

BACKROAD PICTURE HOUSE

CINEMA
FOR ALL

With two screenings under our belt so far - we are going strong !!!! Thanks to everyone who attended the last two films, feedback has been only positive and attendance has been great.

Important to point out that the screening licence for each film costs between £100 and £120 (up to £160 if we want promotional pictures - note absence of ...) and we want to keep the ticket prices low - this means we need folk to come along to allow us to break even. So if you are swithering if you fancy a film or not - please come along anyway and bring your neighbour too.

Our feedback so far has suggested a myriad of films and genres, so the upcoming bunch (below) is pretty eclectic - hopefully something for everyone.

Tickets: £3 adult; £2 16 and under; free for under 5's
Venue: Fountainhall Village Hall

For comments, suggestions or offers of help, please contact Claudia on plenploth.00@btinternet.com

SUN 26 FEB : 3PM HUGO (U)

An orphan who lives in the walls of a Paris train station is wrapped up in a magical mystery. A film for all the family. You know the drill, bring your bean bags (we will not be running out of popcorn this time!)

Watch the trailer at www.youtube.com
search for: Hugo trailer

FRI 24 MAR : 8PM THELMA AND LOUISE (15)

Just in time for Mother's Day... the ultimate female road movie. Bring your mother, daughter (if she is 15 or over), sister, auntie, neighbours, friends and even your menfolk! PLUS BAR

Watch the trailer at www.youtube.com
search for: Thelma and Louise trailer

FRI 21 APR : 8PM HELL OR HIGH WATER (15)

Texan-set thriller with soulfulness and true grit, voted one of the best films of 2016. Were the critics right? PLUS BAR

Watch the trailer at www.youtube.com
search for: Hell or High Water trailer



Heartfulness
Through meditation, joy

MEDITATION GROUPS IN STOW

The children of Stow Primary know all about how good they feel after a session of Relaxation and Heartfulness Meditation (see Stow Primary School article p6) and now their Meditation Teacher Sarah Naylor, is offering adults the chance to feel this too, through two new groups she has set up in Stow.

An experienced practitioner and qualified trainer of Heartfulness Meditation, Sarah makes no charge for leading the meditation groups and welcomes everyone who would like to experience this kind of meditation, for a short time or on a regular basis, to join her on Tuesdays 9.30 - 10.30am or Thursdays 8.15 - 9.15pm at her home in Townfoot.

If you are interested in either of the Stow groups please contact Sarah on 01578 730482 or 07784 740179 in advance of the group you'd like to join so you can have a chat and be sure it's not a holiday that particular week - turning up and finding no-one there would be a wee bit disappointing!

Amongst all the stresses and strains of modern life, Heartfulness offers a simple and helpful approach to meditation and relaxation which is free and open to all, and where the emphasis is on the experience of the seeker.

Meditation has been practised for thousands of years and its benefits are well documented. These include a reduction in stress as well as improvements in health, concentration and focus.

When Buddha was asked
'What have you gained from meditation?'
He replied

'Nothing. However, I have lost anger, anxiety, depression, insecurity, and a fear of old age and death.'

More information about Heartfulness Meditation, and the option to engage in free meditation masterclasses via the web, can be found at www.heartfulness-uk.org

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT - A NEW ERA

In the latter part of last year, there was a proposal to create a landscaped space around a work of art to reflect the medieval status of Stow as a place of sanctuary. After a questionnaire and a public meeting, over 14 people generously offered to take an active part in the building of the space but there were not enough people able to take organisational roles in the project. With all the projects on the go in the village, this is hardly surprising. However, it is good to report that this proposal has sparked some interesting discussions.

Firstly, the Parish Church Board is considering whether it would be possible to extend the hours of opening the church building for periods of quiet contemplation and for potential visitors. Secondly, SBC have confirmed that the piece of land adjoining the park near the football clubhouse does belong to SBC and that officials would be happy to discuss community ownership should the desire arise in the future. The key clause in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 is this:

"Part 4 introduces a new provision for community bodies to purchase land which is abandoned, neglected or causing harm to the environmental wellbeing of the community, where the owner is not willing to sell that land. This is if the purchase is in the public interest and compatible with the achievement of sustainable development of the land."

