



# BLACKRIDGE COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2020

ISSUE 69



A LOOK AT WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE COMMUNITY

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Blackridge Parish Church • Beechbrae News • Christmas Light Show

## YOUR COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS

*Wish you a Merry Christmas  
and a Safe and Happy New Year*

Welcome to this edition of the Blackridge Community Council Newsletter. We know that some people are new to the village, so we would like to extend you a warm welcome to Blackridge and hope you enjoy your first Christmas in your new home.

We normally deliver four issues during the year, with the aim of keeping you informed about what is going on in the village. With the Level 4 restrictions, we have decided to do things differently. We have created a website which offers the ability in these uncertain times to subscribe to our village news online. Thanks go to Susan, of "74 Design", for her help in the design and printing of the new format of the newsletter. We expect that many people will be able to view the newsletter online, but for those who don't have internet access, we will have a reduced print run with Newsletters available to pick up at the Pharmacy, Post Office, Smartways, and the Ice Cream van. Please collect and pass on copies to anyone you know who might need one.

The Community Council meets on the third Tuesday of the month (except July and August). During the restrictions, we are only able to include Community Councillors in the meetings, so our usual invitation for residents to come along and take part has had to be suspended. But please don't let your concerns or comments go unheard, you can contact Kate on the email address below, and she will be happy to take them to our next meeting. The deadline for the next Newsletter is 26th February. If you have anything you would like to be included, please contact: Kate Strachan, by email at [westcraigs29@gmail.com](mailto:westcraigs29@gmail.com)

Visit our new website: [www.blackridge.cc](http://www.blackridge.cc)

**CAFÉ AND TAKEAWAY • OPEN 7:00AM – 2:30PM**



*Takeaway only during Level 4 Lockdown*

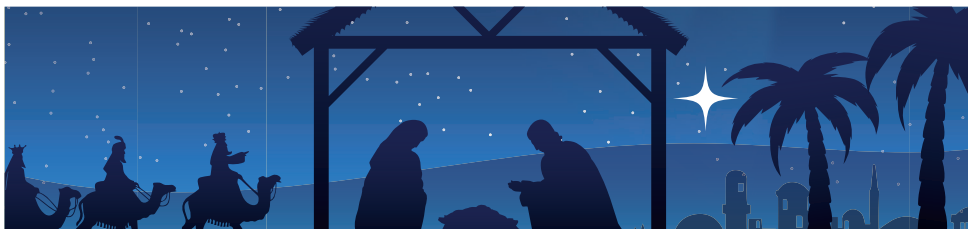
Sandwich Trays for parties • Hot Filled Rolls • Panini's • Baguettes  
Baked Potatoes • Burgers and more.  
Lovely Hot Latte • Cappuccino  
Variety of Teas • Hot Chocolate

**Call ahead for an order on 01501 486759**



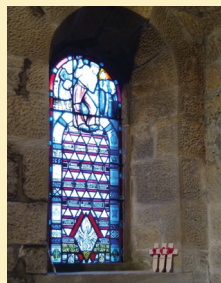
**34d West Main Street, Whitburn (next to Semichem)**





## BLACKRIDGE PARISH CHURCH

It was a pleasant surprise to discover that our War Memorial windows were featured in the Church of Scotland's *Life and Work* magazine in November. An article, 'War, Sacrifice and Gratitude', had been written by a retired priest, Jeff Hopewell, who had studied 20th Century Scottish Stained Glass, the article featured illustrations of the windows. Hopewell recently published a book about the stained glass of the artist of our windows, Douglas Hamilton. Jeff was a great help to our late Session Clerk, Phil Mowitt when the windows were being cleaned and restored for the centenary of the beginning of the Great War.



Looking back to Remembrance it was also good that Blackridge Primary School supplied a video clip, 'Flanders Fields', to include in our online Facebook Remembrance service. The ongoing strong connection between church and school really matters to us. We continue with a recorded service for Sunday which is posted on our Facebook page late on Saturday evening or early Sunday morning. And there too, we have a Reflection posted for the Saturday. The Elders have decided not to re-open the church at this stage, and to review things in the New Year. We will, then, continue online with a weekly recording on Facebook. Regardless of the decision not to re-open the church, there is a plan to put our Christmas tree into the church garden this year rather than into the church. It was felt that the village just needed that added sign of hope on the Main Street.

