



WELCOME

Here we are in February already. Where does the time go? We hope you had a good New Year, despite being stuck at home, and are looking ahead to longer evenings and the arrival of early garden blooms.

Our newsletter includes a Burns-inspired quiz and poem, a shortbread recipe, wartime childhood memories and more. We're always on the lookout for items for upcoming editions, so if there's anything you'd like to share - articles, photos, recipes etc. - then please contact us.

THINKING OF OUR NEAR AND DEAR



Happy New Year to you all, I wish you everything that is good for 2021. I'm sure we're all pleased 2020 is past and look forward to a brighter New Year.

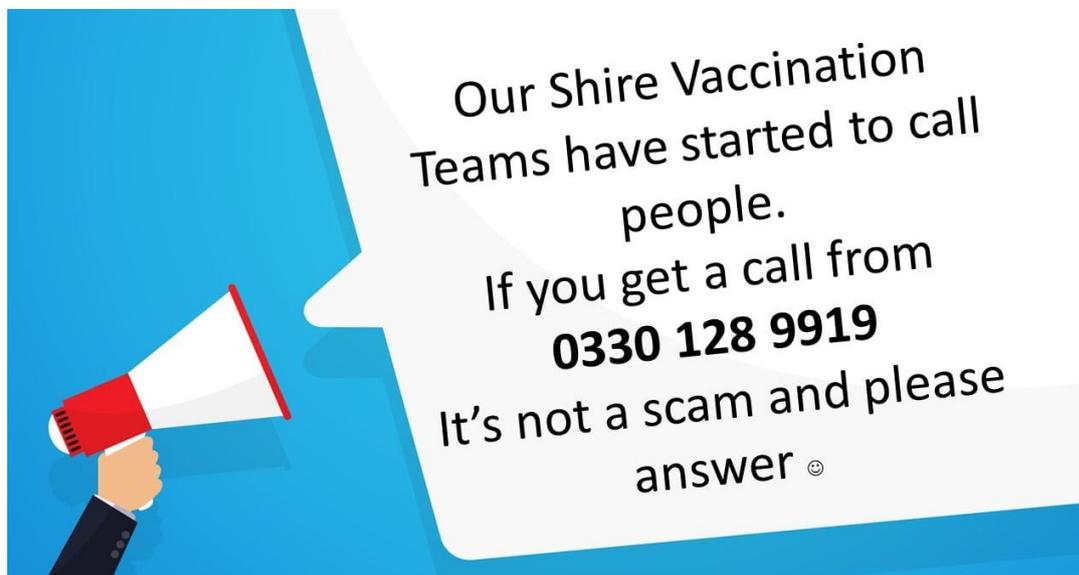
Moving through January, with snowdrops appearing and Burns Night on the 25th, we'll have eaten our haggis and raised a glass at our own fireside this year. With a toast to absent friends and those we hold dear, we move into February and St. Valentine's day which gives us another opportunity to think of loved ones and good friends who are all the more precious just now.

There's much to be thankful for in these difficult times and not too hard to find a positive in each month. I've chosen my rose painting because of Robbie Burns' ballad "A red red rose" and because of Valentine's Day when we can take comfort remembering our friends and loved ones again and look forward to "The Vaccine"! Take care and stay safe.

Margaret-Anne Mackie

COVID 19 VACCINATIONS

With the Covid vaccinations under way, here's a message from Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership:



Here at MCHLN we have volunteer drivers available to take you to your vaccination appointment. If you are aged 50+, call us on 01561 378130 to arrange for free transport.

LAURENCEKIRK AREA PRESCRIPTION DELIVERY

Charles Michie's pharmacy In Laurencekirk now has a free prescription delivery service to people who are vulnerable or shielding. This is a service for those registered with Laurencekirk health centre, and the area covered includes the villages of Auchenblae, Fettercairn, Luthermuir, Marykirk, Drumlithie and Laurencekirk.

The service is available twice-weekly, on Tuesdays and Fridays. If you are in a vulnerable or shielding category, please call Michie's on 01561 377417 for more details, or to arrange your prescription delivery.



WARTIME AS A CHILD

Many families will have been separated at Christmas with the dreaded "lockdown" of CV19. It was much the same for very different reasons during WWII, with loved ones away, many overseas, and even worse, when some never did return. So we will just have to "take it on the chin" as we did then and hope for better times in the future. As Vera Lynn sang, "There'll be blue birds over the white cliffs of Dover, just you wait and see". So let's hope for blue birds over Aberdeenshire in 2021.



Despite living through WW2, I had an almost idyllic childhood. My father was in a reserved occupation and my mother was a housewife, but she was a dressmaker and supplemented her housekeeping by making leather gloves. She made trousers for me, but she really wanted a girl and would have loved to make dresses for one (she was later over the moon when my wife produced a granddaughter for her). She had little interest in boys' clothes or toys and would happily tread on them or kick them away if they were on the floor. My cousin was a pilot in the RAF and made me a model of his Spitfire which I treasured, but my mother threw it out. He was later killed strafing convoys in France.