If you would like to discuss the potential of this for our area, contact the Secretary to the Community Council, Jenny, on 01578 760297.

Newsletter ~~M~~atters

I have to admit I'm feeling a bit sheepish about this issue of the newsletter. In tribute to Bankhouse Farm (see page three) there are occasional sheep pictures scattered throughout the newsletter. I find that no baaaa'd thing and when you read the article I'm sure you'll agree it's entirely appropriate.

Back to the newsletter itself. The Community Council has applied to the Windfarm Panel for funding for another two years and for the newsletter to be increased to eight pages in each issue. At the time of going to press details of the Panel's decisions were not yet released; the outcome will be known in time for the next issue.

The rationale for seeking to double the size is the increase in the news from and about our community. The newsletter reaches 80% of the Parish (c. 400 homes) through their letterboxes four times a year, thanks to the team of volunteer distributors who receive their copies from Wendy Ball who magnificently organises the distribution, and this team walk, in the main, round our streets pushing the newsletter through doors. The balance is picked up from the shop and the café by more far-flung residents and visitors.

Alongside the increase in the news, I'd like to ask you to get in touch more to help shape the content. Who would you like to see 'In the Spotlight'? Who does a lot for our community and should be better known? Let me know and I'll contact them. Is there an organisation

you'd like to know more about - see page seven to learn a bit more about an organisation which has been around for a very long time and maybe what you know about it is very out of date? Are there other organisations you think deserve to be better known, or which you are intrigued about? Tell me about them and I'll follow it up.

I'd also appreciate some 'eyes' and 'ears' to help gather the news. If you know of something or someone that you think would interest the Parish, or want people to know about something but it isn't *your* news, do get in touch so I can follow it up to get it better known.

And at the moment I tend to use one of my own photos as a seasonally appropriate centrefold. It would be great to have photos coming in which the editorial team could choose from and acknowledge in each issue. The next issue is the Spring edition - if you have, or take, a photo which you think captures a sense of our area at that time of year, please email it to me and it may be in the next issue with due attribution.

I hope you enjoy this first edition of the newsletter in 2017. There's plenty going on in our area and I appreciate being a part of enabling that to be celebrated and shared more widely.

Still sheepish, Heather Johnston, Editor
e: heather@southcottage.co.uk t: 01578 730507



Stow Community Park committee would like to say a big thank you to all who donated to our JustGiving bench fund. Now that planning permission is in place for the new playpark we are busy applying for grants and fundraising.

If you have any great fundraising ideas and/or would like to help please do get in touch. Contact Sharon-Anne on 07528 541169



NUGGETS FROM
THE ARCHIVE

"Cardinal David Beaton was Archbishop of St Andrews and the last Roman Catholic cardinal in Scotland. He was a frequent visitor to Stow, between 1539 and 1546, where he kept a mistress at the manor house at Bowland."

IF YOU DON'T ALWAYS CLEAN UP AFTER YOUR DOG, PLEASE RESPOND TO THIS APPEAL TO DO SO NOW

AN APPEAL TO EVERYONE TO HELP SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF DOG FOULING

THIS COMMUNITY SAYS
NO TO DOG FOULING



BAG THE POO - ANY BIN WILL DO
Or an £80 fine awaits you



Once again the issue of dog mess fouling our parks, streets and fields is causing distress and fury. It is an unpleasant health hazard and the law is quite clear - 'THE LAW COVERS ALL PUBLIC OPEN SPACES. YOU MUST CLEAN-UP AFTER YOUR DOG on pavements, roads, footpaths, parks, football pitches, communal land, back greens, stairs, closes and any other land that is open to the public.' Farmers and their stock in the fields, particularly near the centre of Stow, are also affected as there is plenty of evidence that dogs are walked there by owners who don't clean up after their dog.

The Community Council has written about the problem to the Chief Executive of Scottish Borders Council with copies to the relevant Councillors but perhaps there's more we could do to help out.

DOG WARDENS WILL COME TO STOW IF THEY KNOW WHAT TIME THE DOG IS WALKED AND HAVE A DESCRIPTION OF THE DOG AND ITS OWNER

It would be best if dog owners picked up after their pet but if that doesn't happen, residents who know who the culprits are could help by making contact with Scottish Borders Council to pass on the information for the Dog Wardens to act upon. Reports can be made via the council website or by calling 0300 100 1800 and can be made anonymously if preferred. Offenders can be fined and taken to Court if the fine is not paid.



