

Braemar Buzzard



www.braemarbuzzard.org.uk



**Merry
Christmas
and a Happy
New Year!**



The chances of a white Christmas are 1 in 10 for England and Wales, 1 in 6 for Scotland, and for Braemar...?!



In 1999 residents of Maine, USA, built the world's biggest ever snowman. He stood 34 m tall.

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For Christmas to be officially classified as 'white' a single snow flake needs to be observed falling in the 24 hours of the 25 December on the roof top of the Met Office HQ in London



Thank you - to the Castleton Dancers, for sponsoring the colour pages in this issue - to Dale Johnson for provision of Christmas photos.

Editorial

Braemar News Group

www.braemarbuzzard.org.uk

Chair: Pete Mulvey **Treasurer:** Dorothy Ramsay
Secretary: Margaret Palmer ☎013397 41590
Buzzard Editor: Liz Robertson ☎013397 41030

Please send any news/letters/articles to

By email: info@braemarbuzzard.org.uk

By post: Coldrach Lodge, Chapel Brae AB35 5YT

By phone: 013397 41030

For advertising: contact Maggie MacKay
 ☎013397 41245. Adverts cost £20 per eighth of a page.

Past and current editions of the Buzzard together with the 'live' events calendar (updated between issues) can be viewed online (in FULL colour!) on our website: www.braemarbuzzard.org.uk Copies are delivered free of charge within the locality of Braemar. Extra copies can be obtained from the garage, the art gallery, the 'Speciality Shop' and the newsagent/pharmacy. The Buzzard is funded by advertising and donations - donation tins are at all these outlets for any very welcome contribution towards costs. (And thank you to the 'Cappuchino ladies' for their recent donation. Ed.)

New Year - changes ahead!

The forthcoming year may see a flurry of possible changes in Braemar - the opening of the refurbished Fife Arms Hotel, a pub replacing the old 'Strachans', a new Highland Heritage Centre in the Games Park. Then we have the Castle harling project, the ongoing restoration of St Margaret's, the possible revival of the tennis courts, the long anticipated new nature trail.... and so the list goes on.... There are issues to deal with - parking congestion in the village, how to push forward with an upgrade of the village hall, advancing the care initiative through the myriad of red tape, the planned closure of the Tourist Information Centre... Do we really want to be 'cruise ready'? (see article page 4). I'm sure that I am not alone in feeling nervous about many of these developments but change is afoot and we need to embrace it whilst managing it as sympathetically as possible... hopefully retaining Braemar's tranquil status in the process. 2018 is going to be an interesting year - good luck everyone!

Meantime my thanks to the brilliant Buzzard team for all their hard work. Ed.

Community Update:

The South Marr Community safety group

is seeking a volunteer member from Braemar. For information on what the group does visit www.aberdeenshirecommunity.safety.org.uk and to register interest contact Norma Makin email: normamakin@btinternet.com ☎01330 822827

Crathie Opportunity Holidays has had another successful season in terms of visitor numbers. A recent fund raiser, the Golf Day at Balmoral (October), had entries from 19 teams. There is a forthcoming lunch and auction on **Sunday December 3rd** at the Piper's Hall, Balmoral ☎Maggie 42100 for details.

Braemar Shielling - Girlguiding Kincardine & Deeside report that it is now 60 years since the Shielling in Broombank terrace opened. Plans are being made to replace the existing structure with an extended modern building with a dedicated sleeping area and enlarged kitchen. The development Group for the Shielling will be consulting with all users and the local community in due course. Get in touch via braemarshieling@gmail.com if you require more information.

St Andrew's Xmas Sale (Nov 5) raised £500 - thank you all who supported this event.

100th Birthday of the SWI was celebrated across Deeside with a handcraft exhibition at



Balmoral, a party at Braemar Castle and an afternoon tea with the Queen at Balmoral. Two Braemar ladies attended a civic reception in Aberdeen Town House.

Fife Arms Update - Federica Bertoloni

Work at the Fife Arms has been continuing apace. The new buildings at the rear of the hotel are flying up and the garden is starting to take shape. The first recruitment day in October went well, the next recruitment open days will be on 24th Jan and 21st Feb - you can also visit the office in the Mews at any time if you wish to express interest in becoming part of the team. In September Antoine Melon joined Highlands Hospitality as Chief Operating Officer - Antoine has a long and varied career in both hotels and restaurants. Please join us for a festive drink, mince pies and an update on the project between 6 and 8 pm in the office at The Mews on **Wednesday 13th December**.

And Issues Arising from the last Buzzard.....**Parking Update from the Community Council**

The Community Council wants to involve the Community in its decisions on all topics, so many thanks to the 50 plus of you who came to share your views on the Parking issues in the Village. Thank you also to those of you who have contacted us since. The parking situation has been exacerbated this summer by the various construction works and an attractive exchange rate! The construction work is scheduled to finish within a year and hopefully our visitors will keep coming. Poor parking has frustrated locals and visitors alike and highlighted some safety risks.



Summary feedback has resulted in several ideas being debated and most were rejected by an overwhelming majority. The predominant view in the Village that we have heard so far is that:

- There is a lot of un-used car parking space e.g. Invercauld Arms car park, Duck Pond car park, Games Park (although this is currently out of use)
- It will get better when the construction works have been completed. This is not a universally held view as the Fife Hotel and Restaurant will likely bring car-owning customers and staff who have their own cars.

The Options rejected: Any significant permanent yellow lines (too ugly, won't work, may not be needed); placing new 'No Parking' signs on Marr Road; a new Coach Drop off point at the Mews; any new car parks at the edge of the village: a dedicated Motorhome car-park.