We were probably the healthiest generation as most things were rationed and only healthy food was available, almost no sweets or chocolate and very little sugar. We were able to play "whip-and-top" in the streets and ride our bikes as there were no cars about.

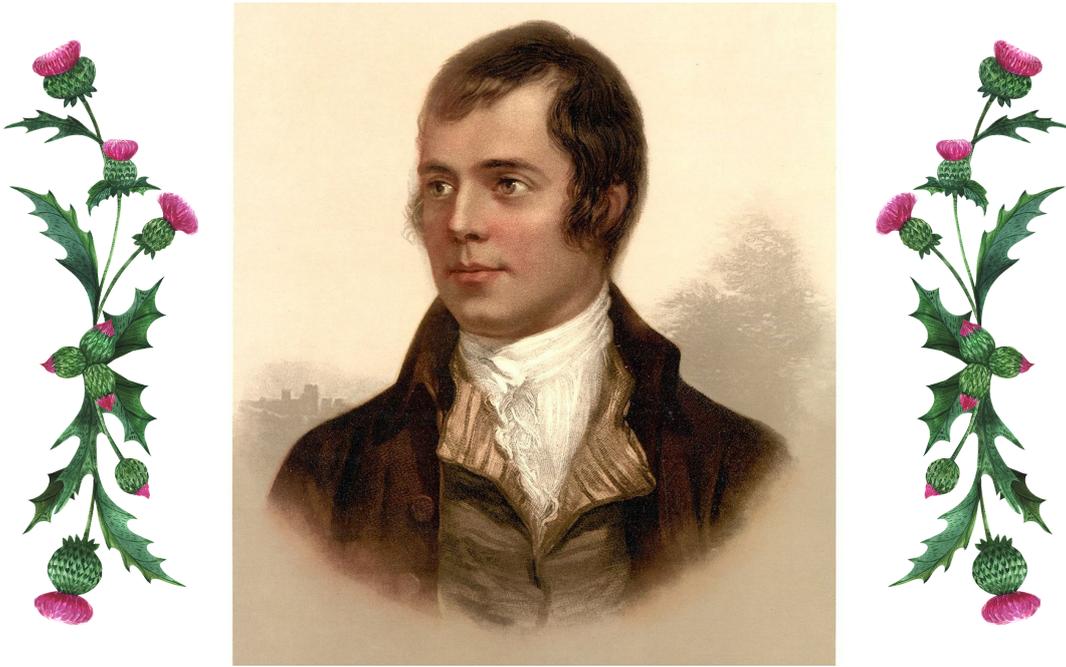
Even the "Blackout" did not affect me as a child as I was in bed anyway. Having a refuge - playing in the "Morrison" shelter inside the house - and going to school with a gas mask was fun. We played in the fields and climbed trees and made dens in the woods. I would go fishing with a jam jar in the canal or play "glugging" bottles, where we would throw a bottle in the canal and throw stones at it until it sunk with a "glugging" sound.

My playmate at the time was much brighter than me, we were in the same class at primary school, but he was at the top and I was at the bottom, but we always got on well together. He became a Professor of Mathematics at Perth University in Australia but always kept in touch and would visit me even here in Aberdeenshire until last year when he sadly died. I was thinking about him recently and realised that I had actually known him for more years than anyone else, more than my parents, more than my wife, more than my children or anyone.

John Shackleton
Portlethen Gardening Group



BURNS INSPIRATION



The last four working years of my life were spent with a company whose divisions included pest control. One morning, after opening up the warehouse, I discovered a dead mouse in half a bucket of water. It had obviously crept in to the premises while a trailer was being parked up, but had fallen into the bucket as it investigated its surroundings. Another member of the staff appeared at my shoulder and said "Aw, poor wee moosie", and the first line of this poem was virtually written.

The similarity between Robert Burns turning over a mouse's nest, whilst working with his plough, and me, finding a dead mouse at my place of work, was not lost on me, hence, my decision to write the following poem in my native Doric dialect, as a tribute to our national bard, recently voted "The Greatest Scot of all Time" and of whom I am a great admirer.

Rod Summers



THE DROOKIT MOOSE by Rod Summers

Puir wee moosie, found in a pail, sy pin weet fae yer heid tae yer tail.

It's plain tae see that ye were drookit, wi yer matted fur and skin a' sookit.

But then moosie, fit were ye daein? Perhaps fae some great cat ye were fleein'

But yer desperate flight tae escape these chases, brought ye here!!

Tae a Rentokill Shed, o' a' places!!

You werena' tae know, how could ye have guessed

That roon aboot here, you're considered a pest.

