

WINTER 2022 ISSUE 73



A LOOK AT WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE COMMUNITY

Blackridge Community Council wish you a joyous holiday season with peace & cheer in the New Year!

www.blackridge.cc



Welcome to the winter 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 you first Christmas in your new home.

We would like to thank our local community for all their efforts to make our village an enjoyable place to live.

The Community Council meets on the third Tuesday of the month (except July and August) at 7pm in the Craig Inn Centre.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year

www.blackridge.cc

If you would like to feature an article in our Newsletter, please email mail@blackridge.cc and put the word "Newsletter" in the subject line.





BLACKRIDGE STATION

The Community Council had hoped to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the opening of Blackridge station but Covid kyboshed that. They now plan an event in January with the added bonus of a model railway mock-up of the original station.

The first suggestion of a railway line through the village came as early as 1830 when the Edinburgh firm of surveyors and civil engineers, Grainger and Miller published a very detailed prospectus for an inter-city railway line passing South Ridge, Torrance, Bogend, crossing the Edinburgh and Glasgow road near Bedlormie. There were other expressions of interest, but once railway lines reached Cowdenhead from the east (with a connection to Woodend) and from the west to around Clarkston. There was a clear interest in the Monkland Company "closing the gap" of ten miles or so and an Act of Parliament in 1857 authorised this and the work began by 1861.

Whilst building the line, large numbers of Irish and Highland navvies were accommodated at Entryfoot and in tents near Harthill. The line opened to mineral traffic on 10th May 1862. A branch line to Shotts ironworks (now a footpath) opened three years later.

Passenger services began in 1871 with a two-platform stations erected with waiting rooms and other facilities, including a stationmaster's house (still standing). Peter Mackay, the owner of the Craig Inn preferred the name Westcraigs rather than Blackridge, in fact, its full name was Westcraigs for Harthill and this service offered four passenger trains a day.

The line was double-tracked in 1904 (prompting the construction of the "model" lodging house in Armadale to accommodate the workforce). Villagers then petitioned Lanark County Council, resulting in a replacement bridge over burn at Clattering Mill (not the iron bridge which was later), together with a linking path to station ("the Stip") costing £755.

Westcraigs station closed to passenger traffic on 9th January 1956 with little or no comment. The line continued in use for freight and for then-popular summer excursions, there was some interest in reopening the line in the 1970s but this came to nought. Infact, the freight line closed in 1982 and the rails were lifted with a walkway created on the track bed.

The travails of the West Lothian economy in the 1980s led to the reestablishment of the Edinburgh-Bathgate passenger rail service.



That once more invited consideration of closing the gap between Bathgate and Drumgelloch. In truth, the policy driver was to try to get traffic off the M8 and the idea became Scottish Government policy by 2003. Legislation was promoted to spend £300m with new stations at Armadale and Caldercruix as well as the relocation of that at Bathgate.

The Scottish Government, West Lothian Council and Network Rail were opposed to a station at Blackridge. A five-year campaign by villagers - named Platform Blackridge - and a formal objection to the Bill debated in parliament eventually saw the village defeat those organisations.

The station - now named Blackridge - was relocated 600m further east as a long straight stretch was needed. Blackrigg No.3 bing was removed to provide the bottoming for the access road which was named Westrigg Way as the name had otherwise almost disappeared from formal records.

The new station opened on 12 December 2010 with a half-hour service in each direction on the Helensburgh-Waverley line. Despite the negativity of the Council and Network Rail, annual boardings at Blackridge station had reached 60.000 before Covid interrupted.

Stuart Borrowman

trains per day from Blackridge to Edinburgh Waverlev.

trains per day from Blackridge to Glasgow Queen Street.



PHARMACY FESTIVE OPENING HOURS

Saturday 24th December	9.00am - 1.00pm
Sunday 25th December	CLOSED
Monday 26th December	CLOSED
Tuesday 27th December	CLOSED
Wednesday 28th, Thursday 29th	
& Friday 30th December	8.00am till 6.00pm
Saturday 31st December	9.00am - 1.00pm
Sunday 1st January	CLOSED
Monday 2nd January	CLOSED
Tuesday 3rd January	CLOSED
Wednesday 5th January onwards	8.00am - 6.00pm

01501 751 175

22 MAIN STREET, BLACKRIDGE, EH48 3SA

GIFTS AND TOILETRIES AVAILABLE

SHOP LOCAL







BLACKRIDGE PARISH CHURCH



Blackridge Parish Church has been a focal point in our community for many years. More than a few villagers fondly remember weddings, Christenings and sadly also funerals, being conducted there. A place then, of many memories.