The Options supported: Additional signage at the Invercauld Arms car park: temporary targeted double yellow lines (e.g. for up to 18 months) at up to 3 safety hazard junctions; '20's Plenty' speed limit on Invercauld and Marr Road: a review of the Coach Parking- post Fife completion.

**The next steps:**

1. Having heard the feedback, the Community Council feel that we should suspend most decisions until Strachan's 'Pub', the Fife Hotel, the Highland Heritage Centre and the Fife Staff accommodation are all complete.
2. We will progress discussions with Aberdeenshire Council to understand how and where we can trial Yellow or Red lines at 'potential accident' junctions. This would be a temporary measure. We will also progress how these could be enforced if at all. Any implementation of this would be subject to the majority support of local residents and businesses.
3. The Community Council will continue to consider where coaches drop-off passengers and park efficiently, but it is thought that the construction work in the Games Park and at the Fife will defer the best long term solution.
4. The consultation reinforced the Council's previous resolution to progress 20's plenty in the Village.

Braemar Village Hall Survey 2017

At the request of the Village Hall Committee, a survey was conducted to establish a way ahead in the development of the hall. An online and paper survey was circulated throughout the village from 9th September to 12th October 2017. A total of 14 paper and 56 electronic responses were returned.

There were many constructive suggestions; the most urgent in long term ambitions being upgrading the Kitchen & Toilets. Bar facilities and small meeting rooms were next followed by increased storage space. The Hall committee met and discussed the results of the Survey and will establish a development plan in the New Year to raise funds to finance the improvements so highlighted. Thank you to all those who took the time to complete the survey - we will ensure that your input was not wasted.

Hall Hire Prices: As from January 2018 a new pricing system will be trialled - full details available on request but in summary:

- Local, non business groups, will receive preferential rates
- The main hall for local weekly groups will be charged at £7/hour plus heating (£12/hour non-local)
- The small meeting hall for local groups will be £5/hour **inclusive** of heating

The hall is available for weekend hire (set up Friday all day Saturday); daily hire; or by the hour. Also available to hire at small additional costs are trestle tables, chairs, card tables, projector and screen. Cleaning can also be arranged at a cost.



Councillor's Corner

Geva Blackett

☎(mobile) 0787 647 5269

Email:

cllr.g.blackett@aberdeenshire.gov.uk



Every year Aberdeenshire Council celebrates the work done in our communities by volunteers. Each councillor can nominate two people they feel deserve special recognition and the choice is really difficult because so many people give up their time to do such amazing things in our communities. This year Braemar is in the spotlight, not once but *twice* over!

First, the Braemar Panto this year celebrates its 25th production – and that's all thanks to one man! John Macpherson gained his production skills working for the BBC's Beechgrove Garden. 24 years ago he was persuaded to produce and direct Cinderella the pantomime in the village Hall. The cast included the village bobby, the school teacher and more.... Since then there's been Aladdin, Puss in Boots, Sleeping Beauty, the Wizard of Oz, Snow White and many others.

What John has achieved is amazing – for all these years he has not only put on a show that sells out night after night but also brought all different ages of the community together from Primary school children right through to local estate factors. His dedication is phenomenal – to the extent that he forgets to eat properly and probably sleeps in the village hall to make sure the scenery gets painted. On the first night the mess miraculously disappears and the show DOES go on! In this, the 25th year, John Macpherson deserves a huge **Thank You** for all he has done.

The second award goes to Marilyn Baker, who is far too modest to accept this award on her own – she insists the whole Braemar Creative Arts team deserves it which to a degree is true, but Marilyn started it and it's Marilyn's enthusiasm that focuses everyone. What started as a small three day festival with 15 classes in 2012, has completed its 6th year. The Festival has grown to a 5 day event with in excess of 30 classes, a programme of evening entertainment, a market, affectionately known as the Braemarket, and a wonderful Fringe of fabulous knitting and other daytime events.

In this village of 400 residents, over 50 miles from the nearest cities with no theatre, cinema, museum, or library on our doorstep we are so lucky to have people like Marilyn who have a vision and the determination to bring that vision to reality and a community of talented people eager to broaden their horizons in a variety of creative pursuits.

After winning the Inspiring Aberdeenshire Best of

Marr Award 2015, the 2016 BCAF, the sixth annual festival continued to grow and this Oct. was bigger than ever (see report page 10).

This village is full of people like John and Marilyn who go the extra mile because we all just love living here – no wonder our community spirit is envied up and down the valley... and thank you to EVERYONE who volunteers in whatever capacity because without that energy and commitment we would not have half the village we do have!

Merry Christmas everyone – and you know where I am if you need me!

Is Braemar 'Cruise-Ready'?

Alasdair Colquhoun (Chair BCC)

As the new harbour in Aberdeen is developed and the number of cruise ships rises from 25 this year to seven or eight times that in 2020... we may need to be prepared!



Some cruisers will stay on board, some will head to the new Dolphin-watch centre and some to Trump's golf course or stray off the NE250 to Dunottar. Others will come out to Royal Deeside and beyond Balmoral.

These potential customers are in a hurry (their ship *will* sail) so businesses need to be well-prepared and able to cater for some extra visitors who are interested in our heritage, countryside and food and drink. All in a tight turnaround.

Some locals will welcome a few extra coaches of visitors coming out to play golf, see the Castle and/or Highland Games Heritage Centre, visit Glenshee, or catch a lunch time performance at St Margaret's, then have lunch at one of our eateries. Others will worry that we will be over-run, destined to be like a landlocked Kirkwall!

