

The

# Auchenblae Messenger

Volume 11 Issue 1

March 2009

Founded in 1999 by Donald B. Rennie



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## From the Editors

Well, here we go with the second attempt! We received a lot of positive feedback from the first one, but we do need you to continue to let us know what's good and what's not so good.

It's been a busy winter with both the Pantomime and the talent show along with all the usual Christmas celebrations.

The main event to happen in the village has been the Drumtochty Arms blowing up, much to the chagrin of the locals who were looking forward to enjoying good food, good wine and good company.

We now look forward to the spring events in the village many of which are detailed in the Messenger.

We still need your continued support in advising us of all forthcoming events in the village.

We were asked about whether or not people could advertise in the Messenger, and after taking advice from Eddie and Kevin (the oracles) we have decided that village businesses can advertise free, however anyone from outside the village should make a donation to Messenger funds.

Please note the deadline for the next edition will be May 15th.

Susie and Annie

This is the Messengers 10th Anniversary year - can you believe it's been on the go as long as that?

Watch out for a special edition later in the year with memories from the archive.



## Auchenblae Bowling Club



Auchenblae Bowling Club are looking for new members. The season starts 24th April and carries on until late September. We welcome people with or without experience. We would especially like to see some younger people come along and give it a try. Bowls can be provided. Contact Bill Barry (320749) or Roy Palmer (320729) for more information.

## Auchenblae Guild

2009 got off to a good start for the Guild with our Scottish Lunch, a very enjoyable occasion. It's amazing what can be done when a few determined people get together!

Our meetings are held in the Church Hall on the third Wednesday of the month at 2.30pm. We are always happy to greet new members who like to meet other people in a spirit of fellowship, The Guild is no longer exclusive to women, any men out there who would like to join us will be made most welcome.

**Barbara Strouts**

## Dates for your Diary

### March

2nd      Heritage Society meets.  
28th     Daffodil Tea

### April

4th      Work Day in the Den  
24th     Bowling Season Starts  
25th     Den Opening Day

### May

**Gala Week –**  
**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> – Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May**  
Please look out for posters nearer the time.



## Auchenblae & District Heritage Society

Three years ago when I first became chairman of ADHS, I wrote an article in the Messenger appealing for local people to help the committee (at present only one out of seven committee members is locally born), find stories, characters - in fact anything of interest from the past. Sadly very little was forthcoming, but we have still managed to put together a series of wide ranging and fascinating talks - e.g. the story of Wull Scorgie, an amazingly talented and innovative agricultural engineer who changed the face of many farming techniques which are still in use today, to a very learned talk on the ancient geology of how the Mearns was formed.

The church hall was packed to capacity at our last meeting on 1st December '08 to hear the talk on "Auchenblae Shops of Yester-year" by Gillian Siddons, showing if the subject is right, people will attend, even on such a horrible night. The success of this talk was partly down to the lively and entertaining presentation by Gillian, but the other important factor was her thorough research done by talking to people who remembered these shops, their owners and products. This was an excellent example of local knowledge and an incomer getting together to produce a record of how Auchenblae was in the not very distant past. Vital evidence for future generations. The closing of Elizabeth Singer's shop and the new part-time Post Office is an all too familiar situation these - and then the very sad explosive disappearance of The Drum, just emphasises that nothing is permanent and great effort should be made to record everything now before it's too late.

Our next talk on March 2nd is by the former postie, Walter Blakeman of Laurencekirk telling us how the mail used to be delivered to us in the past. He has many personal stories to tell and it should be another memorable night. Included in the talk will be a showing of the famous documentary of 1936, "Night Mail" - not to be missed.

Preceding Walter's talk there will be a very short AGM where local people with an interest in Auchenblae's past would be welcomed on to the small and happy committee. Two "new faces" would be perfect.

Annual Membership for 3 talks and an excursion is still only £5 (£3 unwaged) or £1.50 per visitor. Fantastic value in this day of great recession. Malcolm McCoig

## Drumtochty Social Group

**Drumtochty Social Group** wish to sincerely thank everyone who helped, contributed and entertained at the **OAP Christmas Party**. Special thanks to Lorna Bey and helpers who were responsible for cooking and serving the meal, the Hendry family and Pete Murray who provided live folk music, Andrew and Jenni Clark who played the pipes / drums, teenage waiters and waitresses, and finally everyone who helped to organize the event.

**Santa in the Square** – despite the chilly conditions on Christmas Eve over 60 children attended, the remaining confectionary was donated to Aberdeen Children's Hospital.