However, like many churches in Scotland, its future is currently under discussion, with falling rolls and a dearth of ministers, much uncertainty abounds.

The congregation is doing everything it can to safeguard a church presence in Blackridge, from undertaking substantial building repairs to making impassioned pleas to the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian.

It's not just up to us though. We need people to make use of us. The clue is in the title: Blackridge PARISH Church! The church is there to serve the community in both spiritual and practical ways.

You may not be a churchgoer, but the church is there for you, nevertheless. In these difficult times, it might be that you would welcome a safe space for quiet contemplation or reflection; you might also enjoy the friendship, chat and good company along with the delicious goodies on offer at some events; it may be tempting to have a browse or a good old fashioned rake at our thrift shop/jumble sales.

During the summer we had a successful Flower and Craft Festival at which many village organisations participated. All the contributions were excellent but particular praise to the school who built a model of Noah's Ark, involving all the children. In the Autumn we enjoyed a fabulous Afternoon Tea

We are now planning and preparing for a **Christmas Tree Festival** which will be launched on the **15th December** at a **Festive Afternoon Tea**.

Please consider coming along to this and to other events as shown on the church advert.

Supporting us by coming along to events is the best thing you can do for us, to help us maintain a positive role in our community and safeguard YOUR church. Who knows... You might just take a notion to join us for worship on a Sunday morning! You will be made most welcome, as you will be at any of our activities.

BLACKRIDGE PARISH CHURCH

Services conducted by Rev Julia Wiley

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP - 9.45am

Blackridge Fellowship Group - 3rd Tuesday every month 2.00pm - 3.30pm

Coffee Morning - 1st Thursday every month 10.00am - 12noon

Warm Space - 3rd Thursday of every month 1.00pm - 3.30pm free hot soup, roll & hot pancakes

COMMUNION SERVICES 1ST SUNDAYS IN MARCH, JUNE, SEPTEMBER & DECEMBER

A warm welcome is extended to all

NON PERISHABLE FOOD KINDLY DONATED WILL BE GIVEN TO THE FOODBANK

BLACKRIDGE, WESTRIGG & WESTCRAIGS OLD FOLKS COMMITTEE

Organising a Day Trip & Christmas Treat for all over 60s who live in Blackridge

JUNE DAY TRIP You are picked up at various locations within the village, taken by coach to a chosen destination where you will be served a free lunch. You are then free to enjoy the afternoon, returning to chosen hotel for your evening meal before your journey home.

On the day all we ask you is to come along and enjoy the day in the company of old & new friends.

CHRISTMAS TREAT (this year is Monday 12th December) You will be taken by coach to the chosen location where you will be served an evening meal, then evening entertainment supplied before your journey home.

Please join our wee group and don't miss out on great days/nights where new friends await you!

Please get in touch with a committee member if you have just turned 60 or 60+ and new to the village. Alternatively, you can drop in to the Craig Inn Centre or through the village website www.blackridge.cc 'contact us' page - who will be delighted to pass on your details.





We hope you have been enjoying the stunning autumn leaves this year as much as we have. This year it felt like they hung on and let us enjoy their colour that wee bit longer, which was a welcome gift. Its been a busy summer and autumn at Beechbrae, plenty of garden and land jobs to keep us busy as well as our Woodland Wellbeing sessions and work in the Woodland Centre. Read below for a few highlights:

Celebrating 10 years of Beechbrae

On 1 November we celebrated 10 years of Beechbrae. We wanted to honour the land that has held so many of us over the years by sitting by the fire and listening to nature-based stories with a warm cup of Beechbrae apple juice in hand. We were delighted to welcome the fantastic singer songwriter Karine Polwart to bring her nature-based stories and songs to the celebration. It was an enchanting evening and one we will remember for a long time. Thanks for all who joined us.



Plant Walk with Matthew Rooney

We had a great time learning about the different plants, grasses fungi and fruit around Beechbrae with Matthew Rooney. Who knew there were so many types of grasses? Thanks to all who join us and brought their questions and enthusiasm to the walks.

