



Auchenblae Messenger

Founded in 1999 by Donald B. Rennie

Winter Edition



VOLUME 25 ISSUE 4

DECEMBER 2023

From The Editors

Letter from the Editors

First it's hello from Chris and Keith Ridgway. This is our first attempt at editing the Messenger after the sad passing of Barbara Strouts, which will be a hard act to follow. It will take us a while to get to know regular and new contributors but hopefully not too long.

It has been useful to look back at the Messenger archives. Although the first edition was in 1999 the first on-line edition we found was March 2013 when the devastation caused by the floods was a major talking point. Nothing changes!!

In this our first edition we hope to encourage new contributors and perhaps introduce a couple of new items. In future editions we would like to do a feature article on a local group or club. In this edition we have a piece on the Howe O' the Mearns Pipe Band, who support local events and music teaching at the Primary School. Please let us know if you would like a longer feature on your Club, Group or Association. The edition also includes details of the allocation of the Auchenblae Community Fund, which is administered by the Auchenblae and District Community Association (ADCA).

It wouldn't be Christmas without a Christmas Quiz so we have included a 20 question quiz covering music, TV, General Knowledge and Books and Panto. As this is our first attempt at editing we have pulled in a favour from an old friend who let it slip that his unusual hobby is producing crosswords for magazines. We suspect he wishes he'd never mentioned it but we hope he will become a regular contributor to the messenger and his first crossword is included in this edition.

Many thanks to all our contributors, to Kevin our publisher, to Macphies for printing copies for our non-digital readers and to you, our public for still wanting to see the Messenger. We will collect again in mid-February for the March edition.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and all the best for 2024,
Chris & Keith

The Messenger— e-Newsletter

Due to costs & 'staying green' The Messenger continues to be published online at www.mearns.org/auchenblae

The very few printed copies that have been requested are provided by the very kind assistance of **Hazel Horrigan** and **Alastair Macphie**.

All the best,
Kevin (Publisher)

Auchenblae Bowling Club

After the recent ravages of Covid and then storms this was the first full season of bowling held at the Den. The green held up well all season and supported regular Tuesday afternoon and Friday evening open sessions.

The competitive season started with an excellent 7-Ends open competition held in conjunction with Auchenblae Gala. During the season we managed to run the Ladies and Gents Singles, The Begg Shield Mixed Pairs and the Novice Cup. The winners were:

Ladies Singles Silver Salver: Mirjam Currie; Gents Singles Cup: Robert MacNamara
Begg Shield: Ann Galbraith and Colin Hay; Novice Cup: Gareth Whitby

Trophies were presented by Club President (Keith Ridgway) at the end of season dinner held at Clatterin Brig.

The new season will start as soon as possible in the spring and new members will be very welcome; Interested members please email Keith Ridgway at keith.ridgway@me.com or Ralph Currie at ralphcurrie@hotmail.com



Gareth Whitby—Novice Cup



Anne Galbraith and Colin Hay—Begg Cup



Mirjam Currie—Ladies Silver Salver

Waste, recycling and bins

Cllr George Carr, Conservative, Mearns Ward

This week we took the decision to re-open all our household waste recycling facilities other than Westhill and Inverurie where traffic congestion is an issue. This will mean that Laurencekirk will no longer need booking, nor barriers. Trade waste will be regulated by the teams as previously, so I think this is a good move and reflects your views when the Council surveyed on this matter.

Currently all your black bin waste goes to the new energy from waste plant in Altens, and the waste heat is used to heat homes in Kincorth and Torry as well as generating electricity which feeds back into the grid with the Council getting a payment for the energy generated. The former SUEZ recycling plant is also about to rise from the ashes now the insurance is settled after the fire last year, with a target reopening of Christmas 2024. This means we have the potential to divert our re-cyclates there again, and see them efficiently sorted, baled, and exported for wider recycling into new materials.