We all look forward to seeing you at up and coming events during 2009!



## Mearns Community Council



### Local Plan

Aberdeenshire Council is at present trying to identify all options for future site development from which subsequent site selection can take place. Developers and land owners have asked to identify areas of land that they would wish to see in the next local plan.

At the beginning of December 2008 community councils were asked to identify any sites they believe to be appropriate for development. Maps were issued and members were asked to mark up such sites together with any areas that members consider should be "protected" and the reasons why. It is requested that this information be returned to the Planning and Environmental Services Department of Aberdeenshire Council by 4 February 2009. The following is what was returned for Auchenblae.

Areas identified as being suitable for development:

Two sites to the east of the village. One site to the south east of the village.

There are also two sites to the west of the village and there has been an understanding that development to the west side would impede upon the skyline of the village. Also there is a likelihood of Auchenblae having conservation status sometime in the future and development to the west might jeopardize this. As new building is already at the east side, it seems reasonable to keep development to this area

Mearns Community Council will be consulting with residents in early summer. See article on page 12.

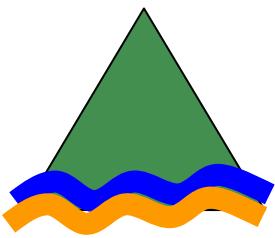
### Notice Board

A question was raised at a recent meeting regarding a new notice board for Auchenblae. It was agreed to ask for your opinions before making any final decision. Do you want to see another notice board in the village, if so, where should it be sited? Suggestions have been at the square, and also perhaps at the medical centre. Please contact a Community Councillor with your views.

### Recycling

At present only one potential permanent site has been identified for the recycling bins. **This has still not been agreed.** Once it has been, a planning application will be made - this will be listed in the local press. There is a chance that in the short term the bins will go back to the former garage site.

# Auchenblae Parks Committee



## **Village Notice Board**

We hope you have all located the notice board which we moved from the old Post Office. It was provided many years ago by 'the Parks' to advertise events being held within the village. We are greatly indebted to Angus, Ruby and Elizabeth for allowing us wall space all these years. Angela and Ludi have willingly agreed to have it displayed outside Metelski's. Thanks very much to them.

## **Annual Work Day in the Den**

This will take place on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April from 10am, so if you share our interest in the Den and would like to help get it spruced up for Spring, please put this date in your diary now!

We know we can depend on our stalwarts, but would dearly love to see some new faces there too. Pull on your wellies, get out your rakes and spades and head for the Den! There'll be plenty of jobs to suit young and old! We treat our workers well, hot soup and rolls for lunch and lots of fine pieces for the fly.

You'll be made very welcome and it's all in a good cause.

## **Den Opening Day**

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April. Let's hope for a good day to celebrate the opening of the Den.

There will be action on the courts and the bowling green for you to watch or to join in if you wish.

As usual, Soup and Sandwich lunches will be served in the pavilion and a raffle will be held. See the notice board for further details at the time.

## **Auchenblae Friendship Group**

The group continues to meet every Wednesday morning in the church hall from 10.00am to 12.00pm. I would like to correct a few misconceptions some people may have about us. We are not a closed group for pensioners only. Anyone who is at a loose end on a Wednesday morning is welcome to come along for friendship. Neither do we sit and play cards all the time. We plan a varied programme of activities and there is something for everyone. Birthdays are not forgotten as Adelaide produces a beautiful cake for every special day. If you would like to know more phone Sheena on 320424 or Barbara on 320911, who will be happy to help.

If you need transport that can be arranged, a stalwart band of drivers help out and we manage to get everyone there on time.

This group is a credit to the people of Auchenblae.

Help us to keep it going.

Barbara Strouts



**DVD's of the demolition of  
Drumtochty Hotel  
now made to order £5 each  
All proceeds to CHAS  
(Children's Hospice Association Scotland)**

**Phone 320383  
Bob Jamieson, Allenbank**

Everyone is welcome to the

# Auchenblae School Daffodil Tea

on  
**Saturday 28th March, 10am until noon**  
in  
the Village Hall



Freshly made scones and pancakes  
Tea and Coffee table service  
Raffle  
Bottle Stall  
Lucky Dip  
Face painting/tattoos  
Children's spring-inspired artwork on display  
and of course the obligatory daffodils (by the hundreds!)

The event is organised by the Parent Council and is to raise funds for the school.