And so we move into Advent and, then, Christmas. For the church this is a season to focus on hope, to look forward and, to celebrate light not darkness. In the Christian tradition Advent is the start of the church year and so, in a way, it is a time of new beginning and looking forward.

It has been a hard year for many and we will not easily forget the journey we have made through this year. Now is the time to look forward, to be hopeful. As Alan Montgomery mentioned in his 'stay strong' article in the Autumn newsletter, it is time to take a different perspective and try to look for the positive. There is considerable strength and resources within the community so, whatever comes our way, we can do this, we can get through and move on.

*Richard Darroch, Locum Minister, Blackridge with Harthill St Andrew's.*



## BEECHBRAE NEWS - Ally Graham



We have had a beautiful autumn at Beechbrae, watching the leaves change colours and then be released from the trees as they go dormant over the winter season. As we are coming into the winter season and the darkness around us increases it is really important for us to make an extra effort to look after our mental health and wellbeing. Below are a few updates...

### Woodland Wellbeing Wednesdays with Blackridge Primary

Our sessions with Blackridge Primary have now come to a finish. We had such a great time, below are a few quotes from the pupils during the sessions.

*"Excuse me, can I tell you something?"*

*"Sure."*

*"Beechbrae is awesome and I can tell you're all hard workers."* P3 pupil

When pupils were told we were going to meet the hens they exclaimed, *"I'm fluent in chicken!"*



We have been enjoying the fine company of a different class from Blackridge Primary up at Beechbrae for Woodland Wellbeing Wednesdays. Each week we enjoy bush craft, woodland mindfulness, exploring different aspects of the wildlife and plant life around Beechbrae, and making pizzas with the cob oven! It has been fun and we've had such great feedback from pupils, parents and teachers.

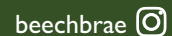
### Branching Out at Beechbrae Wood

We are thrilled to be back up and running with our 'Branching Out' sessions at Beechbrae. We are currently running a group and in the New Year we will be starting a group specifically for women. We're keen to support people with new ways of being outside and getting the most of the daylight hours. There are so many fun, free and accessible ways we can enjoy nature in the winter, we're really enjoying the sessions so far and look forward to the coming ones this winter.

For more regular information check us out here:



[www.beechbrae.co.uk](http://www.beechbrae.co.uk)



## MINING MEMORIAL

Funding has been secured from West Lothian Council and the Windfarm fund to create a memorial of the mining history of Blackridge. The memorial will be a digital installation and Councillor Borrowman is leading the project. There is information already about deaths and injuries in the industry, but he is looking for any stories, memories, and photographs of the people and places associated with mining in Blackridge. It doesn't have to be only about the pits; there will be stories and photos about the wives and families, the homes they lived in, where they shopped, and how they lived their everyday lives.

So, please have a look through your old photos and send copies to [stuart.borrowman@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.borrowman@westlothian.gov.uk)



## BLAWHORN MOSS NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE UPDATE IT'S GOT BIGGER!

Blawhorn Moss NNR has recently been expanded by 20 hectares, increasing the reserve size by 20% and encompassing a lovely little woodland, a beautiful wetland and promising patch for peatland restoration. Peatland bog is created very slowly, by semi-rotten, watery plants compressing at a rate of 1mm per year underground. This process traps a lot of carbon that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere, and is therefore fantastic for fighting climate change.



Blawhorn is one of Lothian's oldest and least disturbed bogs, with some areas of peat having developed over 8000 years now being deep enough to bury two double decker buses! But the new patch will require some TLC to be returned to its natural state. Ditches will need to be blocked to keep the water within the new area and raise the water level. Over time this will increase the bog habitat and connect it to the rest of the reserve.

As well as working to restore this area, there are plans in the works for path expansion - with a new circular path recently cut into place, giving visitors the option for a longer walk round the reserve. We are also in the process of securing funding for a boardwalk expansion, providing an all-access opportunity to explore a greater range of habitats and wildlife across the heart of Blawhorn.