The Community Council has heard that Scottish Enterprise are running consultations to help advise local businesses and groups get 'Cruise Ready'. They have offered to support Braemar *as an entity* - if that is what we want – but individual help is also available. The Community Council and Tourism Group will work with them and Visit Aberdeenshire to build some options and hopefully manage any downsides. **Please let the Tourism Group (Julian Fennema or Sarah Hubbard) or the Community Council (Joanne Morris or Alasdair Colquhoun) know if you want to be included in these conversations.** Look out for more on this in the New Year!



Brig o Dee or Old Invercauld Bridge - the bridge that kept us open to the east after Storm Frank!

Brig o Dee

Katy Fennema and Alison Grant

Driving back to Braemar from the east, the Brig o Dee marks the point where it feels truly like home. The journey is so straightforward today, but in the past things were rather different, prompting the building of a 100 mile stretch of military road linking Blairgowrie to Fort George through Braemar. In this article we take a look at the history of the bridge, and the building of the road that was to change the fortunes of the area.

This military road is generally known as **General Wade's Road**, but in fact General Wade died the

year before it was begun. The road was actually the design of William Caulfield, Wade's successor. His name is less well known, but he was responsible for far greater swathes of road building in Scotland. But it is Wade everyone remembers, and he was even the hero of a verse of the national anthem "*Lord, grant that Marshal Wade, May by thy mighty aid, Victory bring. May he sedition hush, and like a torrent rush, Rebellious Scots to crush, God save the King.*" This verse isn't sung these days – or certainly not in Scotland. The original plan was to build a road from Ruthven to Braemar through Glen Feshie, which was a dauntingly difficult project. The plan changed in 1746 when the garrison at Fort George was blown up, which prompted the building of a bigger and better garrison in its place. Suddenly a route through Fort George made more sense, and in 1748 Caulfield began to survey a route from there to Blairgowrie. Work began on the southern section to Braemar in 1749, and after a brief pause to recover from building a road at the Devil's Elbow, work recommenced in the spring of 1753 to complete the remainder. By 1754 the road was finished, the last significant military road to be built in Scotland.

The government may have noticed that military roads seemed to help the Jacobites more than the occupying forces, but the main reason to stop road-building was the prohibitive cost of building and maintaining roads in such remote locations. The section of the road between Crathie and Braemar almost exactly follows the line of a much older road. The six-arched, hump-backed **Brig o Dee** or **Old Invercauld Bridge**, taking the road across the River Dee, was built in 1752. Caulfield had to do significant blasting of the rock around it to enable its construction. Its arches are all of different sizes, with the final two intended as flood arches and normally on dry land. The bridge was not aligned to the military road, but to the road travelling westwards through the Ballochbuie Forest - this was because bridges built at the time would generally cross rivers at their narrowest point. As you travel east, you can see the old road re-joining the military road after crossing the Dee. In 1859, Prince Albert commissioned a new bridge to be built across the Dee. To protect their privacy, he wanted to close the road through Ballochbuie to Balmoral. The 1855 Act stated that '*this road was closed against Use for any Purpose whatsoever*' and for over 60 years a sign there confirmed that the '*road is closed and declared a private road*'. The north Deeside road was continued to the Balmoral Bridge, built between 1856 and 1858 by Brunel. He described it as a bridge of 'functional elegance'. Queen Victoria hated it because she felt it was too plain. The new stretch of North Deeside Road left an interesting problem for the lodge on the eastern banks of the Dee. Originally a lodge for the entrance to Invercauld House, it was now marooned, so when Queen Victoria bought the ground surrounding it, she also bought the house as a lodge for the private entrance to Balmoral. The house was known locally as **Threepenny-Bit Cottage** – the same shape as the pre-decimal threepenny bit. It has been reconstructed since Queen Victoria owned it, but there is still a boundary stone marked 'B' to declare the start of Balmoral ground. The intention of Caulfield's road was to ensure that there could never be another Jacobite Rising. For more than 80 years after it was built, a garrison remained at Braemar Castle to ensure our ancestors didn't get up to seditious activities like wearing tartan and playing bagpipes. But long after the occupying force departed, we have a road and bridges which are still central to our communications today.

New Highland Games Centre

David Geddes



For some time now the Highland Society have had an ambition to build a Highland Games Visitor Centre in Braemar which would tell the story of the history of the society, the gathering, its royal connections, the clans and their tartans. The £2.2 million development is being funded by the Braemar Royal Highland Society and private donations - £700,000 having been committed by one lead donor. A fundraising campaign is ongoing to help meet the final target. The anticipated completion date for the Centre is August 2018.

Whilst building works continue, visitor parking within the Park is temporarily unavailable.

Sixth Creative Arts Festival Marilyn Baker

Congratulations to the committee for delivering another very successful five days of classes and workshops amounting to a total of 680 man hours spent in creative arts pursuits in 31 different classes. Thanks are due to our wonderful tutors who come from afar to share their expertise with us.

Popular this year was the expanded cookery section with something every day from tapas to Scottish, bread making to sweets. Now residents are asking for regular classes in cooking techniques from the 'experts'.....watch this space.

We introduced a few new classes this year, Belleplates (warmly adopted by Kindrochit Court), Tablet Weaving, Scrapbooking, Song writing, Understanding Written Music and Salsa Dancing. The participants all spoke highly of these new classes and are hoping for more of the same in the near future. The classes which attracted the highest numbers were the Ukulele Sessions (see photo right) with numbers as high as 20.

And a huge thank you to the residents of Braemar who signed up for classes or attended an evening event, or took part in the Braemarket. Your continued support is needed for the Festival to be



successful. If you have any suggestions for a class or workshop that you'd like to see at the Festival please tell any member of the Festival team or email braemarartsfestival@gmail.com with your ideas. We want to deliver an innovative and exciting festival in 2018, so please let us know what you'd like to see included. We would like to think that nothing is impossible!

