blackhall, Ordinary members–
Doreen McIntosh, Tricia Law

Meetings are held at 7.30 in the Kirkton Hall, Durris unless otherwise arranged. Anyone interest in joining or require any information please contact Maggie on 07753806366.

In September we had an enjoyable well attended evening visit to Castleton Fruit Farm and farm shop near Fourdon. Murray Mitchell, one of the business partners gave us an informative guided tour of the fruit farm. He detailed how it had grown over the years and the expansion into Blueberries and more recently into Cherries. Many members enjoyed a delicious tea of sandwiches, cream scones with their own homemade strawberry jam and home bakes. Liz Hirst gave the vote of thanks and closed the meeting before the members browsed the farm shop.

October saw the members treated to an Indian Theme with Linda Robb and Sarah Holtom presenting detailed talks and photos on Goa and India. Sarah had an interesting selection of Saris and jewellery from her time in India. A delicious selection of Indian foods and drinks rounded off the night. Carol Melvin gave the Vote of thanks and closed the meeting.

The prize winners were: 1st Sandra Blackhall, 2nd

M Simpson, 3rd Aileen Melvin for the single home grown bloom. A Jar of Chutney 1st Winnie Reid, 2nd Tricia Law, 3rd Anne Calder.

The Federation Quiz night in Catterline resulted in a well deserved second place for our team of Carol Melvin, Liz Hirst, Sarah Holtom and Doreen McIntosh.

Our own fundraising Quiz night held in Kirton Hall was well attended with 7 clubs and 17 teams attending. Excellent night with teas and home bakes supplied by our own Institute.

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The next Kirkton Hall meeting in November had a delightful floral demonstration and covered an interesting range of button holes and corsages. The seventeen members were keen to demonstrate their skills with expert guidance and resulted in a beautiful display. Maggie Simpson gave the vote of thanks and closed the meeting.

The competitions were floral display in a shoe: 1st Winnie Reid, 2nd Kym Muir. A single home grown bloom: 1st Sandra Blackhall, 2nd M Simpson, 3rd Winnie Reid.

Eight members are attending the Federation taster skills demonstration day in Stonehaven in November.

The next meeting is our birthday meal out at Christmas time which is being held in Scott Skinners in Banchory in December which will round up 2018 meetings.

We look forward to meeting any interested new members in the New Year with our first meeting being held in Kirton Hall with our Burns Supper on 8th January 2018. Please contact any members or Maggie Simpson (07753806366) for information.

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[Thoughts from Councillor Sandy Wallace](#)

During the election campaign earlier this year, more than one party was involved in campaigns to keep local bank branches open. I was not: it felt hypocritical, as my own actions in banking online have contributed to the demise of these bank branches. At this time, I also discovered that our local Kirk costs around £250 a week more to run than it typically raises from its members. I do not attend and do not contribute to my local Church. And yet, as with the local bank, there will be a time when I hope it is there. A funeral for a friend, one day maybe my own; a wedding, maybe one day my own daughter. If when I most want the Kirk or a bank branch, it has long since closed its doors, I can have no complaints. Accordingly, even though I do not expect to attend the Kirk any more often, I have to consider contributing and having considered it, I have to follow through on it. Maybe others will feel similarly!

THE FARMHOUSE THEN & NOW

After composing the Durris Then & Now article in the June edition of the Newsletter, I felt it was a duty to mention the farmhouse, farmer's wives and the domestic side to a farm in the forties. The farmhouse had the basics, a fireplace with a swey to boil the big 2 gallon black kettle, a sink with a cold water and in several cases a pump from a well at the back door, a milk house and a wash house which also had a large square sink, no bathroom simply an outside toilet. Some of the farmer's wives had a maid or a servant girl as they were called at that time.

A huge amount of work happened every day; the fire had to be lit at 6am, to boil the kettle for the brose or porridge at 6.30am. The cows had to be hand milked by the farmer's wives or the servants, at a dairy farm many of the cattlemen and horsemen's wives were engaged with a contract to hand milk at least 10 cows, I remember Mrs. Kate Gordon with big hands could milk twelve cows in an hour. Mrs. Helen Leslie at Wester Durris often said that when she got married as she had no farm background the neighbours said she will never manage to milk a cow! Mrs. Leslie said her determination made her do it and after a year she could keep up perfectly.

The bothies had to be swept and cleaned every day, and the men's beds made. The thick blankets often in many cases were only washed once a year, usually before the Term on the 28th May.