Branching Out at Beechbrae

We've been busy with our Branching Out sessions at Beechbrae. As we come into the winter season and darkness around us increases it is important for us to make an extra effort to look after our mental health and wellbeing. There are so many fun, free and accessible ways we can enjoy nature in the winter. Sometimes we just need a little support to begin and develop confidence in our outdoor skills. We start our 4th programme this year in Jan and are looking forward to it.



Sadie Montgomery has held 'the world's biggest coffee morning' every year for the past 25 years for Macmillan Cancer Support.

To mark her 25th anniversary, Sadie with the help of her family and a local designer and printing company, have created a thirty-six-page recipe book full of favourite recipes of individuals who have been supported or know someone who has been supported by Macmillan.

A real pillar of the community, Sadie is very active in organising her big fundraiser every year (with the help from many volunteers from the village) so everyone can come on the day and have a cup of tea or coffee and enjoy some tasty home-baking.

During the last few years, Sadie didn't even let a lockdown stop her and continued to bake and sell her cakes and jams from her garage.

Since its inception the amount raised each year has steadily grown but this

year has been the best to date by raising £4,200. Which is a fantastic amount and especially poignant with it being the 25th anniversary of coffee mornings in the village.

Every year the support from friends, family and helpers who make not just the main event happen but also support in other ways throughout the year mean that the village's fundraising efforts continue to go from strength to strength but most of all it continues to bring the community together for a great cause.

Everyone knows who Macmillan are and the wonderful work they do to support people going through such difficult times.

"I love baking and get a lot of enjoyment out of it and would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the village and beyond who are so supportive in making our fundraising a success"





The commemorative recipe book was on sale at her coffee morning as an additional way of raising even more funds.

She continued: "The recipe book went down a storm on the day. It's full of some lovely recipes for people to try and been a huge success in raising extra funds for the charity."

Kirsteen Plop, regional fundraising manager for South and West Scotland said: "What an incredible amount of money Sadie has raised over the years. We cannot thank her enough for her support of Macmillan and to everyone who goes along to sample her baking.

"She's a real inspiration and we just want to say a huge thank you to her for raising what are such vital funds for people living with cancer." In November there was a motion in parliament raised by our local MSP which offered further recognition for the village efforts.

Cancer Fundraising for Blackridge Coffee Morning Group

That the Parliament congratulates the Blackridge Coffee Morning Group on its remarkable achievement of hosting the World's Biggest Coffee Morning for Macmillan Cancer Support for 25 years in a row; notes that the Group has now raised over £40,000 during that time to help support cancer patients; recognises the work and dedication this takes from hosting it in a garage during the COVID-19 pandemic to the recent event in the Craig Inn Community Centre, and congratulates everyone involved over the years.

Finally for recognition of the continued dedication to raising money and awareness of MacMillan Cancer Support, Sadie has also been short-listed for Fundraiser of the Year at the Edinburgh and Lothians Local Hero Awards 2022 and will attend a gala event at the Sheraton in Edinburgh in December.

Good luck Sadie and thank you!



THIS YEAR WE RAISED £4,200

COMBINED TOTAL OVER 25 YEARS

£41,533.65

Macmillan Cancer Support, registered charity in England and Wales (261017), Scotland (SC039907) and the Isle of Man (604). Also operating in Northern Ireland.







CRAIG INN COMMUNITY CENTRE

Craig Inn centre is all about bringing the community together, so why not come along and participate in some of our classes.

Here are just some of our classes:

MONDAY			
Craft Class	9.30am - 12.30pm		
Gentle Exercise	11.00am - 11.45am		
Monday Club	1.00pm - 3.30pm		
Railway Club	6.30pm		
TUESDAY			
Art Class	5.45pm - 9.00pm		
WEDNESDAY			
Tutti Music for the kids with the talented Alison Pinkerton	10.15am - 11.30am		
Railway Club	6.30pm		
Camera Club	7.00pm - 9.45pm		
THURSDAY			
OAP Bowls for the more mature adults	1.30pm - 4.00pm		
Steps Dance Class Kids try your dancing skills	4.00pm - 9.30pm		

	FRIDA	Υ
Tut	ti Music	10.15am - 11.15am

These are just some of the classes available to the community, if you want to start up a new group please contact the centre as we are always looking for new ventures.