Any donations for the raffle/bottle stall would be much appreciated. Please hand these to  
**Margo Titmuss (320808) or Claire Ptaszek (320338).**  
Thank you!

## HOTEL EXPLOSION

Urban Search and Rescue Teams from Grampian Fire and Rescue Service were mobilised to a gas explosion and partial building collapse at the Drumtochty Arms Hotel, Aberdeenshire on January 8<sup>th</sup>. The newly refurbished hotel measuring 15m x 25m and consisting of three floors is situated in the village of Auchenblae some 30 miles from Aberdeen.

The call was received at 17:30 and four retained appliances from Stonehaven, Laurencekirk and Inverbervie were first in attendance, what met them was a scene of devastation as the rear of the property had suffered a major structural collapse due to an internal explosion. Three casualties were removed from the collapsed structure and taken to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary with serious injuries.



As persons were still reported missing the specialist Urban Search and Rescue Teams along with the Major Incident Unit from Aberdeen were mobilised to the incident, on arrival the teams followed the Six stages of Rescue framework,

- Reconnaissance & survey
- Elimination of Utilities
- Primary surface search & rescue
- Exploration of voids
- Access by selected debris removal
- Terminate by general debris removal

Internationally recognised and used by rescue teams around the world, the concept was originally developed in the USA by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and further developed by the UK Fire Service Search and Rescue Team (UKFSSART) the framework provided a basis for operations to commence and was successfully adhered to.

The teams working under very arduous conditions had the advantage of using the Airshore Rescue equipment to commence search procedures, the Airshore equipment supplied by the Scottish Executive through the New Dimension funding programme proved its worth on the night, although never being used at an incident before, the Airshore exceeded all expectations and was a valuable piece of equipment in providing a safe structure for the teams to work from.



As the teams progressed within the collapsed structure they had to replace the Airshore with Timber shoring, although a slow but sure process it was vital that the teams did not compromise the safety of anyone trapped as well as themselves. Work progressed well through the night with areas being made structurally safe so that search patterns could be enhanced and when morning came with all persons accounted for it was a case of the teams continuing to shore for the structural rigidity of the building.



At approximately eighteen hours into the incident an unexpected movement in the structure caused the teams to withdraw and upon consultation with the structural engineer it was deemed unsafe to continue working in the area. A joint investigation into the cause of the explosion in conjunction with the HSE is underway although this is expected to take several months to complete.

All three casualties removed from the building are making speedy recoveries and have thanked their rescuers for their help in removing them from the dangerous environment they had been placed in.

Grampian Fire and Rescue Service would wish to sincerely thank the Community of Auchenblae for their support and hospitality in the period following the explosion. It was very welcome in such cold temperatures and much appreciated.

**Area Manager Andy Coueslant – Head of Service Delivery**

## Think the 80's were murder?



Well, with all that big hair, huge shoulder pads and the “cube” that could drive you to distraction, I’m surprised any of us made it out alive. But luckily we did and some of us are missing it so much we just had to bring it back!

So for one night only you can transport yourself back in time as

The Auchenblae Drama Group present:

### **Who killed the Popstar?**

A Murder Mystery set in the 80's that will bring back lots of memories, mostly too awful to put into print!

A pop duo are riding high in the charts but it's all about to come crashing down as one of the two brothers comes to a very messy and premature end. You will have the chance to witness the run up to the crime, take part in the investigation and ultimately you can solve the crime to reveal.....

### **Who killed the Popstar?**

Dressing in the fashion of the time is very much encouraged and the best (or worst) will be rewarded. There is a quiz after the crime scene has been cleared and the evening will be rounded off with an 80's disco. So if it's been a while since you had your 7" (vinyl) out, then bring it along and we'll give it a spin!

**Auchenblae Village Hall. Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April.**

**Doors open 6.30 for 7.00pm.**

Hot supper provided, drinks available from the bar.

Tickets £20.00 or book a table of 6 for £100.00.

2 bottles of wine will be provided per table.

To book, please call

**Natasha on 01561 321190.**

### **Who killed the Popstar?**



# DRUMTOCHTY CASTLE

## **Drumtochty Arms Hotel**

After the explosion at the Drumtochty Arms Hotel on the 7<sup>th</sup> of January, I'm sure you were all shocked like we were but relieved that there were no fatalities. On returning to the hotel and seeing the devastation that night, I was humbled by the support of our local community to get stuck in even to the risk of their own safety to ensure the safety of others.