The hens were a big part of the household duties, the hens had to be fed, watered and the eggs collected, the paraffin lanterns in the byres and stables had to be filled twice weekly and the glasses cleaned as required. Every glass had a ladies iron kerbie grip hanging at the top which absorbed the head and prevented the glass from cracking. A strict routine was the order of the week, Monday washing day, Tuesday baking oatcakes, scones and pancakes. As the milk was put through a separator the cream had to be made into butter usually three times a week, depending on the temperature. The eggs had to be cleaned and packed into cases for the egg van collection on the Friday.

As there were at least twenty grain, feed and agricultural companies at that period there representatives and travelers all received tea, coffee and often lunch, with the lorry drivers receiving the same hospitality. The days of the threshing mill there were sixteen extra men who all to get lunch, tea and scones morning and afternoon. The midday meal was taken very very fast, often just twenty minutes to half an hour, the men who owned the threshing mill were always desperate to get started, and I do remember a student who's name was Robert Forscinal, who's father was a Member of Parliament in France was shocked at the short lunch break, and said that such a meal in France would at take at least two hours. There were extra men during harvest all to be fed; likewise the schoolchildren at the tattie picking in October had great appetites. What an enormous amount of work farmers wives had to do. Many were WRI and Guild members and they often competed at the summer shows with their baking, eggs, butter, knitting etc. Mrs. Milne at Darnford, Durris had tremendous success in the butter classes at every show. One of her secrets was to put the cows into the corn yard three days before the show, the natural grass made the butter rich bright and yellow. There was cheese making, gardening and often helping in the hay and harvest fields. Springtime

often lambs at the fireside, and I know of a true case where an orphan foal was at the kitchen fire for four weeks. I mentioned the threshing mill which was earlier known as the steam mill being pulled by the steam engine part of the contract was the farmer had to supply half a ton of coal per day, and if the mill was stranded due to the weather often 2-3 tons were required, although the stoker had a black shiny face they were hardy happy fellows, they got their meals in the farmhouse and often a bed. Seasonal work like the plucking and trussing of the Christmas poultry, jam making were extra chores which had to be fitted into an already busy life. Giving farmer's wives and their maids or servants a very busy hard working life full of activities of many kinds.

THE FARMHOUSE NOW

It does not need someone like myself to mention the changes, the kitchen with superb units, cookers, microwaves, dishwashers, washing machines, tumble driers computers and many more gadgets. In many instances farmers wives now have part time or full time occupations, nurses, secretaries, teachers etc. also a big change with the numbers of women farmers increasing yearly. Many girls now happily working among cattle and sheep and doing tractor work, they manage quite well and can handle calving and lambing perfectly. So tremendous changes mostly all for the better, although girls working among ponies still have a fair bit of the barrow and graip. The days when women had to pull turnips and dress and plant tatties have ended. I leave it there, as there are so many changes that plenty folk will have memories of the farmhouse past and present.

William Blackhall

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Can you spare about an hour 3 or 4 times a year?

We require a few more volunteers to deliver the Newsletter either on a regular basis or as a reserve when helpers are on holiday.

We are grateful to those members of the community who have already kindly offered their help.

If you are able to support the Newsletter in this way or wish to know what is involved please contact:

Nancy Jackson 01330 811264 or nancy@deevview.myzen.co.uk

Tales from the Riverbank

The River Dee 2017 fishing season closed mid-October. Total salmon/grilse caught 4294 and 1344 sea trout, not to bad but we really hope for numbers to increase, in saying that there were many more salmon in the river this spring. At times difficult to catch because of low water levels and unfortunately a shortage of anglers in the spring for many beats, understandable considering resent years of low catches, especially 2014/15 but without doubt improving again 2016/17, at least for some?

The largest salmon recorded on the river was a 28lbs fish from the Lower Blackhall and Kinneskie beat in February, a really good springer and a 10lbs seatrout from Ballogie, a great seatrout for the Dee as average weight is around 2lbs. Well done.

2017 has once again shown a drop in griles catches, not only on the Dee but for many other rivers also.

Fisheries Management Scotland has been alerted to a much-reduced grilse run again in 2017. This appears to be following a pattern observed in recent years.

Whilst it is difficult to attribute the current reduction in grilse numbers to any one factor, one theory which may explain the changes we are seeing is related to large scale changes in the marine environment. In recent decades, there has been an increase in surface temperatures in the NE Atlantic and there have been widespread changes in the abundance and distribution of other marine species consistent with this. There is some evidence to suggest that warmer conditions in the subarctic may mean more salmon than grilse. If they have to migrate further to feed they may not obtain sufficient resources to mature in their first year. They may therefore delay maturation for a further year and return as salmon having reached productive feeding grounds, or they may simply die.