Would you eat this off your plate?



Then why should they



PLEASE BAG IT AND BIN IT

PLEASE ALWAYS CLEAN UP AFTER YOUR DOG

We all share this environment and we all need carry out our responsibilities as members of a community. Owning a dog means cleaning up its mess. Please be a responsible dog owner and clean up after your dog.

BANKHOUSE FARM IS SCOTTISH SHEEP FARM OF THE YEAR 2016

Congratulations to the Lofthouse family at Bankhouse farm for winning the AgriScot Scottish Sheep Farm of the Year 2016 award.

The small cattle and sheep farm, situated between Fountainhall and Stow, was up against twenty-one other sheep farms across Scotland for the coveted title. The award was presented to Graham and his wife Kathleen at the AgriScot event at Ingliston in November 2016.

The judges were impressed with Graham's drive to increase profitability and run an efficient, forward thinking business. He, along with Kathleen and parents Wilma and Bert, have made significant changes to the management of the farm over the last few years.

Graham has a keen interest in increasing the productivity of his grassland, part of which is running a paddock grazing system for his stock. This involves splitting fields into smaller areas using electric fences, the sheep spending one or two days in each area. They have an Easycare sheep breed that are natural wool shedders so no need to shear in the summer months. They have rethought the management of the stock during the winter months having lost over four miles of railway line which was previously used for out-wintering the animals.

Hamish Dykes, a director of Agriscot and one of the assessors summarised: "In an era where we are always told that big is best and expansion is key, Bankhouse turns this on its head and proves that a profitable sheep enterprise, and a viable income, can be generated from a smaller farm. The Lofthouse family well deserves this award."

The Lofthouses are thrilled to have been awarded 'Scottish Sheep Farm of the Year 2016' and look forward to the year ahead.



CONGRATULATIONS - THE AULD KIRK IS RESTORED TO ITSELF AND TO US

THEN



After two years of this important restoration project, the signs warning of the danger of the Auld Kirk crashing down, can finally be removed. So how did we get here?

The Community Council applied for windfarm funds to undertake essential repairs, local resident and lime builder Robin McMillan was contracted to carry out the work and for him it turned into an all-encompassing two years of intensely skilled analysis and skilled, historically sensitive restoration.

expected at the outset and there were many occasions when considerable creativity and persistence was required to find the best solution. It is to the credit of the vision of the Community Council, the support of Historic Scotland, but most of all, to the commitment and hands-on ingenuity and skill of Robert McMillan that we can safely visit the Auld Kirk and muse upon the magnificence of the original building, its history, and its contribution to Stow, whenever we choose. Thank you.

NOW



As the building is of great historical significance all was done in partnership with and to the standards required by Historic Scotland. A good working relationship was established and Historic Scotland has signed off on the satisfactory completion of the project.

Restoring the Auld Kirk was much more complex and dangerous than





Stow Highland Dance School

Thank you
to everyone who supported our
Annual Dancing Display on
Saturday 26 Nov 2016



We raised £310 for Stow & Heriot Church



Classes started again on Wednesday 11 January 2017
3.45pm in Stow Town Hall
We welcome 4 years old and over



Looking forward to a new year,
a new challenge?
Be a part of recording the story of the
Gala Water

We're looking for people interested in the stories
of the places and people of this area.

Remember it's your story too!

Contact Mary for more information:
Stow Town Hall: Tues, Thurs, Fri
galawaterhistoryandheritage@gmail.com





Stow Brewery continues to make good progress, with its first beers now on tap in pubs and exploring the potential for a brewpub/ bistro as part of the old station house in Stow.

Some lucky folk will remember that Stow shop stocked Stow Brewery bottled ales at the end of the year, and that the shelves emptied at an enthusiastic pace. At the moment all the brewery's bottles are spoken for elsewhere but the shop will be restocked as soon as production allows.



WIND FARM FUND APPLICATION DATES 2017

DEADLINE	NOTIFICATION
16 January	7 March
10 April	30 May
10 July	5 September
9 October	5 December

For details on how to apply go to:
<https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/programmes/edf-longpark/>

The first panel of 2017 has met. Details of the awards had not been released at the time of going to press.