Marilyn has been given an 'Aberdeenshire Community Volunteer Award' for her work with the Braemar Creative Arts Festival - see page 4. Many of us also had an early celebration with Marilyn for her 70th birthday, in the village hall on November 11th. A good time was had by all! Ed.

Braemar Church Steeple gets a 'Make-Over'

The roof repairs are progressing well and by the time you read this the scaffolding should have gone. The aim was to make the building wind and water tight i.e. stop the roof leaking! Some of the roof has been stripped and replaced and some repaired. It has been impressive watching the steeple jacks up the spire working on the repointing. The next challenge is to raise money to redecorate the inside of the church.

In other church news - around 30 people of all ages enjoyed Messy Big Harvest Challenge with lots of games and activities and homemade soup and bread to finish.

Simon Blackett

There was a great village turn out for the Remembrance Day Service (Sunday Nov 12th). The uniformed organisations paraded into church with their flags (preceded by the playing



of pipes) and the service itself included singing from the Braemar Primary school singers, a trumpet call from Ruari Wilson and a postlude from Ellie McClaren on fiddle. Following the service was a short wreath laying ceremony at the war memorial, attended by a substantial proportion of the village, a ceremony that finished with the 'last post' sounded on the trumpet. There was also the usual Remembrance day weather! - a bitterly cold breeze with light snow lying on the ground.

Pictured to the right is one of the two panels of knitted poppies, made by the Deeside Knitwits, which have been on display on the railings behind the war memorial. These panels are to form part of a larger installation in 2018 to mark 100 years since the end of WW1.

The back room in the church is still available to hire for meetings - contact Simon Blackett

simon.blackett@btinternet.com or Pat Thomson

patdalmaik@btinternet.com for more details.



3rd Age Lunch Club hosted a musical afternoon tea at the Invercauld Hotel in October for members of the Ballater lunch & OAP clubs. Musical entertainment was provided by G7 ukulele group, Doug Anderson (harmonica) and Brian Casey (keyboard). Thank you to the Deeside Knitwits & Braemar Charitable Trust for assistance with funding.

The Braemar lunch club meets every second Wednesday at the Invercauld Hotel at

12.30pm. New members very welcome - come and enjoy a sherry, a nice lunch, a blether and sometimes a speaker, for more information contact Margaret ☎41413, Kathleen ☎41309 or Carole ☎07708 01798.

Cocktails and Mocktails - especially for the festive season

Christmas Cosmopolitan

- 500 ml vodka
- 500 ml Ginger wine
- 1 litre cranberry juice
- Juice of 5 limes (keep zest for garnish)
- Sliced stem ginger

Mix the vodka and ginger wine in a jug. Stir in the cranberry juice, lime juice and some sliced stem ginger. Garnish with lime zest.



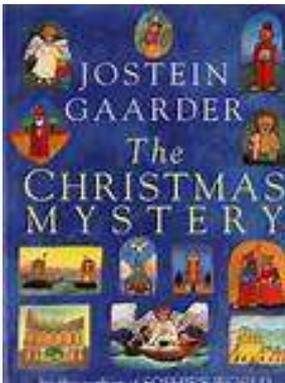
Orange and cranberry spritz Mocktail

- 500 ml smooth orange juice
- 500 ml smooth cranberry juice
- 400 ml sparkling elderflower drink

Mix the orange juice and cranberry juice in a large jug. Slowly pour in the sparkling elderflower drink as it will fizz up. Mix together and serve in tall glasses with ice.

And did you know..... scientists have now invented the 'Vocktail' or virtual cocktail glass, LEDs first change the colour of the liquid, which affects the perception of how it will taste. Electrodes on the rim then stimulate the tongue so that the drink tastes sweet, salty or sour. Next a tube inside the glass releases odours to confirm the perceived flavour. The Vocktail glass is controlled using a smartphone app - create faux sugary drinks without the calories and without the need to add fresh lime or other ingredients.... you could just serve water!! The glass is still in development (it looks very 'clunky' at the moment) but who knows, it could be launched in bars and restaurants soon....

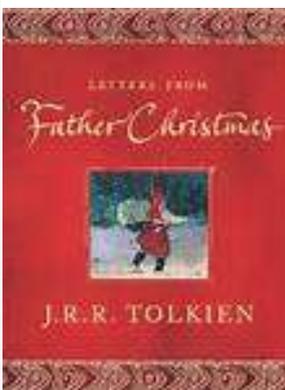
Recommended Christmas Reads Erin MacAlpine



The Christmas Mystery written by Norwegian author Jostein Gaarder, tells the story of a young boy who comes across an old advent calendar and is instantly intrigued by it. Each chapter represents each day of advent and the young boy Joachim finds a small piece of paper within the doors of the calendar that tells the story of Elisabet Hansen, who chases a toy lamb that has come to life from an Oslo department store. The story within the calendar follows Elisabet as she meets a host of characters, including the angel Ephiriel and the three Wise Men, as she travels across Europe whilst simultaneously travelling back in time heading towards Bethlehem to witness the birth of Jesus Christ.



Each day Joachim opens the doors on the calendar he and his family become more determined to find out about the maker of the advent calendar, and about Elisabet Hansen, a young Norwegian girl who disappeared many years earlier. Could the two Elisabet's be the same?