Knit Wits (Knitting Group)

The centre will be holding events throughout the year here are just a few:

6.30pm -9.00pm

- Sunday 22nd January 1.00pm 4.00 pm Family Railway Event
- Sunday 2nd April 1.00pm 4.00 pm
 Family Egg Hunt with face painter and entertainment
- Sunday 29th October
 Family Halloween Event

Watch out for further information on more events.



AN ENERGISING OVERVIEW OF BLAWHORN MOSS

What an exciting year for the Blawhorn Moss National Nature Reserve team! It's a year since the new stretch of boardwalk began construction. The opening of the boardwalk in March was long-anticipated, as we were finally able to offer more circular walks for visitors to the reserve. You can now walk across much more of the peat bog, taking in the wildness of the moss and the views over to the wind farm.

There's even a little stopping point halfway, encouraging you to pause and take a pew. The installation of this bench was a bit tricky – a heavy, green oak bench plus wet bog makes for an awkward and squelchy working day. But it was totally worth it to sit down afterwards and look towards the wetland area by the little patch of pine trees. It's worth keeping an eye out for wildlife here, as it is a popular hang-out spot for Grey Herons, Kestrels and Buzzards.

SRUC Oatridge students were a massive help in finishing the boardwalk, enduring the wintry weather and adding hundreds of grip-strips to the new walkway. A fresh group of Oatridge students returned at the beginning of November to assist with replacing the boundary fence near the Blawhorn Moss car park. As they dug 1m-deep holes for the larger straining posts, they came across some small lumps of coal!

This find reminded me of the history of the reserve and of the surrounding area's industrial heritage. West Lothian used to have 25 collieries (coal mines and associated buildings) in the area and, in fact, Blawhorn Moss was bought from the National Coal Board in 1979 before becoming a National Nature Reserve in 1980. This reminder of past coal-mining history is a stark contrast to the nearby wind turbines producing the much cleaner energy of today.

The resulting clearer air has been filling the lungs of our youth of today. Blackridge Primary 6 pupils have been enjoying visits to Blawhorn Moss to learn about its natural and cultural history. Their first taster of bog life was a bit of a soggy venture onto the moss where we told stories, made 'Green Man' faces in the trees, and measured the depth of the peat through the relentless drizzle. Thankfully, their 2nd visit saw drier weather as they built a lovely wildlife hibernaculum, or 'bug hotel', ready for creatures to curl up into for the winter. Whilst I know we may be huddling by the heaters this hibernation season, we hope to still see you coming to our beautiful reserve to get some fresh air, admire the views and blow the cobwebs away.





Barbauchlaw Medical Practices ARMADALE & BLACKRIDGE



The GP practice is closed on the following public holidays so please ensure that you have enough medication to last you during these closures.

Monday 26th and Tuesday 27th December 2022

Monday 2nd and Tuesday 3rd Jan<u>uary 2023</u>



Please call 111 if you require medical attention during the above days.



We would like to wish our patients a very happy Christmas and a bright and prosperous New Year.











CHRISTMAS - DECEMBER 2022 #Blackridgestars Shine Again



MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
		30 Christmas tree up	1 Christmas classroom doors	2 Festive Friday
5	Christmas STEM Day P1 - P3	Whole school Christmas lunch	8 Christmas STEM Day P4 - P7	9 Festive Friday
12 ELC Christmas Stay and Play 2-3	13	P4-P7 #Blackridgestars shine @ Christmas	P4-P7 #Blackridgestars shine @ Christmas	16 Happiness Day - Christmas
			ELC Christmas Stay and Play 2-3	
19	20 p _{1-p7}	21	P1 - P3: 11.00 - 12.30 P4 - P5: 1.30 - 3.00	23 Santais Coming!
ELC - Party Day	Church visit	Panto Day 🎤 👢 🌁	P7 - P7: 6.00 - 7.30	Last day of term



BLACKRIDGE PRIMARY LOCAL AUTHORITY REVIEW MAY 2022

In May 2022 we had review of the school by the Local Authority. This looked at different aspects as well as the next steps we should be making to further improve our school.