Notes
on
the
Wind



STOW PRIMARY SCHOOL

We are delighted to welcome all our children back to class for 2017 and look forward to the exciting opportunities a New Year brings. The winter term so far has been very busy with many activities and events:



Massage in School: Primary 1/2 have been acquainting themselves with massage techniques under the guidance of Mrs Jamieson. The children responded positively to these sessions displaying maturity in their thinking and listening skills, whilst learning some tricky strokes. It was encouraging to hear the children using words such as 'happy, peaceful, and relaxed' to describe this time. Many thanks to Mrs Jamieson for her expertise.

French Week: Primary 5/6/7 have been learning all things French. The children participated in a French week which saw them learning phrases, exploring French art and taking part in the Paris marathon as part of their daily mile. The week long adventure came to an eventful end with the boys and girls hosting a French themed Community Café. Thanks to all who supported the café, it was great to welcome so many families & friends.

Relaxation Techniques: Primary 5 -7 have been learning relaxation techniques with Sarah Naylor, EFT Practitioner. The children have been taught how to relax and meditate to help them focus in class and be calm within. Many thanks to Sarah for her time and expertise.

Science Day: The whole school came together to participate in a science day on the second of November. The children took part in

various experiments and adventures, resulting in some explosive fun. They dabbled with colourful chemistry, optical illusions and rocket race cars - the atmosphere was electric, with very enthusiastic children. Special thanks to Borders College, Shinton Consultancy and the Royal Zoological Society for Scotland – they truly made the magic happen!

Christmas Concert: We also watched with great pride as all our children came together to showcase their singing and acting talents in our well anticipated Christmas concerts. First up were the nursery children, who sang their hearts out to some beautifully selected Christmas songs. Then, the Wiggly Nativity, excellently performed by our enthusiastic P1/2's. Finally, Tinsel & Tea Towels delivered professionally by our P3 – P7's boys and girls with great aplomb and to loud applause. Well done to everyone for taking part and of course, the teachers for their time, patience and encouragement – brilliant job all round.

It with great joy to hear that Aaliyah (p4) has been offered a place with the National Children's Orchestra for the UK – this is delightful news for Aaliyah and we are incredibly proud of her achievement, well done!

The last term of 2016 came to an end with an array of festive frolics, from children's parties to concerts and even a visit from Santa, the school was alive with excitement and anticipation. On the final day before Christmas we all gathered at the Church for a lovely service held by Victoria Linford, with carols, readings and prayers – a special time enjoyed by all, thank you Victoria.

Fountainhall Village Hall Burns Supper 27 January 2017



Celebrating the life of the Bard at a public Supper had not happened in Fountainhall for several years and around 60 people gathered to end that lack to dine, drink, to entertain and be entertained in good company on 27 January 2017 in the wonderful new hall.

Keeping order(!) from the Chair was the inimitable Charlotte Hendry(1) and the evening kicked off with the piping in of the haggis by Alex Scott from Earlston(2) who had nobly stepped in at short notice when the original piper was unwell. We were blessed with more fine piping from Alex later in the evening.

Bearing the haggis to the top table was Bob Preston(3), and a fine job he made of it - skilfully held it arrived in style. Stuart Anderson(4) gave us the Selkirk Grace and the toast to the haggis and the meal was afoot. Alison, Evelyn, Kathleen, Fran, Penny, Tracey and Georgie created and served a fine supper for both omnivores and vegetarians, with a bar that was welcoming throughout the night.



FOUNTAINHALL SCOTTISH WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Which organisation:

- has 17,700 members; is for women only (but will welcome interested men) and is 100 years old this year?
- has no age limit; a long tradition of celebrating women's skills in homebuilding; maintained a keen interest in life-long learning before the phrase had been coined, and been a source of friendship and support for women in rural communities for generations?
- rebranded itself in 2015 "...to inspire women to join an organisation more reflective of modern lives where women work, have family and busy lifestyles ... [amending] the name, to reflect the growing membership in urban areas..."?

It has to be the Scottish Women's Institute / SWI, formally the Scottish Women's Rural Institute / SWRI, and we have a dynamic branch right here in Fountainhall. Fountainhall SWI (known simply as 'The Rural' for many years) meets in Fountainhall Village Hall on the third Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm apart from July and August.