We hope to work closely with local students, providing them with project opportunities across these new spaces, as well as continuing our activity days with Blackridge Primary School in partnership with Beechbrae, and leading volunteer work parties once the world returns to something a little more normal. It all takes time but gradually we hope you will see the reserve expand and improve. For now, we hope you can explore Blawhorn, new bit and old, as part of your daily exercise, enjoy the connection to nature, and perhaps find a sense of peace in this little bit of wilderness.

*Written by Bethia Pearson – Student NNR Placement, NatureScot.*

If you would like to know more contact the Reserve Manager:  
david.pickett@nature.scot or follow the blog: <https://2bogsaswampandsomeislands.wordpress.com/>

**Ingredients:**  
5 oz wholemeal flour  
2oz soda bread flour  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
½ teaspoon salt  
7 fl oz buttermilk

### WHOLEMEAL SODA FARLS

Mix dry ingredients in a bowl then gradually add the milk. Heat girdle or heavy based frying pan over a medium heat.

Form the dough into a flat round disc and cut into 4 cook 7 minutes on each side.



## DAVID BRYCE

21st April 1926 - 16th October 2020

Davie served his country during WW2 as a wireless operator and always spoke of his time in Padova, Italy. It was probably the wireless work that rendered him hard of hearing for most of his life and tone deaf for the last few years of his life however, he often said he could use that to his advantage when he did not want to listen to anyone, he simply turned it down!

His mum was Annie Tobin and his dad was David Bryce. His dad worked in the mines, and when Davie came out of the army, that's where he headed, labelling himself as an Engineer. Obviously an engineer of great repute, as he went on to become Chief Planning Engineer at British Leyland in Bathgate, via Cummins.

He lived in Blackridge, Bathgate, Little Moscow, Blackburn and ultimately back to (2 Bedlormie Drive) Blackridge where he resided for approximately 58 years; he was a staunch Labour supporter, actively involved in the Masons, and assisted with projects in and around the village. He had treasured neighbours: in the early years, the Condie, Sherlocks, Meechans and Campbells, and in later years many of his neighbours were on lookout duty when Davie decided to go for a wander. He was often returned to the house by Robbie and Andy Campbell, by Janet McLean and Brian Espie, reported by John Condie, hotlined by Jim and Margaret Jeffries and Anne and Robert Meechan, who all registered his movements with his son David, for the last three years.

Davie had brothers and a sister; Jimmy, John and Betty, and once he married he had two children, Anne and David. He travelled the world to keep contact with his family and had visits to Ras Al Khaimah and Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates, Lagos in Nigeria, London, Kathmandu in Nepal, Hong Kong with side trips into Macau and China, Karachi in Pakistan, and several months and many visits to Davao City in the Philippines. His son's wife Rosie has looked after Davie for the last few years, and he has been cared for in several locations around the world... he's been fleetingly lodged and tended to in hospitals in Nepal, Philippines and the outer Hebrides, where he



impressed the authorities with his strength of character. He loved the Philippines and his extended family there; they all miss him dearly.

He was married to Winnie Bryce, and she was the complete life for Davie, as he looked after her 24 hours a day until her death around 19 years ago. When that happened, his grandson Tom had the option of either going to Hong Kong (from the Middle East), or going back to stay with his grandad at 2 Bedlormie to finish his studies at Armadale Academy.

He chose the latter, and he certainly kept his grandad very busy over the next couple of years, taking Davie's mind away from his dear departed wife.

For the last 20 years of his employment he worked as a technical teacher at Whitburn Academy, took charge of the football team there and also carried out numerous guidance duties. Of course, he retired from Whitburn Academy some 29 years ago, but many former Whitburn pupils remained in contact with him, and on almost every occasion when the family were out for dinner, a past pupil came over to the table to greet him. Whilst at Whitburn Academy his best friends were Ian and Joyce Forrest, sadly Ian passed away 18 months ago, however, he'll be up there awaiting the party along with Winnie. Winnie's favourite song was Falling In Love Again by Marlene Dietrich, the opening song at his funeral. She spent many happy occasions singing it at parties with Davie's uncle, Sandy Frew and their pals. Davie was a clean living chap who stopped smoking at 40 and never drank alcohol, although he liked to gamble on the horses and was a favourite's man. As a young man he drove the whole family to the North of Spain, something rarely done back in the 60s... a pioneer of life.