My rule of thumb is that anything we can do to make our systems simple tends to lead to increasing efficiency, higher recycling and saves money. Currently Aberdeenshire is on a journey and we have some way to go to achieve this, but reopening the HWRCs is a first step in the right direction.

Can I take this opportunity to wish all Messenger readers all best wishes for the festive period and for 2024.

CHRISTMAS OVER THE MEARNS

A stumbling mist cradles brooding hills,
gaunt peaks shoulder their tired skies,
Ragged winds scatter fallen remnants of
autumn, under frosts tenacious grip a cold
earth sighs.

To a snow cast landscape the holly's blood red
beacons burn bright,
Advent candles turn the gloom from darkness
to light.

As a child is born, in a stable, in the still of the night.

Throughout the Mearns tall majestic beeches
parade with naked bough,
'Tis the harbingers of Christmas that echo
across Kincardineshire now!
Frost borne winds tease Cairn O' Mount's
heather lined ridge,
Drumtochty Forest evergreens extol in
silvered foliage;
Fettercairn's merry burns banter to their
rippled notch,
On Yuletide's eve sombre pines, sentries of
the slopes keep silent watch.

As a child is born, in a stable, in the still of the night.

As nature scribes winter's chapter to season's
book,
Festive lights a'twinkle spread cheer across the
Mearns homely nooks;
On Christmas day, church bells message of joy
ring clear,
Heralding Christmas and a Holy day drawn
near.

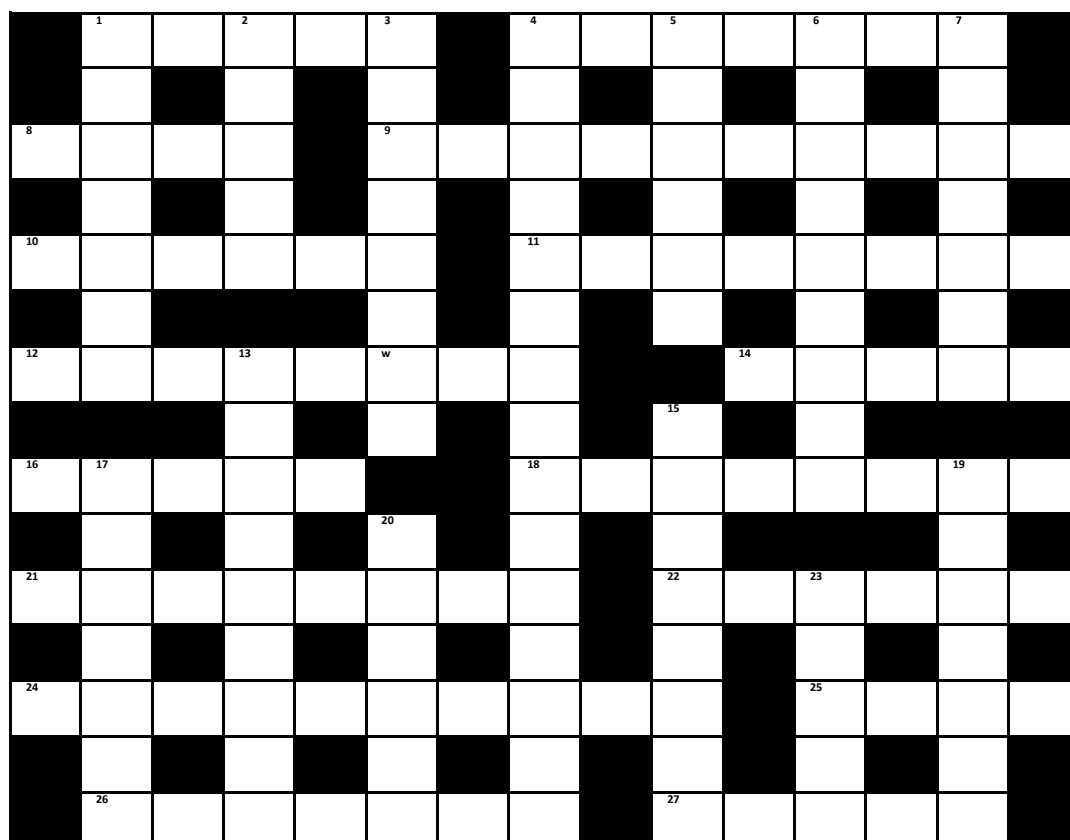
As a child is born, in a stable, in the still of the night.