The SWI is adapting to the changes in women's lives since 1917 to enable expansion from the well-established focus on education and training in home skills, family welfare, citizenship and friendship to include the different interests reflecting often younger or urban lifestyles and communities, such as tyre-changing classes or group-learning the Ukulele! (Head for the Leith branch if the latter appeals.)

Each Fountainhall SWI meeting includes a demonstration, talk or workshop and examples of this year's syllabus are a talk on Stow Brewery, a cookery demonstration and a craft workshop. Past topics have seen a talk from the new Borders Street Pastors, a presentation

by Stow residents Nettie and Fraser Simm on their return to St. Helena where they lived for several years in the 1990s; the charity Borders Pet Rescue and the design process involved in creating locally commissioned 'in memorium' tapestries.

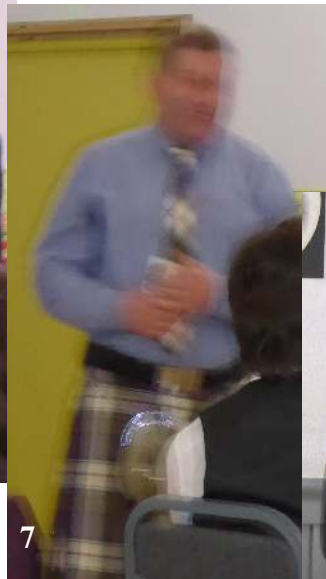
Once a year the branch runs a bring and buy stall to raise money for a chosen charity. Last year's was for Shelter Boxes via the local Rotary Club, where a basic survival kit is made up for around £100 to be given out at disasters anywhere in the world where people need immediate shelter from the elements.

Members can get involved in as much or as little of activities as they choose. Often there is a gentle competition at the monthly meeting around baking or craftwork in which by no means all members take part, and sometimes larger initiatives - such as the SWI Big Knitathon in 2015 to knit scarves, gloves, blankets and hats for Big Issue sellers - which gives a chance for those interested, to contribute on a wider scale. This also provided a chance for old skills to be passed on to a new generation. We have a saying 'if you know a good thing, pass it on'. If you want to learn things or have skills others may value learning, Fountainhall SWI could be the ideal place for that exchange.

Members are part of Selkirkshire Federation and we are looking forward to celebrating SWI's Centenary at a garden party at Bowhill House in July. We are a friendly and welcoming group and would be delighted to see new faces at any of our meetings. The annual subscription is £17. Membership is open to women only and we also welcome visitors for £2 per session so it's easy to come and have a trial visit or join us for an evening that's focusing on something that particularly interests you. And that applies to men too. Further details can be obtained by contacting President Dianne Wilson on 01578 730210.



Kenneth Gunn(5) from Selkirk gave us a lively Immortal Memory, which was followed by a spirited enactment of Tam o'Shanter by John Tullie(6) from Teviothead who later enthralled diners with Holy Willie's Prayer performed in nightgown and cap (no photo - shame! - the camera battery gave out.).



The Toast to the Lasses came from Andrew Pate(7) of Nettingflat and the rapid-fire sheep jokes in honour of Bankhouse (!!!) (see p3) ensured that neither he nor the photographer could keep still, as you can see.

A bold Reply from the Lasses came from Katherine McQuillan(8) frae Heriot who was holding fast to witty sobriety when a least a few about her were losing ... (um, I mean ... er...). Woven throughout were songs and music from Stow's own Stuart Anderson(9) whose accordion and voice carried us all through and into a good, very good, night and finally, Auld Lang Syne.



spotlight on

DIANNE
WILSON

Many, many folk know Dianne Wilson and probably many more don't know her name but have benefited from her part in a team or committee behind community events. Alongside her organising skills, and long before Mary Berry brought 'The Great British Bake-off' to our screens, Dianne brought the warmth of her generously shared skills and love of baking to Stow Parish, but we're not about to be so absorbed in deliciously remembered smells and tastes as to overlook all the other contributions she makes and has made to our community over the years.