Letters From Father Christmas

In 1920, J.R.R. Tolkien's children began receiving beautifully illustrated letters from Father Christmas, and continued on until 1943 when Tolkien's youngest child reached the end of her 'stocking days'. **Tolkien's Letters From Father Christmas** is filled with tales from the North Pole that Father Christmas affectionately writes about in his responses to the children's letters - most tales include a rather mischievous North Polar Bear who accidentally sets off an entire storeroom of sparklers, unintentionally soaks the Christmas presents, and even snaps the North Pole in half! A lovely and oftentimes humorous read to get people in the Christmas Spirit.

Are you aware that you can borrow, order & return Aberdeenshire Library Books at the Braemar Tourist Information Centre in the Mews? Open daily - this is in effect like having our own personal branch library. Please do use this facility - we don't know what will happen when the TIC closes so WE DO want to demonstrate usage and hopefully the facility will be retained in some form.

Braemar Castle

Snow on the hills and activity in the Castle with draining the water for the winter. We welcomed our last visitors for a Halloween extra on our final day, with stalwarts Andy and Sheila Anderson, and re-turning Braemar Castle devotee Hanane (ex-student) all dressed up and duly scaring them off! In fact we continued to find our numbers up by around 20% right through the normally quieter months of September and October, so altogether a very successful year for the Castle and thanks to all the volunteers who make it possible.



Historic Scotland declared 6th October to be Scotland's first Heritage Awareness Day. We invited the primary school to get involved and it was great to see all the children from P1-P7, 33 in total, marching up the hill to visit us. They were welcomed by our resident Jacobites and given a tour of the Castle, with Magali demonstrating how a wee Jacobite warrior might look, followed by a quiz to test their Castle knowledge.

Happily we were successful with our Crowdfunding Appeal! (photo below). With every single donation helping us along, we met and exceeded our target – the final amount, with gift aid donations, reaching £22,294.50. It is a fantastic achievement and we are so grateful to everyone who helped us get there. The Castle has now been able to start preparing test patches of harling on the curtain wall, to see how they perform through the Braemar winter.



Matt Halliday, the Castle's fund-raiser, will now be pressing on with a ten year Masterplan, with the aspiration that the Castle eventually becomes a 4/5 star Visitor Attraction. The plan will cover the major external repairs work including re-harling, internal conservation measures, as well as a vision for a visitor centre at the gate and several developments within the grounds. This amounts to a £2million project which it's planned will be achieved across three stages. Matt is crunching his way through all this and funding applications will be made to Architectural Heritage Fund and Heritage Lottery Fund. Depending on grants being awarded, the soonest the re-harling could get started would be

June 2020. During the construction period, with major scaffolding and windows boarded up it is likely the Castle would be closed to the public. However, we will still welcome visitors with enhanced grounds and a staffed Visitor Centre explaining the project and showcasing developments as we move towards a much-enriched visitor experience.

Georgina Errington & Doreen Wood

Braemar Community Hydro has been in operation for 18 months. The Society held its second AGM in September and all 197 shareholders were invited. As part of the business on the AGM the members approved the transfer of £7000 to the Community Fund. This is the first such transfer, coming after the initial year of operation. A process for applications and awards is being designed and this will be widely advertised in the new year for distribution in 2018.

Despite lower than average rainfall in the 2017 summer months generation has been satisfactory, tracking rainfall quite closely. As many readers will recall, our Feed in Tariff is guaranteed for 20 years from start up so it is important that we keep generating as efficiently as possible. To that end a rota of eight volunteer monitors is now in place. Each volunteer takes one week every two months, checks the daily performance on line, and does a weekly visual inspection of the site. With this support we aim to spot any issues quickly so that we can minimise unplanned downtime and maximize generation. You can follow us on Facebook or at www.braemarhydro.org.uk



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Evening Classes in Braemar

These classes have been arranged by Carole Paterson - you can contact her for more details or if you have any suggestions for courses that you would like to see happening in the village:

☎07708001798 patersoncarole@yahoo.co.uk

Introductory Italian Classes

Six week block. Starting 30th November 6 pm - 7 pm in the guide sheilling bothy. Refreshments provided.

Federica Bertolini will host conversational Italian classes on 30th Nov, 7th, 15th and 21st December. Two classes will follow after Christmas holidays.

Courses in the pipeline.... Italian cooking; bread - making ; IT skills

Scout Group News



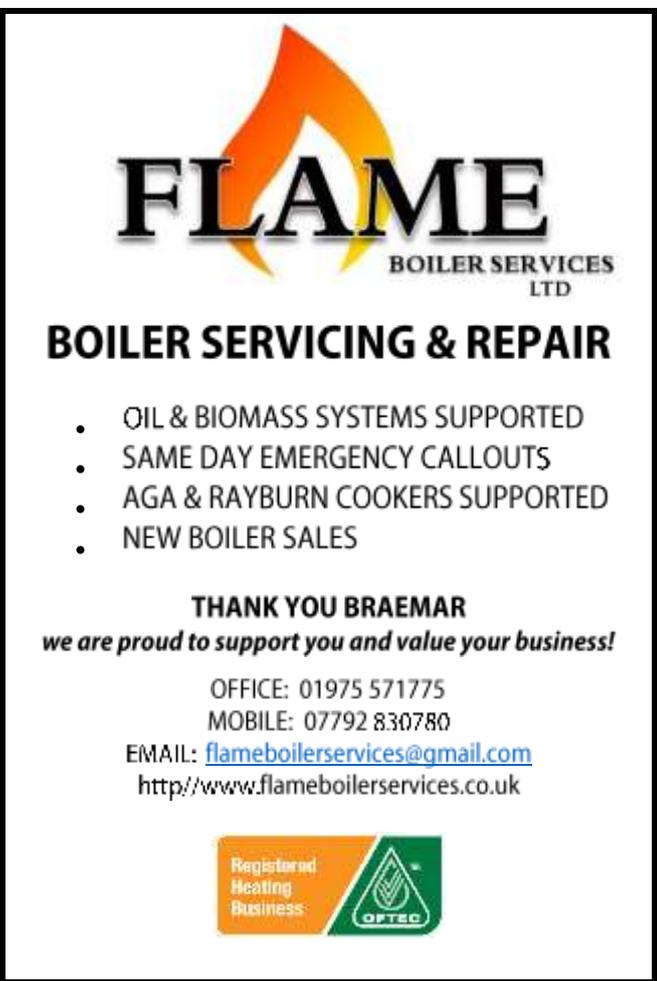
Three sections of Scouts are currently active in Braemar – Cubs, Scouts and Explorer Scouts. All sections meet on a Thursday evening. Unfortunately the Beaver section (youngest section, 6-8 year olds) is not running at the moment due to lack of leaders – it would be great to get this section running again, any adults who feel that they would be prepared to help, please contact Dave Torrance ☎41549. In fact all sections are in need of more adult volunteers to ensure that the programmes continue. **If you can help, please don't wait to get asked, but get in touch with Dave Torrance or with one of the section leaders.**