© Peter Morriss

YULETIDE PEACE

Across the Mearns, homely
nooks fires set to amber flame,
How still the night lies that clear
star strewn skies acclaim;
The blessed spirit of Christmas
on children's faces given lease,
A landscape in the quietness
of Yuletide Eve at peace.

© Peter Morriss



Across				Down			
1	It might be a delight in the theatre at Christmas (5)			1	No room here? Possibly seen in the right light, only more so (7)		
4	It's believed by nearly everyone – a myth with no knight (7)			2	Early flight here say? It's an unknown port (5)		
8	Manchester? Mexico? Bethlehem once? (4)			3	Official returning following rants about handover (8)		
9	Hatred of processing carbon here? (10)			4	20, 23, may be an example – according to 7 (1,9,5).		
10	Unwraps, unties, and brings things together (6)			5	In a superior way, one may be leaping on the fringes of lunacy (6)		
11	Perhaps denizen of Cyprus and Israel surprisingly forgot answer (8)			6	It allows work for a beginner comic (5, 4)		
12	Poet returning, footballer following – most dreary (8)			7	What the _____? Dizzy, sickened, lacking energy (7)		
14	Santa, missing a left, finding direction provides reason (5)			13	As seeing is said to promote? (9)		
16	In maturity, the Italian is athletic (5)			15	Scoundrel bagged – bagged! – and tumbled		
18	Leaves a group working at the beginning of September (8)			17	Gathered good, frugal ends of cabbage and chard (7)		
21	Chef first cooked ale, rice and veg (8)			19	Christmas show, timeless, English not Indian, is simplicity itself (7)		
22	We hear it's like sweets, honest! (6)			20, 23	Mum is nearly on time for Carol (6,5)		
24	Red Engine, turning around at the end of the line, is cleverly constructed (10)						
25	Fun - too bad it's around lunchtime (4)						
26	Idiot, face hidden, using finger (7)				SOLUTION ON BACK PAGE		

Auchenblae Community Fund

Auchenblae & District Community Association (ADCA) are pleased to share that all 10 groups who applied to Auchenblae Community Fund in 2023 were granted funding.

In October, the panel awarded a total of £75,815.86 to a total of 14 out of 15 projects and Fred Olsen approved these decisions in November. We are expecting award notices and funds to be distributed in December with a detailed report provided at our AGM in February.

Following conversations with 4 group representatives about their applications and receiving assurances that each was happy with the proposed decisions for their group, 11 projects received full funding, 3 projects received partial funding and one group had an application declined.

ADCA committee also agreed to provide emergency funding to both the Parks Committee and Auchenblae Pre-School Group as they risked the closure without our support. We awarded £4,429.94 to the Parks Committee and £18,000 to APSG in early 2023.

The sum accrued to date for 2024 is £32,883.63 for Midhill 1. There will be further index linked accrual for Midhill 2 but we will not know this sum until early 2024. We look forward to sharing more information in February 2024.

Have a lovely Christmas & a Happy New Year! We can't wait to see your projects come to fruition.