One last thing that Davie will be remembered for, was his spectacular driving skills. He commanded respect from the inhabitants of the local villages, who stayed off the road whilst Davie was driving. Davie only stopped driving two years ago, when he crashed into the wall at Armadale Co-op. Remarkably, Davie was unscathed, although his son is often politely reminded that the wall never quite recovered. Davie often reminded people that he was born on exactly the same day as the queen, and with a twist of fate, his son David, could have been the future King of England!!

At last, Davie and Winnie are... **Together Again.**

## BLACKRIDGE HEALTH CENTRE

**The Health Centre will be closed on the following dates;**  
**Friday 25th December and Monday 28th December**  
**Friday 1st January and Monday 4th January**

*Please make sure you order your prescriptions to cover the above holidays.*



There will be information regarding the Influenza Vaccination for patients aged between 55 - 64 available on Facebook and Social Media in the near future.

All the staff at the Health Centre would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a safe New Year.



## BLACKRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

### *Wellbeing Woodland Wednesday at Beechbrae*

Since our return back to school in August, we have been very fortunate to reconnect with our local woodlands, Beechbrae. Every Wednesday over the last couple of weeks, each class has had the opportunity to spend the day at Beechbrae with the team, Ally, Sammy and Jan.

Our Wednesdays were filled with outdoor activities and new learning opportunities for us all. We all had the luxury of getting to use the new outdoor pizza oven and make our very own pizza from start to finish and even better we got to toast some marshmallows and make some really yummy smores. Making the pizza and smores was something new to most of us, and it was definitely a memorable (and delicious) activity for us all!

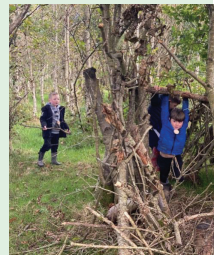


However we can't forget to mention some of the other fun activities that the team at Beechbrae had prepared for us. Primary 7 and Primary 6 used their problem solving skills to take part in den building, and if you are out walking through Beechbrae, you will be able to see Primary 6 and Primary 7's den!



Primary 1 – Primary 5, put their fears aside and took part in some bug hunting and pond dipping, it was very exciting to identify the different bugs and we even got to hold the tiny frogs that we found. Primary 1 had an exciting experience of seeing the hen lay her eggs while they were there. They got to hold the eggs and learn a little more about the chickens at Beechbrae!

Our day would end off with a calm mindfulness reading from Ally, this gave us a chance to reflect and take in the different sounds and smells around Beechbrae. Overall the time we spent at Beechbrae gave us an opportunity to appreciate what we have available to us here in Blackridge. Being able to go to Beechbrae and extend our learning outdoors, gave us something to look forward to and help as settle back into school after lockdown. In the future we hope to maintain and continue to make links with Beechbrae and our local community.



*Written By: Zak (Head Boy) and Harmony (Head Girl)*



## SOME QUOTES

Kate (P1) – “I really liked making Pizza, it was really yummy!”

Amber (P2) – “Using the fishing nets and pond dipping was lots of fun.”

Harris (P3) – “Making smores was the best!”



Lily (P4) – “I liked bug hunting.”

Jean (P5) – “I liked walking through the woods looking for a stick to toast our marshmallows.”

Hamish (P6) – “I really liked making and eating the smores and pizza.”

Dean (P7) – “I enjoyed the den building best!”



In what has been a dark year, and as we enter Tier 4 the staff at Blackridge Primary and ELC are aiming to ensure the children have an enjoyable time leading up to the Christmas Break. Our first priority is to ensure that they all remain safe, so that they can enjoy their Christmas with family. However, we also wish them to enjoy December with their school family.