Within the Scout section, activities over the past year have been many and varied – from looking at knife & axe handling skills, building survival shelters, archery, wide games, to canoeing and film nights. The summer camp started with a walk through the Larig Ghru and was followed with water sports on Loch Morlich, mountain biking and walking with reindeer! (so you can see - a very active programme!)

The Explorer scout unit took part in a number of overnight bike and bothy nights in the last year and enjoyed a week of water sports at Lochgoilhead during July as part of their annual camp. 2017 also saw the first ever District Explorer Camp which was held at Braemar in September. The camp saw nearly 40 Explorer Scouts from Torphins, Braemar, Aboyne and Banchory. The activities over the weekend included backwoods cooking, woggle making, biscuit making and Chariot racing! - and in the evening, an Orienteering activity on Creag Choinnich followed by a campfire.



Thank you to Aboyne Academy for submitting a number of articles with reference to pupils from Braemar. Many readers will like this photograph of Fraser Wood, taken when Charles & Camilla visited Aboyne Academy for the Harvest festival in October.



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Invercauld Estate News

Angus McNicol

As the first snow of winter falls on Morrone and the Millstone Cairn, work continues apace at Invercauld Estate in and around Braemar. The Estate has recently embarked on a new phase of investment in the village and its surroundings, continuing its vision that helped create Castleton many years ago. This summer, we opened six new 'fog pods' at the Caravan Park providing an insulated and heated glamping opportunity on the outskirts of the village. The inspiration for the pods was the 'fog house', the small heather thatched type of summer house seen for example at Braemar Castle and Creag Leek. We were very keen to create something that was unique to Braemar and reflected the area and the design included two large pillars at the entrance to each pod which are made from larch grown and milled here on the Estate. We look forward to welcoming many people over the winter to this new and unique accommodation.

We have also recently commenced work at what used to be Strachans' shop and Rowan Cottage, renewing the windows and roof on the main elevations. Further works are planned for 2018 when we are hoping the enlarged building will be open for business as a public house.

Slightly further out from the village, in January we are planning to start harvesting a Scots Pine plantation at Creag Leek. Originally planted in the 1880's, these trees have been very slow to grow due to the high elevation and relatively poor soils typical of the area. Whilst this means it takes a very long time for a crop to be ready for felling, it also means that the close-grained timber that results can be of a very high quality. Come the late winter we shall also be beating up (in other words replacing dead and damaged trees) in the new plantations at Creag Clunie, Morrone and Meall Gorm. These plantations, all created within the last 5 years, will in years to come form new woodlands for the environs of Braemar.

After another excellent shooting season in 2017, the gamekeepers will be working hard on the hills over the forthcoming months to fulfil the hind cull and protect and enhance the habitat for red grouse. One of the important bi-products of their work is the success of other ground-nesting bird species. One of these, the ring ouzel (which looks a bit like a blackbird with a white bib although is a member of the thrush family) is a particularly important species in Glen Clunie to the south of Braemar. We are also seeing increasing numbers of black grouse which particularly like the habitats provided where woodland and the heather moor meet.

A slightly more unusual activity we are undertaking is further peatland restoration work in the River Gairn catchment, with funding assistance from SNH. The idea is to restore heather and sphagnum habitat over areas of bare peat to hold back its erosion which is thought to be a material contributor to greenhouse gases. We are also planning to employ a firm of specialist engineers to undertake a major Natural Flood Management study. This will assess what light and natural engineering could potentially be undertaken in the River Clunie catchment to reduce the chances of flooding such as that which caused so much damage in Deeside at the end of 2015. So far from being a period of hibernation, winter is as busy as ever at Invercauld as we look forward to more new projects, and the continuation of many old ones, in 2018.



The new fog pods at Braemar Caravan Park



Ring Ouzel



Junior buzzard

The children of Braemar School spent a wonderful afternoon harvesting vegetables in the Community Garden - which they turned into soup, carrot cake and carrot juice for the Christmas Fair on Sat 25 November.

St Margaret's Project Jane Smith

Following the buzz of our experimental "Jazz café " for the Fat Suit Concert on 10th November, the challenge now begins for us to start planning our 2018 programme and follow what has been a very busy, varied and successful year.