The loss of the hotel was not only to the owner Charlie Anderson but to us all as locals or residences of Auchenblae, this was a Hub to the local community.

The cause of the explosion has not yet been pin pointed but is in the hands of the Health and Safety Executive, we await their findings.

We do plan to rebuild the hotel but this of course will be a lengthy process, to which we will consult with locals and residence alike, to get the facility we all want back in Auchenblae.

I thank all who helped and supported us through this and hope we can put back to the community what has been lost.

*Bruce Aitken*

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## **West Mearns Parish Church**

### **SUNDAY WORSHIP:**

9.30am at Fettercairn

11am 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month at Glenbervie

11am all other Sundays at Auchenblae

Services at Auchenblae are followed by tea and coffee



### **SPECIAL SERVICES + EVENTS**

\* **Soup + Sweet Lunch** in Auchenblae Village Hall on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> February,  
11.30am-2pm; in aid of Church Fabric Fund

\* **World Day of Prayer** service on Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> March at 2pm in Fettercairn Church Hall

\* United Service at 10am in Fettercairn Church followed by **Church AGM** on Sunday 22nd March

\* Church Coffee Morning on Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> March from 10 – 11.45am at Glenbervie Village Hall.

\* **Maundy Thursday** Communion Service at 7.30pm on 9<sup>th</sup> April at Fettercairn

\* Ecumenical **Good Friday** Service at 7.30pm on 10<sup>th</sup> April in Auchenblae Church.

• **Easter Day Services:** Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April at 9.30am At Fettercairn; 11am at Auchenblae. At both these family services there will be the opportunity for those who wish to celebrate Communion.

All are welcome at our regular and special services and events.

Sunday School is held at all our churches and all children are welcome.

## Auchenblae Community Association

Dear Fellow Villagers,

As a relative newcomer to the village, it came as a bit of a surprise to find myself in the chair of our Community Association last September. At first I found it a rather daunting prospect but with the help and kindness of everyone involved it has not been at all bad. In fact it has been a lot of fun. I feel very privileged to have been given the role and I hope I can do half as good a job as the previous chairs who have done such a great job in the past. As one of the newer members of the Association I was curious about its history, its aims and its responsibilities. I suspect, like myself, many residents will be interested to learn of my findings.

The origins of Auchenblae Community Association lie with the original Public Hall Committee.

An inaugural meeting was convened in 1869 to consider the possibility of a “Public Hall for the use of the District” being built within the village.

The hall was built at an initial cost of around £400 and was opened in 1870 from monies raised by public subscription and fundraising.

The original design consisted of a main hall, small ante rooms, a boardroom and family accommodation for the resident hall keeper. The balcony or gallery as it was then known was added later, as were the Mutual Hall and Reading Room.

It soon became a popular venue for varied recreational, educational and social groups. It was quite surprising to learn that in 1899, at the Harvest Home Ball, *50 couples partied the night away until 4.30am!*

In 1974, (over a century later!) the hall was still fulfilling the terms of the original constitution. Regionalisation was afoot and the then Kincardine County Council began to approach groups to form either Community Councils or Associations in their own villages.

Auchenblae Public Hall committee accepted this responsibility and adopted the new title of Auchenblae Community Association. Discussion on how to transfer from a Trusteeship to an elected committee followed. Legal advice was taken and in time the structure and purpose of this new body was finalised.

By March 1976 regular meetings were being held on the first Tuesday of the month, a practice which continues to this day. At the following AGM, representatives from village groups and clubs formed the majority of the committee: Bowling, Tennis, Curling, Golf, Youth, Playgroup, Football, Dramatic, Farmers’ Ball, WRI, Parks, PTA & Women’s Guild.

Its new role was quickly adopted and at the same AGM reports on lighting, blocked storm drains, the school, allocation of new council houses to local residents, as well as the damage and subsidence caused to surrounding roads by the heavy traffic used in laying new the gas pipeline were on the agenda.

The hall’s insurance was increased to £40,000, a substantial sum then, but small in comparison to today’s value of £850,000!

Many issues under discussion then, remain uncannily familiar to those of us who serve on today’s committee. Hall charges, fundraising, electricity, insurance and community events to mention just a few. We look forward to seeing you at our planned events. Your continued support is much appreciated.

Alan Richardson, Chairman

## Lunch club

A lunch club is due to start meeting in the spring. It will meet on Wednesday lunchtimes in the Church Hall. The meals will come from the school and transport can be provided if needed. If you're interested please do get in touch. Also it would be great to have some more volunteers to help out – with serving, clearing away and transport. Again do get in touch if you have an hour or two to spare each month – contact Ed or Nikki at the Healthy Living Network 01561 378130.