Decisions are as follows:

Group	decision	granted
Auchenblae & District Comm Assoc	yes	30,000.00
Auchenblae Pre-School Group	yes	3,000.00
Auchenblae Drama Group	yes	2,189.96
Drumlithie Clay Pigeon Club	75%	2,061.00
Auchenblae Community Café	yes	2,000.00
Auchenblae Defibrillator Group	yes	1,713.60
Auchenblae Heritage Society 1	50%	5,935.00
Auchenblae Heritage Society 2	yes	315.00
Auchenblae Parent Council	yes	6,338.96
Auchenblae Parks Committee 1	yes	15,977.22
Auchenblae Parks Committee 2	remainder 2023 allocation	3,489.47
Auchenblae Scouts 1	yes	890.70
Auchenblae Scouts 2	yes	974.95
Auchenblae Scouts 3	yes	930.00
Auchenblae Scouts 4	no	-



SSEN Pylons

Kate Mathews

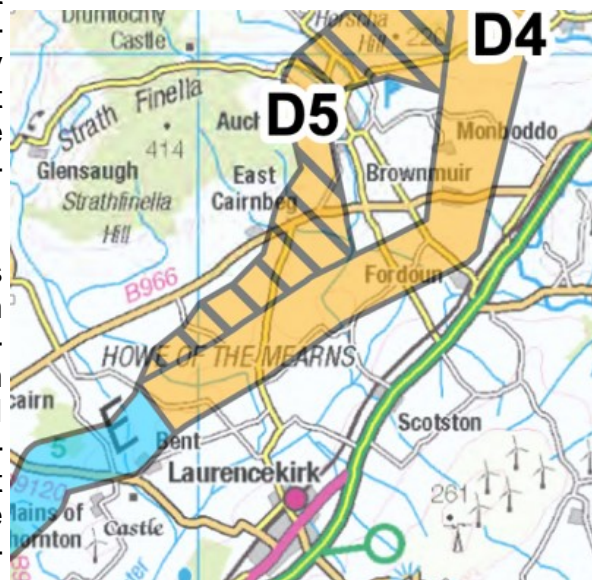
SSEN has finally published their Report on Consultation following their flawed public consultation exercise earlier this year.

Campaign group, Save Our Mearns, are considering the content of this report but are deeply concerned at SSEN proposals to move the substation from Fiddes to Fetteresso Forest. The result is two newly proposed corridors running northeast to southwest either side of Auchenblae which simply shifts the devastating impact onto a different part of our community.

Save Our Mearns believe that alternative solutions to the energy transmission problem have not been properly considered or costed and that the socio-economic impact on our communities has not been properly assessed. The price our communities will pay as a result of SSEN's Net Zero projects is punitive and makes a mockery of the Scot Gov Just Transition promise. We will continue to raise awareness of these projects for those in our community who still do not know about the plans. oppose SSEN for overhead lines and substations in our region.

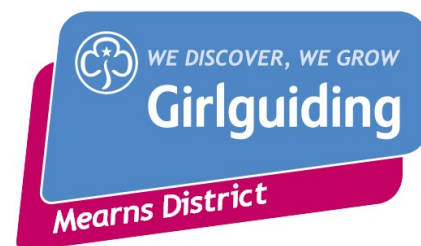
SSEN has provided limited information here: [Kintore-Fiddes-Tealing 400kV OHL Connection - SSEN Transmission \(ssen-transmission.co.uk\)](https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk) and are proposing further consultation events in early 2024.

If you have concerns about these proposals, please contact your local Cllrs, MP and/or MSP and if you wish to follow or get involved with the Save Our Mearns campaign, please join [Save our Mearns | Facebook](#)



Auchenblae Guides

Girl Guiding in Auchenblae
Gillian Watson
District Commissioner for Mearns



We currently have 3 sections running in Auchenblae village

1st Auchenblae Rainbows who meet at the Church Hall on a Wednesday 530-630pm

1st Auchenblae Brownies who meet in the School Hall on a Monday from 6-730pm

1st Auchenblae Guides who meet on a Wednesday from 7-9pm

We are currently recruiting for an additional Leader/ Leaders for Auchenblae Guides. All sections are always looking for new girls to join their Units as without new girls and volunteers the units would not run.

At the end of September some of the Auchenblae Guides went to a District Guide camp at our site in Fettercairn and both Brownies and Guides are now planning for their next camp at the end of March.