We have a range of exciting activities planned that you can see on our December Calendar. From this you can see we have many online events. We hope to have the calendar on our website soon, so please visit our website to have a look at these.

<https://blackridgeprimary.westlothian.org.uk/>

We hope that our #Blackridgestars give you a little light and hope over December.



## BLACKRIDGE PHARMACY

*You don't have to travel to find gifts for everyone, get them in your local pharmacy and support Blackridge businesses.*

**Why not pop in and have a look at our range of toiletries, gift sets, aftershaves and perfumes for sale.**

### FESTIVE OPENING HOURS:

**CLOSED:** Friday 25th December & Monday 28th December  
Friday 1st January & Monday 4th January

**OPEN:** Saturday 26th December & Saturday 2nd January  
9.00am - 1.00pm

22 Main Street, Blackridge EH48 3SA • TEL: 01501 751175



## DAVID SIBBALD AWARDED MBE IN QUEENS BIRTHDAY HONOURS FOR SERVICES TO BUSINESS AND CHARITY IN WEST LOTHIAN

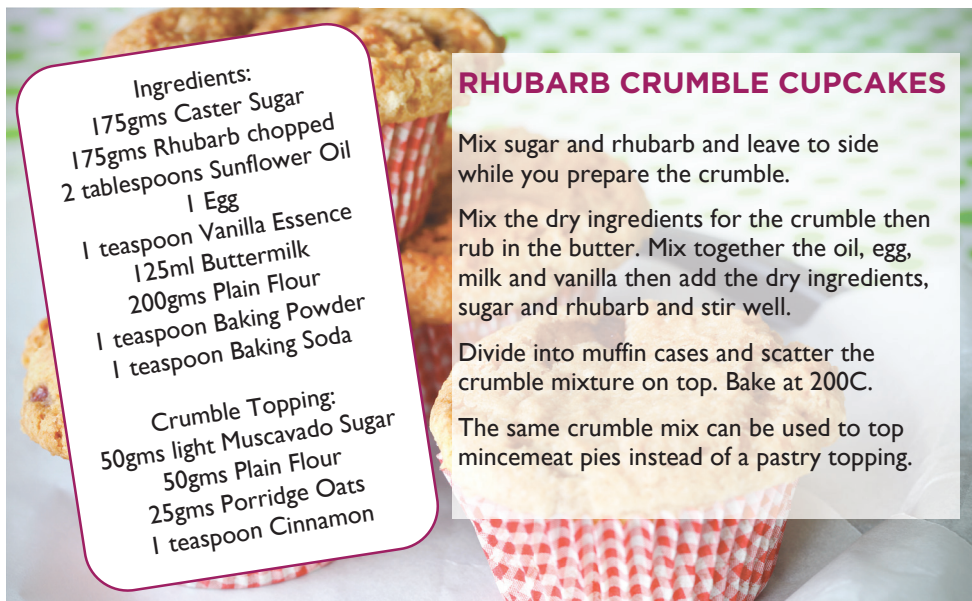
David Sibbald of Bathgate, West Lothian, was delighted to be recognised in the Queen's birthday honours list at the beginning of October. The generous local businessman, who founded Sibbald Training and Cappers Group, based in Blackridge was awarded an MBE for his long-term commitment to business and charities in West Lothian, with particular focus on his work with young people in the local community.



He has long been a champion of youth engagement within the construction sector and has generously provided resources, time and finances to various projects over the past years, seeking to give young people vital experience in the construction industry.

He is also an avid fundraiser for the Lighthouse Charity and sponsors various awards which recognise achievement in technical subjects amongst schoolchildren.

Finally, he also plays an important role in promoting the role of entrepreneurial women in business through his activities within the Chamber of Commerce and sponsorship of a 'Women in Business' award. David is thoroughly delighted to have been nominated for this prestigious accolade and plans to keep up the good work in the future.

A photograph of several rhubarb crumble cupcakes in red and white checkered paper liners. The cupcakes are topped with a golden-brown crumble. The image is used as a background for a recipe card.