Evaluative Analysis of School's Current position

- The leadership team and staff create a welcoming, calm and nurturing
 environment for learners and families. There is a purposeful, positive ethos and
 the school's values are evident in the supportive interactions witnessed across
 the school. Learners state that they feel safe, respected and listened to and
 they speak positively about relationships with staff.
- The refreshed vision, values and positive relationships policy have been co-created with the school community. There is a clear emphasis on high expectations and standards which is motivating all and is supporting improvement.
- Almost all children demonstrate enthusiasm for their learning and engage
 positively with learning experiences. Staff give clear instructions and
 explanations and learning environments are well-organised and purposeful.
 There is improved use of the outdoor space and local woodlands to enhance
 learning.
- Most learners make good progress from prior levels of attainment and increasingly they can reflect on their progress, strengths and next steps.
- Children in Primary 1 benefit from a rich, play pedagogy environment which is significantly enhancing their learning and engagement.
- Approaches to assessment and monitoring and tracking have been refreshed and there is increased ownership for staff.
- Most learners achieve expected levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy and attainment is either ahead or in line with schools of a similar demographic

No one should have no one!



Need help?

Call us ANYTIME on: 0800 4 70 80 90

The Silver Line is the only free confidential helpline providing information, friendship and support to older people, open 24 hours a day, every day of the year.





Do you look after a child who has a disability or other additional support needs?





SIGNPOST IS HERE FOR YOU!

What is Signpost?

Signpost is a voluntary organisation which offers information and support to anyone involved with a young person who has additional needs of any kind from birth to 18. We also support parents/carers whose children are awaiting diagnosis.

Our staff understand:

- What questions to ask, and who to ask
- What support you can access, for you or for your child, or their siblings
- How to help your child find friends and social opportunities
- · How to get help if school is difficult
- How to manage behaviour
- Who can help if you feel low or feel like you can't cope
- · Funding or other benefits to apply for

Let us help you to make plans to go forward - there is always support on hand.

Support Available:

- Support from experienced front-line staff for families of children who have any kind of additional support needs (no diagnosis needed).
- A single point of contact for enquiries/questions on any topic
- A 1:1 confidential 'listening ear' if you just need to talk things through or make plans.
- Use of free "Family Passes" for days out (members only)
- · Contact via telephone, email, Facebook or website, or visit our office for a chat
- 'self-service' information available on our website.
- partnership working with other agencies to improve local services
- awareness-raising presentations and information/social events
- appropriate training to support parents/carers & professionals to meet specific needs of children.



Contact Signpost at: Tel: 01506 431 123 (helpline) Email: enquiries@signpost-online.co.uk www.signpost-online.co.uk Facebook: Signpost - West Lothian Or drop in to see us: Livingston Family Centre, 5 Jackson Place, Livingston EH54 6RH

CHRISTMAS LIGHT SHOW

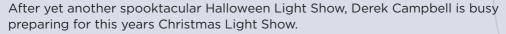












Derek's October show at Leishman Court attracted over 3500 visitors and featured a towering jack-o'-lantern and boasted millions of bulbs and an LED screen to get everyone into the spirit of Halloween.

The **Christmas Light Show** is well under way and they cant wait to deliver yet again another amazing show for you all with all money raised going to Glasgow's Children's Hospital Charity.

CHRISTMAS LIGHT SHOW - DATES & TIMES

FRIDAY 9th DECEMBER
SATURDAY 10th DECEMBER
SUNDAY 11th DECEMBER
MONDAY 12th DECEMBER
FRIDAY 16th DECEMBER
SATURDAY 17th DECEMBER
SUNDAY 18th DECEMBER
MONDAY 19th DECEMBER
FRIDAY 23rd DECEMBER
SATURDAY 24th DECEMBER

5.00pm, 6.30pm and 8.00pm 5.00pm, 6.30pm and 8.00pm 5.00pm, 6.30pm and 8.00pm Autism Friendly (no music) 6.00pm 5.00pm, 6.30pm and 8.00pm 5.00pm, 6.30pm and 8.00pm 5.00pm, 6.30pm and 8.00pm Autism Friendly (low music) 6.00pm 5.00pm, 6.30pm and 8.00pm 5.00pm, 6.30pm and 8.00pm

They are taking **requests for personalised messages** to be displayed during the show and will have the singing faces read your message out loud for your little ones or loved ones. It is £5.00 per message, 10 slots available per show!!! All monies will be donated to the nominated charities.

For more information visit "Westrigg Electrical Light Shows" on Facebook

PLEASE NOTE FOR EVERYONES SAFETY
PLEASE PARK ON MAIN STREET - NO PARKING ON LEISHMAN COURT
PLEASE DO NOT BLOCK ANY DRIVEWAYS



IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

IMPORIANT TELEPHONE	NONDERS
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	0045 7404050
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
•	