For more information on Rainbows, Brownies and Guides please see the enclosed posters.



Your local Girlguiding group needs:

We are looking for Leaders for
Auchenblae Guides (10-14), Laurencekirk
Rainbows (5-7) and Laurencekirk
Rangers (14-18)

Contact via messenger for a chat or
click on the link below for more
information



**Register
today**

girlguiding.org.uk/volunteer



We open up a
world of possibilities
to girls from 4-18-years
-old, one where they
can do anything.

It's totally flexible,
you can help as much
or as little as you want.

Join us for nonstop fun,
learning and adventures.





Girlguiding

Mearns District



For ages 4 to 7

Rainbows welcomes all girls to come together to laugh, learn and have fun in a creative, safe space. It's a wonderful world of adventure, week after week, just for her.



Brownies is full of firsts: she can explore her creative side, get out into the great outdoors, learn how to look after herself, others and the world we live in.



For ages 7 to 10



For ages 10 to 14

Guides is a fun-filled space, she'll have one big adventure with friends, learn how to be herself, explore the things she loves and do stuff she's never done before!



Rangers is an open and relaxed space, where you can regularly meet up, go on trips at home and abroad, to help make a difference to the things you care about.



For ages 14 to 18

Find a group near you girlguiding.org.uk

Registered charity number: SC044356

Auchenblae Cinema Club

Auchenblae Community Cinema

Auchenblae Community Cinema screened its first film on the 16th of January 2016 and up until Covid hit we were screening a family matinee and main evening film every month. We generally managed to break even over this time and just managed to keep the cinema going. Unfortunately Covid really depleted our finances as we still had to pay out for insurance and licences etc. but had no money coming in. At the end of last year we cancelled our yearly licence and have found it very difficult to get the cinema up and running again.

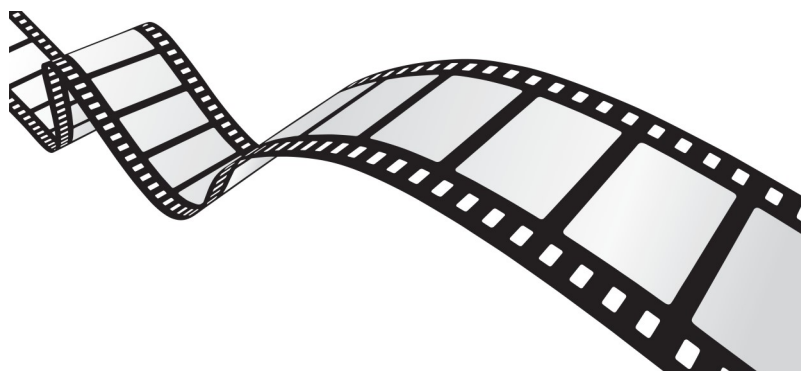


But now we can report that thanks to funds from the Tullo wind farm and Auchenblae Community Fund we will be able to get the cinema up and running at full capacity with an improved cinema experience. We have purchased a new specialist pre-amp processor for Dolby Atmos and DTS surround sound which has greatly improved the clarity of the sound and dialog in particular. We also now have a personal hearing loop system for the hard of hearing. Plus we have been able to upgrade our projector to a professional installation 4K laser projector with industry standard contrast ratio for a greatly improved image quality. So we are able to say that we can now offer the residents of Auchenblae and the Mearns a cinema experience close to what you would get in a commercial cinema.

The Funds from the Auchenblae Community Fund will also allow us to present a full programme of films for the coming year. We would love to get community input on what films you would like to see in the coming year and would encourage anyone interested to get in touch and join the cinema group to help with screening films and selecting films for our 2024 program. We will be having informal fun meetings bi-monthly in the village meeting room.

We are also looking for anyone interested in training to operate the sound and projection equipment so they can become a Auchenblae Hall AV technician, with the aim of them helping to screen films and run sound / lights at hall events. If you are over 18 and interested, please contact us.

admin+cinema@theblae.org.