Pacific, Pink salmon, best known for being a favourite prey of North American grizzly bears, made their presence known in the River Dee this summer. Pink/Humpback salmon were deliberately introduced to Russian rivers 50 years ago and slowly spread westwards to colonise northern Norwegian rivers. This year they have made a real appearance in many other countries rivers, including UK Rivers and the Dee.

These fish are not native to the UK and are likely to have 'strayed' from some of the rivers in northern Norway or Russia. These fish spawn at a

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different time from Atlantic salmon, have a 2-year lifecycle and generally spawn in summer, mostly in the lower reaches of a river.

Pacific pink salmon, when fresh from the sea, are steel blue to blue-green on their backs, silver on the flanks and white on their bellies. There are large black spots on the backs, upper flanks, adipose fins and tail – some of the spots on the tail can be as large as the fish's eyes. They are very uniform in size, reaching only 40 to 60cms in length.



Breeding males are immediately identifiable because of their humps, their black tongues and heavily spotted tails are also very obvious. Females will show heavily spotted tails and be pinkish-brown on the flanks.

**Robert Harper
Ghillie.**

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Deadline for articles for next newsletter will be Friday 9th March 2018. Please email to editorddnews@btinternet.com.



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Nuclear Fallout Monitoring Bunker in Drumoak

I wonder how many people in Drumoak are aware of the fact that from 1960 to 1968 there was a nuclear fallout monitoring bunker in Drumoak. This bunker would have been staffed 24 hours a day by at least three members of the Royal Observer Corps. Originally the Royal Observer Corps (ROC) had been a civil defense organization intended for the visual detection, identification, tracking and reporting of aircraft and operated between 1925 and 1995; however that role subsequently changed to nuclear fallout monitoring from the late 1950's.

Whilst there is now no remaining trace of the Drumoak bunker, it is just possible that readers of the Newsletter may know of someone who manned this post. Between 1958 and 1968 a countrywide building programme resulted in a network of 1563 underground monitoring bunkers, approximately eight miles apart, distributed throughout the country, at an estimated cost of almost £5,000 each (£106,900 in today's money). Other bunkers in this area with which Drumoak is likely to have been linked were located at Echt, Kintore, Bridge of Don, Cove and Portlethen

To enable staff to operate in a nuclear environment, it was necessary to provide protection against blast effects and radiation from nuclear bursts. The picture below gives some idea of what the site would have looked like to the outside observer. The bunkers were excavated to a depth of twenty five feet, a reinforced concrete building was cast and bitumen waterproofed, before the whole structure was covered by a compacted soil mound. Entry was by a steel ladder in a vertical shaft leading to a single room, providing accommodation for three observers to live and work and there would be a separate toilet compartment with chemical closet. Air was circulated from gridded ventilators at both ends of the post and electricity was provided by a crated 12 volt lead-acid battery. Conditions in these posts were cramped, cold, and in some cases damp. Following a nuclear explosion it was essential for bunkers to be occupied for a period of between seven and twenty-one days.



The posts were equipped with a wide range of instruments which could: (a) detect nuclear explosions and estimate the size of blast in megatons; (b) register the pressure wave from a nuclear explosion passing over a measuring instrument; (c) give an indication of the character of the fireball of a nuclear explosion; and (d) measure the level of ionizing radiation. Individual observers in the bunkers were equipped with dosimeter pocket meters which could measure personal levels of radiation absorption.

If you want to get a better idea of the structure and content of a bunker, you should go to the following website: <http://www.ringbell.co.uk/ukwmo/Page221.htm>

One of the few bunkers still remaining intact and which was very recently 'reopened' is located at Braemar and that reopening is featured on the following YouTube site:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fw1R8oLgqlw>

If anyone in the Drumoak district happens to know someone who served in the Royal Observer Corps and in this bunker, I'm sure that readers of the Newsletter would be most interested to hear.

Robin Jackson

From the editor As you can see this is a very full edition of the newsletter and I would like to thank everyone who contributed articles for it. I apologize if your article did not make it but it will be held over to the next edition that will be out in March 2018. I would like to thank the newsletter team for their work over the past few weeks in making this edition happen, and not forgetting the delivery team without whom you would not be reading this now. A great community team effort!

Just remains to wish you all a Happy Christmas and a Best Wishes for the New Year from the Newsletter team. **Kevin McPhee-Smith email editorddnews@btinternet.com**

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[Aberdeen Saints Croquet Club \(ASCC\)](#)

The Club was established in 2017 by 5 players who had played informally in 2016. The Objective was to provide CROQUET for residents of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. We expect to start the 2018 season with 17 players, and to build membership year on year. Croquet has been played in the North East of Scotland for many years with Clubs, formal or informal, in places like Maud, where there is still a Club, Monquhitter (Cuminstown), and Udney (The Udney Farmers). Crathes Castle Lawn has been and still is a popular venue. Charles Henderson, founder Captain of this Club, has been a regular player at Crathes for over 30 years.