### RHUBARB CRUMBLE CUPCAKES

**Ingredients:**  
175gms Caster Sugar  
175gms Rhubarb chopped  
2 tablespoons Sunflower Oil  
1 Egg  
1 teaspoon Vanilla Essence  
125ml Buttermilk  
200gms Plain Flour  
1 teaspoon Baking Powder  
1 teaspoon Baking Soda

**Crumble Topping:**  
50gms light Muscavado Sugar  
50gms Plain Flour  
25gms Porridge Oats  
1 teaspoon Cinnamon

Mix sugar and rhubarb and leave to side while you prepare the crumble.

Mix the dry ingredients for the crumble then rub in the butter. Mix together the oil, egg, milk and vanilla then add the dry ingredients, sugar and rhubarb and stir well.

Divide into muffin cases and scatter the crumble mixture on top. Bake at 200C.

The same crumble mix can be used to top mincemeat pies instead of a pastry topping.



## WESTRIGG ELECTRICAL SERVICES CHRISTMAS LED MUSIC & LIGHT SHOW

The Campbells who run Westrigg Electrical Services, put on a Hallowe'en LED display show at their home, in celebration of the way American people take to these holidays.

They were amazed at the reaction to their display, it really put a smile on everyone's faces and they got so many messages saying how it had helped people to forget, for a while, the uncertainty that the virus has created.

It was so successful that they have decided to do it all again and create a Christmas Show! They are aiming to raise money for the Charity, River Kids, which gives help to children and families. The Campbells are hoping that, as well as making people smile and feel happy, they can make a donation to the Charity.

**There will be 14 shows, all held at 23 Leishman Court. On 12th, 13th, 19th, and 20th there will be three shows, and on Christmas Eve, 24th, there will be two shows.** The event will also be live-streamed. Further details can be found on Westrigg Electrical Services Facebook page (Events) or on the River Kids website. Hopefully, we can all come together and donate to make others feel happy, as well as enjoying an amazing Christmas display.

You can donate to the Charity at any of the shows, or by the JustGiving page <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/thecampbellsxmasshow>



## BLACKRIDGE HISTORY

When I moved to Blackridge many moons ago, the Doctor's Surgery was next to Little the butchers on the village Main Street, this building is now a private dwelling. The times I was at the surgery was mainly for ante-natal appointments when I became pregnant with our first child. Our daughter was born in October 1970 and all went well. My 6 week post natal check-up appointment came through and for that I had to go to the new Health Centre. Wow!

When I arrived there, I was shown into the room that Allison the nurse uses. There were no curtains or blinds on the Windows, so you can only imagine how I felt. Panic over; a set of screens were put round to maintain my privacy and dignity and thankfully all was ok.

That is how I know that our Health Centre is 50 years old in November.

*Sadie Montgomery*



# IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

## POLICE/FIRE

Police HQ Livingston	01506 431200
Police (Non-Emergency)	101
Fire (Emergency)	999

## HOSPITALS

St. John's Hospital, Livingston	01506 523000
University Hospital Monklands, Airdrie	01236 748748
Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh	0131 536 1000
Western General Hospital, Edinburgh	0131 537 1000
University Hospital Wishaw	01698 361 100

## HEALTH

Blackridge Health Centre	01501 751238
Harthill Health Centre	01501 751795
Armadale Health Centre	01501 730432
District Nurses/ Midwife/Physio	01501 730339
Blackridge Pharmacy	01501 751175
NHS24 (Out of Hours Service)	111

## SCHOOLS

Blackridge Primary	01501 751223
Armadale Academy	01506 282145
St. Anthony's Primary, Armadale	01501 731668
St. Kentigern's, Blackburn	01506 656404

## UTILITIES EMERGENCIES

Scottish Gas	0800 111 999
SP Energy Networks (Electricity)	105
Scottish Water	0800 077 8778

## TRAVEL

Rail Service Enquiries	0845 7484950
West Lothian Traveline	01506 775288

## WEST Lothian COUNCIL

01506 280000

## LOCAL COUNCILLORS

Stuart Borrowman	01506 281702
Andrew McGuire	01506 281717
Sarah King	01506 281741

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CUT OUT AND STICK TO FRIDGE