Mearns FM

By Alex Russon



Mearns FM has been on the airwaves since 1993; three decades of radio serving the local community. It's run by volunteers, a merry band of two dozen or so presenters broadcasting from the Portlethen studio or from the comfort of their own homes.

Presenting at Mearns FM is a labour of love with local characters showcasing their own idiosyncratic styles, preferred genres of music and tastes in humour. Some are in your face, some laid back, others in the middle, but all are devoted to the station, committed and fun!

There are specialist and generalist shows. If your preference is either heavy rock, country, disco, indie, classic hits or all of the above you'll find what you want at Mearns FM. There are talk shows too; movies, politics and local affairs. You'll find what you want at www.mearnsfm.org.uk, an excellent website detailing the weekly schedule in full.

Our community is very dear to us and we're pleased to be heavily involved in assisting local events, providing sound systems, music and announcers for galas, fetes and shows. If you have an event that needs help in this regard, or you simply want your event advertising on the airwaves, just get in touch and we'd be pleased to assist – 01569 766406 or events@mearnsfm.org.uk

Auchenblae listeners are invited to tune in on the FM frequency 107.3 or listen online. Crank it up and happy listening!



West Mearns Parish
Church of Scotland

CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME

ALL ARE WARMLY INVITED

CHRISTMAS EVE

FAMILY CAROL SERVICE
Auchenblae Church
6:30pm

MIDNIGHT SERVICE
Fettercairn Church
11.15pm

CHRISTMAS DAY
Glenbervie Church
11am

The Howe O' The Mearns Pipe Band

From Stonehaven to Fordoun via Belize, Berlin, Norway and Edinburgh and a few other places in between.

If you are a piper in the Gordon Highlanders you will almost certainly have seen a lot of the world. That's the case for the Howe O' The Mearns Pipe Band, Pipe Major, Davie Duncan. Starting his piping journey in Stonehaven Davie joined the Gordon Highlanders as a boy soldier and travelled the world before returning to the Mearns to establish the Howe O' The Mearns Pipe Band in 2011. In between he has piped countless times for the Queen and now King Charles and had the honour of being the solo piper at the Edinburgh tattoo on no less than three occasions.

The Howe O' The Mearns Pipe Band really is a family affair with Davie's wife Caroline teaching Tenor drum, son Corey and Davie teaching Snare drum and daughter Daniel and Davie teaching Bagpipes the band has a strong family commitment.

The band's first event was the Marykirk raft race in May 2012 and since then it has grown from strength to strength playing at a wide variety of events around the area. The band now play at Laurencekirk Gala, Stonehaven Highland Games, Johnshaven Fish Festival, Inverbervie Gala and the annual Thomson Vintage Vehicle Rally held in Stonehaven. Close to home the band regularly feature at the Drumtochty Highland Games.

As Davie likes to point out Howe O' The Mearns Pipe Band is a teaching Band. They teach all ages and abilities from the youngest 6-year-old to our oldest in their 70s. Davie's family teach on Friday at Auchenblae Primary and St Cyrus Primary giving free tuition in school time to provide the children with the opportunity to learn traditional Scottish instruments and then hopefully join the Pipe Band.

With 22 playing members and more learners on the way the band is growing but they are always happy to welcome new learners or indeed playing Pipers/drummers.

The band wear the new Graham of Montrose Tartan and although currently self-funded the band would love to get a sponsor. Anyone out there wanting to assist the Band by sponsoring would be very welcome.

If anyone wants to join the band as a playing member or learner please contact Pipe Major, Davie Duncan on 01561 377426 or contact via Facebook @the Howe O' the Mearns Pipe Band



Art for Art's sake

By Jennifer Colbeck

When I was asked to write a short article about art for this issue the first thing that came to mind was the question that many people ask me about my work.

"How long does it take to complete a painting"?