2017 saw us welcome back some familiar and popular faces including Fiona Kennedy, Paul Anderson and Paul Mealor as well as introduce some new world class musicians to the St.Margaret's stage including Mary Gauthier, Noam Greenberg and Adrian Brendel. Other renowned musicians came as part of the very first One Fine Day music festival curated by Graham Fitkin and Ruth Wall. Simon Haram played his saxophone out on the roof to an audience armed with brollies and a determined spirit not to let the weather spoil such a good experience. Ruth Palmer and The Marian Consort completed the line-up and secured the festival a 5 star review from the music critic of The Herald. Other highlights included an experiment with theatre and The Three Inch Fools high octane musical take on Romeo and Juliet making full use of our balcony for that famous scene. We also held lunch time recitals with soup and cake served before the performance.

There was dancing in the aisles with the Ricciotti Youth Orchestra from Holland after which everyone left St. Margaret's with a very big smile on their face. Also making full use of the stage was the Kronach Youth Orchestra who had St. Margaret's Arts Administrator, in nostalgic tears with their lyrical and poignant medley of Simon and Garfunkel's Bridge of Over Trouble Waters album.

St. Margaret's also proved to be an excellent venue for exhibitions with three very different shows held during 2017. Stephanie Vandem and the Braemar Royal Highland Society gave visitors and locals alike a thought provoking insight into the games with 'Lifting', an exhibition around the theme of the heavy weight lifting events. 'Celestial Terrestrial' was a stunning installation created by three artists, Rosy Wood, Karen Beattie and Andrew Braidwood featuring oil paintings, yarn and sound which received many extremely positive comments. Last but not least the pupils of Braemar Primary School inspired everyone with their colourful and accomplished paintings and photographs at an exhibition involving the entire school entitled 'Creativity and Capability'.

St Margaret's Trust will be resubmitting their funding application for the restoration and development of the building to Heritage Lottery Fund by the end of November and will await the result sometime in March with great anticipation. A reliable, dedicated team of local volunteers who support the St. Margaret's Volunteer Committee is crucial to St. Margaret's success helping with everything from decorating, the stage, lighting, sound, joinery, stewarding, first aid, serving at the bar and many more jobs behind the scenes. Our ongoing thanks and appreciation goes to them all. For photos and clips of some of our 2017 events please LIKE our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/StMargaretsBraemar/?ref=settings> and if you wish to be notified via Email of our up and coming events in 2018 then please contact admin@stmargaretsbraemar.org.uk



With the consent of Scottish Natural Heritage several small trees have now been removed from around the indicator at the Morrone Birchwood to restore views to the hills beyond.

Second Braemar Mountain Festival March 1-4th

www.braemarmountainfestival.com

A festival which celebrates the mountains in winter with workshops on ski touring and telemarking, winter skills and avalanche awareness, low level walking, navigation and fell running. New for 2018 are mountain bike skill sessions and workshops. The evening programme features illustrated talks from a number of esteemed mountaineers; there will also be a ceilidh, a film night, music and food. Daytime talks are an eclectic mix of subjects from 'Inspirational Women', Mountain weather forecasting' to 'Bikepacking'. **Tickets will go live on December 1st.**

Once again we are looking for volunteers to help with delivering the programme - if you can help please contact Sarah Hubbard by Email at: sarahhubbard21@gmail.com

Clubs and Societies - news and activity ...

Bowling

Congratulations to this season's Bowling Club prize winners :



Lady's singles - Kathleen Kinsella
Men's pairs - Doug Bruce & Dave Mitchell
Mixed pairs - Doug Anderson & Dave Mitchell
Triples - K. Kinsella, A. Simpson & D. Anderson

The bowling green should be open again in the Springtime when all are welcome to come and join us, both novice and experienced players.

Meantime...Indoor Bowling takes place through the winter in Castleton Hall, Monday afternoons at 1.30pm. £2/session. All welcome.

Braemar Golf Club

The club house is now shut for the winter but if you would like to use the clubhouse for a function, meeting etc. please contact Dave Till ☎013397 41618



The golf course will remain open during the winter months, weather permitting, at a cost of £10 per person per round for visitors and guests. Payment by cash only - please use the honesty box.

Congratulations to the men's champions: Men's scratch - Sandy Pirie; Men's handicap - Oliver Till; Lady's scratch - Lynn Mason; Lady's handicap - Liz Myers;

The golf club will officially open again at the beginning of April 2018 when the committee would like to welcome all members - new, old and juniors - back for the new season.

Traditional Music - the Blaeberrys

The Blaeberrys have had a very good year. We have played four ceilidhs in the village, and continue to meet on Monday evenings to chat and play tunes. We have a great range of instruments; guitar, fiddle, drum, whistle, bodhran and concertina accordion with up to fifteen players regularly coming along.



If you fancy joining in, even if its your first time playing with other people, please get in touch. If you'd like to come along and listen one evening before committing, that's fine too. You will be made very welcome. Dave ☎41516

Braemar Men's Shed

Braemar will soon have a Mens' Shed and join a community of nearly 70 Scottish Sheds, which have been formed in the last ten years.



The concept originated in Australia and has spread worldwide. The prime aim is to provide a venue for older men to meet and participate in enjoyable and mutually beneficial interests. Members of the shed decide which activities to introduce and can include games, computing, woodwork, gardening, etc. Ultimately, work on social projects to benefit the village will be undertaken.

Exploratory meetings last month attracted around 12-15 men and a Steering Group has been formed to push the project forward. Premises have been identified which will need some tidying and modification. Meantime a temporary meeting venue is sought so that we can get together and plan our future strategy.

Anyone interested in coming along should contact me at: braemarmensshed@btinternet.com or ☎ 07500047282 to be added to a circulation list for the latest information.