For three decades she has contributed skills of organisation, collaboration and cooking, arriving 31 years ago from her native Lanarkshire with her shepherd husband Willie and their toddler and baby. In her first week in Stow Dianne was 'gathered up' via the playgroup by Jessica Troughton (see newsletter 26) and Margaret Robertson. Another baby was to follow and this warm welcome gave support to the young family and gained the cheerful and capable person of Dianne who since then has never stinted in her input to the parish.

Dianne has served on the Playgroup Committee, the Parent Teacher Association of Stow Primary and has been a church Elder of Stow and Heriot Church since 2003 - a role that gives her the opportunity to visit church members around the parish and which she greatly appreciates. As an enthusiastic member of Gala Water Singers she was the original bridge between the choir and their occasional contributions to Church events.

She also spent more than 20 years in the Red Cross which at one time had a strong Stow group who provided First Aid Training Classes locally and provided First Aid cover for local events such as Stow Sports. Latterly the Red Cross developed into therapeutic care, and after training, Dianne spent several years giving neck and shoulder massage to those who wanted it, as part of a social visit to residents of sheltered housing and nursing homes in the central borders, all while bringing up her daughters and after the first few years, while also in paid work.

It was while working as the school cook at Heriot Primary and with her children becoming less dependent, that Dianne planned her return to her career in office work. Having been a secretary in the West of

Scotland Agricultural College in Lanark prior to marriage and motherhood, the intervening years had seen the computerisation of the workplace and Dianne attended night classes at Borders College

to equip herself for re-entering the, by now, electronic office. Since then she has had a variety of posts including many years in the fast-paced world of Edinburgh auction houses which she really loved. This is a woman for whom multi-multi-tasking is absolutely normal! Eventually the commuting palled and Dianne now works in Selkirk.

The past two years have seen Dianne become President of the local branch of the Scottish Women's Institute having served a decent apprenticeship during the previous 10 years as one of its Vice Presidents. The SWI (Fountainhall 'Rural') seems perfect for Dianne - good company; sharing and developing traditional and contemporary women's skills while maintaining the continuity of capable women at the heart of rural life - creating something good while building on strong foundations in companionship with like-minded others.

The life of a shepherd is often one of moving every few years. When Dianne and Willie came to Bowshank this area

was completely unknown to them. They were seeking a change from Lanarkshire and were looking for a bit of an adventure. Rewardingly, the shepherding at Bowshank has provided enough change and stimulus for Willie that he has never sought another position. The local community has provided friendship, support and stimulus for the whole family and their rootedness here has allowed Stow, Fountainhall (and Heriot) to claim Dianne and her community involvement for our own.

Baking is only one visible embodiment of Dianne's care for others and enjoyment of being active in village life - she's a major hand behind Cake and Candy stalls across the parish, for example - usually with some of her scrumptious baking included. When asked what motivates her to get involved she answers simply "I just always have done; it's how I am." Those who know Dianne will recognise that straightforwardness and generosity. How fortunate we are that the adventure she sought brought her here.



Gala Water Singers enjoyed performing their Christmas Concert to an audience of around 80 in the week leading up to Christmas 2016. Despite the coughs and colds going around, just over two dozen singers formed the choir, presenting a programme of traditional carols and songs with an imaginative re-interpretation in a longer piece. Included in the programme were solo piano pieces from the community choir's Music Director Jim Letham, and a warm festive atmosphere was created with the buffet afterwards as good as ever.

Choir rehearsals restarted in January at Fountainhall School 7-9pm on Tuesdays and there is a definite American swing, jazz and rock 'n roll feeling about the music so far - it's too early to say what the final programme will be but it will be good, you can be sure of that. Our next concert is on Sunday 28 May; the timing is to be confirmed but likely to be 7pm. Keep an eye out for posters in May.

If you've missed our term restart, it's not too late to join the choir, you'll soon catch up. Ring Paul on 01875 835331 for more information.

**NEXT NEWSLETTER
SPRING 2017 - NO. 28**

COPY DATE
8 May 17

DISTRIB'D FROM
29 May 17

to: Heather Johnston, Editor
heather@southcottage.co.uk
01578 730507



**NUGGETS FROM
THE ARCHIVE**

"In 1329, the Earl of Carrick, an heir to the Scottish throne, was married and held his wedding feast in Stow. King David II, son of the Bruce, paid the bill which included 1,500 sheep and oxen."