The answer that I prefer to give is not in hours and minutes but this:

"It takes a Lifetime"

A life time of observation, of developing ideas and mastering techniques.

A lifetime of playing with colour and balancing composition.

A lifetime of dreaming about images and problem solving while I sleep.

A lifetime writing down ideas, sketching possibilities and creating colour studies.

A lifetime of learning from my successes and always from my mistakes.

I can only hope that somehow the result of my endeavours will resonate with the viewer.

Like so many artists the desire to create something of worth is paramount, not solely for monetary terms but instead that it says and means something to another person.

The common view of an artist being a solitary individual working away in their garret can be true to some extent. Personally, I need my own space and time whilst working. The process is both challenging and rewarding but the work of art remains incomplete until shared with others.

Sharing art opens eyes and minds to new perspectives, ideas and values.

People can be touched during their happiest or saddest moments, evoking memories and bringing hope, joy and in some cases healing. In this crazy world with all its diverse problems the role of the artist is needed more than ever.

The skills of our creative collective of musicians, actors, writers, song writers and artists in any medium are crucial to the wellbeing of our society. They can lift our spirits, challenge our thinking and create restorative moments in our lives.

So why not immerse yourself, take the plunge and treat yourself to the experience of visiting an artist or gallery soon. These are safe and welcoming spaces where you may be pleasantly surprised that you connect with some of the gifts that have been created for your benefit.

We are so fortunate to have some wonderful galleries nearby who promote many talented artists Here are a few who are currently showing their winter exhibitions and are well worth a visit.

Eion Stewart Fine Art Gallery, Stonehaven.
Gallery Heinzel, Chattan Place, Aberdeen
Milton art Gallery near Banchory
Meffan Museum and Gallery, Forfar.



*The Clean Slate by
Jennifer Colbeck*

You are also welcome to visit my studio in Auchenblae to view my range of paintings, Just contact me to arrange a time. Or if my sign is out on the roadside just pop in. Jenny Watt Colbeck, Bridgend Studio, The Waters. 01561 320998 jennyclbeck1@gmail.com

Auchenblae 2024 Calendar



Again this year Jenny Thomson has produced a fabulous calendar of local scenes. The calendars, which cost £7 each are being sold in aid of the Auchenblae Pre-school Group, who meet in the Mutual Hall as well as their Outdoor Area in the old Curling Rink. Each of the twelve scenes, plus the cover are from her post card collection and range from 1909 onwards. The calendar includes an early photo of a horse and carriage waiting to collect passengers off the train at Fordoun Railway Station, which closed in 1956. Jenny has already sent three calendars abroad and a number to supports elsewhere in the UK, who want a reminder of life in and around Auchenblae village.

A copy of the calendar is on display at the Premier Shop in Auchenblae where Billy and Sabz have kindly agreed to sell them on Jenny's behalf. Alternatively please email Jenny direct at jennythomson1@hotmail.com



Christmas Quiz

Music

1. Which Christmas carol describing Mary's journey to Bethlehem has been recorded by Gracie Fields, The Beverley Sisters, Vera Lynn, Nina and Frederik and Aled Jones?
2. German-based disco group Boney M had a number one hit in 1978 with which Christmas song?
3. In the official single chart table who has had the most Christmas number 1s
4. What song was the UK Christmas number 1 in both 1975 and 1991?
5. In the song "Santa Claus is Coming to Town", how many times does he check his list?

Christmas TV

6. There have been several "Doctor Who" Christmas Specials. One prominently featured an alien race, known for saying "Delete!". What was the name of the alien race?
7. The animated character Wallace, from "Wallace and Gromit", has a particular fondness for a particular cheese. What is the name of the cheese?
8. How many ghosts show up in "A Christmas Carol"?
9. What is the name of the real New York based department store featured in the movie "Miracle on 34th Street"?
10. What's the name of the carrot that features in the Aldi TV ads?