Jim Stark
Steering Group Secretary
Braemar Mens' Shed



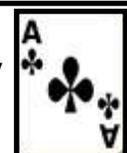
The Braemar Rural

There is a new women's group in Braemar to replace the now disbanded SWI that existed for many years in the village. There was a meeting to see if there was any interest in starting a women's group which was held on Thursday 12th October. The turnout was excellent and the first meeting of the newly formed group is on **Wednesday 22nd November** in the back room in Braemar Village Hall at 7.30pm. All ladies of all ages welcome. The night will involve making Christmas Crafts. Come along for some crafting, tea, coffee, chat and a fine piece.

More information ☎Susie 41382



Whist - every Thursday evening in Kindrochit Court, 7-9 pm. Everyone very welcome. £1.50/session.



Clubs and Societies - news and activity (continued) ...**Braemar Local History Group**

The Village History Walks proved increasingly popular this season, numbers increasing by c.50% - with even some requests for private 'walks'. The walks will resume in mid April although the advertised timetable may change slightly but any alterations will be published well in advance of the start of the new season. If you would like to become a walk leader please contact Doug Anderson ☎ 07585 122730

Starting the winter evenings session was a very popular film night when clips from a number of old films, both in black and white and in colour, were shown by Colin Whyte. Great amusement was forthcoming from some of the audience as they recognised themselves and others in some of the clips. A second film night is likely to be time tabled for next winter.

Future events include:

- 21 January - A continuation of locations of Harper Bridges by Douglas Harper
- 18 Feb - Group AGM followed by a talk on Deeside by Ian Murray
- 11 March - The Cairngorm Club - talk by Robbie Middleton

Deeside Knitwits Rosy Wood

Has raised so far this year £1,600 from donation tins, poppy kits, trail maps and sale of the trolls. The group has made donations to the Braemar 3rd Age Group, Poppy Scotland, CLAN and SSRS. Thanks to everyone who has joined in and supported our efforts through knitting and buying our work. Come and join us on a Tuesday 2-4 pm at Kindrochit Court!



Ukulele Group Meets every Friday evening at the Moorfield Hotel at 7.30pm -

come and join us (even if you have no uke - come and sing along!) The group have notched up several recent public appearances including: on the green at Ballater Victoria Week; Braemar's Got Talent; the 3rd Age Group tea; (and the forthcoming St Andrews Day concert). Anyone interested in taking up the ukulele (and who wouldn't want to - what a great, inexpensive, happy, instrument!) please get in touch with either Doug Anderson ☎07585 122730 or Liz Robertson ☎41030. We now have several 'spare' ukuleles and plan to run some 'come and try' sessions in the New Year - get in touch if this is of interest.

Marramba

The newest band in town continues to meet for drumming sessions twice a week on Sunday and Thursdays. Their performance on the Green at Ballater during Victoria Week in August, led to a very welcome boost to band funds (see photo below where some of the band members went to Ballater to receive a cheque). Their latest gig was at the Guy Fawkes Bonfire at Mar Lodge, where they were surrounded by many lively youngsters eager to try out a few rhythms.

Looking to the future, Marramba is hoping to recruit some new players and are planning a series of beginners' workshops early next year. If you are interested in giving Samba drumming a go, watch out for a notice on the Braemar Community page or get in touch with Marilyn ☎41225. It's good fun, good exercise and a real stress buster.



Please send news/articles for the Buzzard to:

info@braemarbuzzard.org.uk

Deadline for the next edition:
Monday March 7th 2018

Website:
www.braemarbuzzard.org.uk

Adverts cost £20 per eighth of a page. Contact Maggie MacKay ☎41245

Church Services and events

St Andrews RC Church

- Dec 2-5 Parish Mission—more information on church gate
- Dec 25 Christmas Day Mass 5.30pm - preceded by carol singing at 5pm

Braemar & Crathie Parish

- Dec 9 Messy Christmas Party 4-6pm, Castleton Hall, all welcome
- Dec 11 Crathie Church Hall - Christmas coffee morning 10-12 noon
- Dec 17 Village Community Carol Service 6.30pm, all very welcome
- Dec 24 11.15 for 11.30 pm Watchnight service, mulled wine & carols
- Dec 25 Church Day Family Service 10.0 am



Village Panto - ALADDIN



Dec 22 Fri	7.30pm
Dec 23 Sat	2.30pm & 7.30 pm
Dec 24 Sun	2.00pm
Dec 26 Tues	2.30 pm & 7.30 pm

Adults £8 ; Concessions £6
 Child £4
 Tickets online
www.ticketsource.co.uk or
 from Braemar Pharmacy or
 ☎013397 41549

Santa Ramble



Sunday Dec 10th
 12 noon
 Starts at the Mews
 Entry fee covers
 cup of hot soup!
 Charity fund raiser

More info: susie@farkys.net

Christmas Music Night

Moorfield Hotel
Friday Dec 22
 Look out for more
 details ...



Art Exhibition at St. Margaret's

Every child at Braemar School, from
 Nursery to P7, will be displaying
 their masterpieces at our long-
 awaited, 'Creativity and Capability'
 exhibition. Open daily from:

Sat 18th Nov - Fri 1st Dec
 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



St Andrews Day Concert St Andrew's Church Friday Dec 1st 6.30pm

Scottish music, dance, song, poetry,
 stories. Come along for a great night -
 plus broth, stovies served with a
 dram...

Christmas Fair

Saturday November 25th, Village Hall 2-4pm



Switch on of the Village Xmas Lights

Saturday November 25th, The Mews 6pm

Wheest choir will lead community carol singing. Mulled wine
 and mince pies will be served

Burns Supper

Friday January 19th
 Run by the Braemar Scout
 Unit - details to follow.



Hogmanay Ceilidh

December 31st
 Village Hall
 With the Graeme
 Mitchell Band