The SAINTS play at Crathes, courtesy of National Trust for Scotland, and at Old Torry Outdoor Sports Centre, courtesy of Sport Aberdeen. Our playing times (afternoon and evening) are:

Old Torry: Tuesday; Thursday: Sunday. **Crathes:** Monday: Wednesday: Saturday

There is an open invitation to guests and visitors to join us for a game.

We welcome players who want to play competitively or those who just want to play socially. Coaching is provided for players of varying levels. We have a Coaching Programme and we also have "guest coaches" on a regular basis. There is great enthusiasm amongst our players. We have members, such as our Secretary, Pam Rotheroe-Hay who are experienced in organising events and are happy to arrange Croquet Sessions for business organisations, social clubs and others. Croquet can be an excellent mechanism for team building and is also an ideal, different, and value for money way of spending time with colleagues and friends.



WHAT IS CROQUET?

It is a ball game of skill and strategy where male and female players can compete on equal terms. There are several variations of the game. Association of Scottish Croquet Clubs focuses primarily on Association Croquet which is the full version of the sport, and we also play golf croquet. A handicap system allows inexperienced players to play experienced players, even experts, on equal terms.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Aberdeen Saints welcomes new members, whether experienced or beginners just wanting to try to see whether they might like to take up Croquet. Please contact:

Charles Henderson, Captain, at Charles@hendersonfinancial.co.uk 01224 318448 07721 834098
or

Pam Rotheroe-Hay, Secretary, Pam.rotheroe-hay@hotmail.co.uk 01339885502 07777 672059

Drumoak School news from Paul Wilson

Term 2 is always a busy term for the school with lots of activities and events. The school roll is currently standing at 110 pupils and 26 in our nursery. We are well rooted in our wonderful building but are always looking at ways to improve our school.

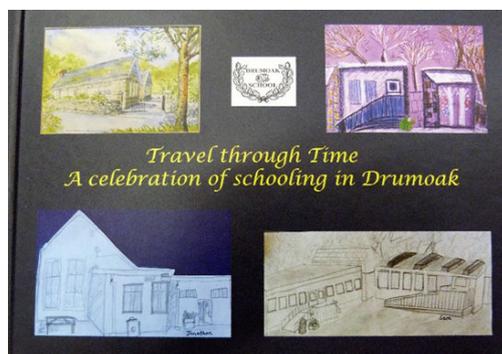
Last term the school community supported over sponsored read and this raised over £2000 to purchase non-fiction books for our classes and library. Our stock for our library has built up over the last eighteen months and I believe we have a very good range of books for all ages.

The main focus of the term will lead to our production of a Nativity and Pantomime in the School Hall. A first for the school. We watched our annual visiting pantomime group last week and this has stimulated lots of interest for our own one. We have a Kodaly (music) specialist with us this term and this will assist with our singing.

Our production will be shown on the evening of Wednesday 13th December (for parents only) and the morning of 14th December (community and parents). Tickets will be £2.50 and will be soon available from the School Office. Our nursery will also present a Nativity on Friday 15th December in the School Hall.

Our School Hall is a fantastic facility. We have held many events so far and on Friday 17th November we held our first "Film Night" for families, Boss Baby. It was a great success. The next major event in our hall will be an indoor curling tournament on December 6th. We have purchased three indoor curling sets, which were fundraised by the school community supporting our School Council chairperson completing the Illuminator Run. A House tournament will be organised including all ages from Primary 1 to 7. The school has four houses Dalmaik, Dee, Drum and Park. Each child is a member of a house and they earn points each week which is added to a grand total for the year. Our Drumoak School book will be on sale over the Christmas period – we have a limited stock left. The book was published in March and the feedback has been positive.

It is called "Travel through Time – A celebration of schooling in Drumoak"



The book has 140 colourful pages of text and images detailing the history of Drumoak School. It will make a wonderful Christmas present for ex pupils and families of the area. It is on sale for £25 at the School Office. Any profits go to the School Fund, which supports our pupils' activities.

Have a happy festive period from all at Drumoak School.

DRUMOAK & DURRIS NEWSLETTER

This Newsletter has been published quarterly for over 20 years as a community service by Drumoak-Durris Church of Scotland. It is produced and delivered FREE by volunteers to all households in Drumoak and Durris.

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