General Knowledge

11. Which British monarch delivered the first ever Christmas message?
12. The Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square, London, is an annual gift from which nation
13. Father Christmas has three reindeer with names beginning with the letter "D". What are those names?
14. In which tin of chocolates would you find a green triangle?
15. In the song "The twelve days of Christmas" what was the total number of gifts given over the 12 days?

Books and Panto

16. In Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, what do the Dursleys give Harry for Christmas?
17. In which fictional land is it always winter but never Christmas?
18. Which fairy tale inspired the first gingerbread houses?
19. In which panto would you find the character King Rat?
20. In the panto "Jack and the Beanstalk" what phrase is used by the Giant when he smells Jack?

And one for the kids

What did one snowman say to the other snowman?

ANSWERS ON BACK PAGE



Dates for your diary

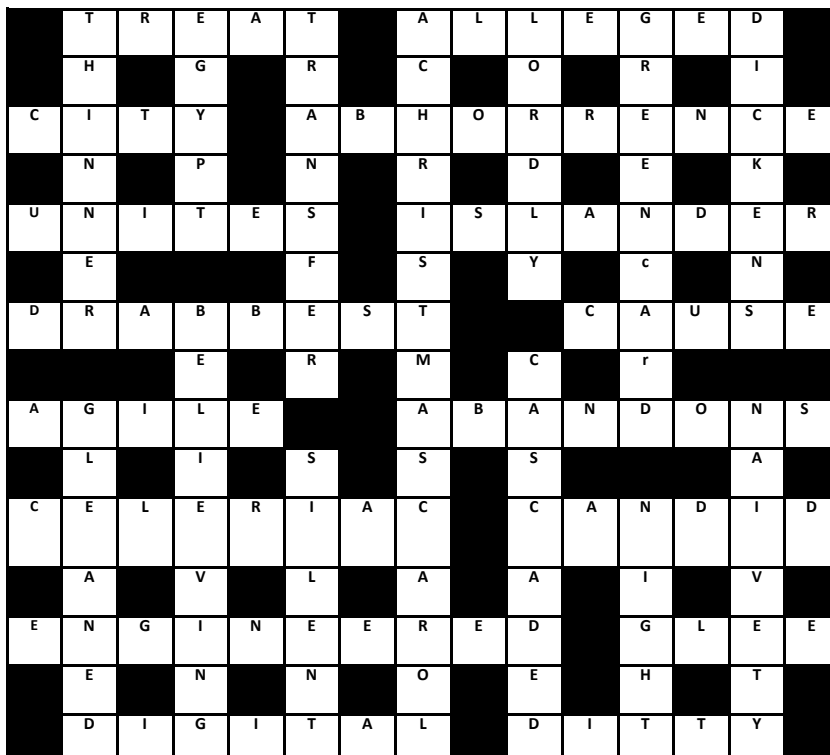
Watch this space!



Check out the social community network online, advertise events, book the hall, promote your group and lots more: [www.http://theblae.org/](http://theblae.org/)

The Auchenblae Messenger is available online for convenient reading or ex-residents wanting to stay in touch. Find us at www.mearns.org/auchenblae

Crossword Solution



Christmas quiz answers

1. Little Donkey, 2. Mary's Boy Child, 3. Ladbaby, 4. Bohemian Rhapsody by Queen, 5. Twice, 6. The Cybermen, 7. Wensleydale, 8. Four - Christmas Past, Present and Future, and Jacob Marley, 9. Macy's, 10. Kevin, 11. George V in 1932, 12. Norway, 13. Dancer, Dasher, and Donner, 14. Quality Street, 15. 364, 16. 50 pence piece, 17. Narnia, 18. Hansel and Gretel, 19. Dick Whittington, 20. Fe Fi Fo Fum I Smell the Blood of an Englishman

And the one for the kids "Can you smell carrot?"

Messenger Production Team—Chris & Keith Ridgway, Kevin Newstead, Eddie Cairns

The publisher for this issue was **Kevin Newstead**