There are men who work here, quite unforgiving,

Who cheerfully kill your kind for a living.

Ye were so close tae safety, it hardly seems fair

That ye fell in a bucket and drooned yersel' there.

If only ye'd made yer way back tae yer field

But ye chose tae hide here, and yer fate then was sealed.

Ah moosie, if there's any justice at all, yer in some moosie heaven wi the angels on call

I hope ye arrived at some far better place, where moosies are treated wi honour & grace

A place where there's comfort and plenty to eat, and a hoosie weel bigit, all tidy and neat

Wi' long sunny days tae enjoy at yer ease,

Nae cats, nae moosetraps, and lashings o' cheese!!!



A ROBERT BURNS QUIZ

1. Ayr United Football Club are nicknamed "The Honest Men" This was inspired by a Burns poem. Which one?
2. "Wad some pow'r the giftie gie us, tae see oorselves as others see us" is a saying still in common use today. In which Burns poem would you find it?
3. According to Burns poem Tam o' Shanter, what was the name of Tam's horse?
4. What did Burns call "The hell o' a' diseases"?
5. What did Burns think was "worthy o' a grace as lang as ma airm"?
6. Who was Burns tearfully parting from in his song "Ae Fond Kiss"?
7. Burns held a government position during his working life. As what?
8. Complete this line from a Burns poem. " The best laid plans o' mice and men..."
9. What accolade was awarded to Burns in 2009?
10. Which of these 3 songs is the odd man out? (a) Scots Wha Hae (b) Flower of Scotland (c) My Love is Like a Red Red Rose.

Answers on the back page

CLASSIC SHORTBREAD



Shortbread made by volunteer Liz Watson, in celebration of both Burn's Night and Valentine's Day. Her recipe is below.

250g Plain Flour
100g Corn Flour
100g Caster sugar
225g Salted Butter (best at room temperature)

What better accompaniment for tea or coffee than a nice piece of shortbread? Especially if it has been home made.

It's simple to make. Pile all the above ingredients onto a clean work surface. Using your hands, work the butter into the dry ingredients. Once the mixture has held together roll out to approximately half-inch thick. Prick lightly with a fork and cut into your desired shape.

Bake in a moderate oven until light golden colour (30/40 minutes).

SHORTBREAD - A QUICK HISTORY

Shortbread has long been associated with Scotland. The first printed mention was from Scotswoman Mrs McLintock in 1736. However, a variation of shortbread dates back to medieval times, when spare bread dough was cooked at a low temperature until it became biscuit-like. Over time, the yeast in the dough was replaced with butter.

Mary, Queen of Scots has been credited, with the help of her French chefs, in perfecting the shortbread recipe to the one we know today. It is said that Mary, who loved shortbread, was served the biscuit in the shape of petticoat tails.

Shortbread's ingredients of butter, sugar and flour were once so expensive and hard to come by that it was reserved for serving only on celebratory occasions such as weddings, Christmas and New Year. Shortbread has been a traditional first-footing gift at Hogmanay for centuries and this tradition still exists today.

Liz Watson



NAME THE PLAYERS!



Ian Davidson brought this vintage photo of Laurencekirk FC into our office. How many faces do you recognise? So far, we've got goalkeeper Murph Stewart, Alan Taylor bottom row 2nd right, George Brown top row 2nd right and Harry Lamont bottom left. Let us know if you can add any names and we'll publish them in the next newsletter!

RIDDLES FUN

1. What goes up but never comes down?
2. What has to be broken to be of any use?
3. What occurs once in a minute, twice in a moment, but never in an hour?
4. How many months have 28 days?

Answers on the back page

OUR NEWSLETTER

We hope you've enjoyed our newsletter. We welcome feedback, suggestions, and items for future editions. Contact us:

Phone: 01561 378130

Email: office@mchln.org.uk

Address: 44 High Street, Laurencekirk AB30 1AB

Website: mchln.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/healthylivingnetwork

Don't want to receive this newsletter again? Let us know.

THANKS

Thanks to the Scottish Government Wellbeing Fund for funding this newsletter, and to the content contributors.

ROBERT BURNS QUIZ ANSWERS



1. Tam o' Shanter - "Auld Ayr, wham nane surpasses for HONEST MEN And bonny lasses"; 2. To a Louse; 3. Meg - "Weel mounted on his grey mare MEG, a better never lifted leg"; 4. Toothache; 5. Haggis; 6. Nancy McElhose; 7. Exciseman (tax collector); 8. Gang aft agley (from "To a Mouse"); 9. Greatest Scot of all time (as voted for by the general public); 10. Flower of Scotland (it was written by Roy Williamson of The Corries, the others were written by Robert Burns).

RIDDLES ANSWERS

1. Your age; 2. An egg; 3. The letter M; 4. They all do!