## Mrs Jamieson's Jam

Mrs Jamieson and her team of jam makers have been making and selling jam for over 30 years. The proceeds have gone towards treats for the pensioners in the village.

The pensioners treats all began with a bottle on the bar of the Thistle Inn, then run by Rudi and Dorothy Buschman. Various events such as sponsored slims, card selling and coffee mornings boosted the fund.

Then came the jam, berries being donated by the Mitchells at Castleton. The jams were sold at various Vintage Rallies, indeed orders were given at one for jams to be taken to another. This meant that all the monies raised were not coming from the village.



As we know the Pensioners Fund has closed, however the jam making will continue with funds going to charities still to be decided on.

Anyone who hasn't tried Mrs Jamieson's Jam doesn't know what they've been missing!



## From Grampian Police

Following the dramatic event on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2009, when the village was rocked by the explosion at The Drumtochty Arms Hotel, Grampian Police would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the village for their patience and goodwill during what was an extremely traumatic event for everyone. The community shone through and the access to the village hall was much appreciated by all of the Emergency Services in attendance.

Just when we thought we had had all of the snow for the winter back in December, it returned with a vengeance. We would ask that particular care is taken when trying to negotiate your way in and out of the village, which tends to have its own micro-climate on occasion. You can see large amounts of snow and drifting in and around the village with hardly any towards the A90 or Stonehaven. Always check the weather forecast and decide whether your journey is really necessary. If it is, leave in plenty of time, ensure that you carry warm clothing, a flask and a fully charged mobile phone. Don't press on through bad weather – turn back if conditions deteriorate. Please keep an eye on elderly neighbours to ensure they are not feeling isolated and vulnerable.

Thankfully the instances of break-ins and thefts around the Auchenblae area are few and far between, however we urge you to invest in security lighting and timers for lights to give the impression that buildings are occupied. A radio on a timer during the day adds to security. Always remember to lock doors when you are out.

Our local Community Focus Officer is Constable David Mitchell, who works out of Laurencekirk Police Office. He will try and visit the village as often as duties permit, but please feel free to call him on 0845 600 5 700 if you would like to speak to him.

Tom Lawson  
Sergeant  
Stonehaven



Mearns Community Transport Scheme has a minibus available for hire to local groups and clubs. MiDAS training is required by all drivers.

MCT can arrange to carry out assessments for any interested person.

The scheme offers a shopping trip on a Monday from Fordoun and Auchenblae at 10.20 and 10.30 respectively. Seats must be booked in advance, no later than Sunday night. Please ensure you leave full contact details and your full address. Mearns CTS 01561 377000

Due to the recent bad weather, it was not possible to run the shopping service every week - however alternatives were offered.

# The Next Local Development Plan

Aberdeenshire Council planning staff are evaluating submitted proposals for the next Local Development Plan against a set of technical criteria in order to come to a conclusion as to which sites they see as the better ones. The conclusions for Kincardine and Mearns will be discussed with Councillors at a seminar on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2009. Thereafter, the proposals will be published to indicate what sites Aberdeenshire Council think are the ones that should be taken forward and what other possible candidates exist. This document, which will sit within the Main Issues Report, is the one Aberdeenshire Council will be undertaking formal consultation on. The Main Issues Report will be published in mid May 2009. There will then be a six week period for communities to comment upon the report. Responses will be sought in writing or electronically through the Aberdeenshire Council website.

The responses received from communities will be analysed and used to inform the Proposed Plan. This too will be the subject of a public consultation probably in January/February next year. Unresolved objections to the Proposed Plan will be put forward to an independent Reporter and a subsequent Public Local inquiry who will rule on these differences of opinion. All of these stages will be detailed in the “participation statement” of the Development Plan Scheme, a document which Aberdeenshire Council hope to publish around March/April this year. A copy of this document will be sent to all Community Councils on publication.

It is very much in the community’s interests to engage with the developers to ensure that the developers are aware of and seek to deliver what the community wants.

There is also the question of Planning Gain. Aberdeenshire Council in line with other Councils in Scotland operates a system of Developer Contributions also referred to as “Planning Gain”. The Planning Gain Officer assesses the impact of a development on the facilities and infrastructure of a settlement and then negotiates a contribution from the developer to help offset impacts. The Planning for Real exercise completed in Auchenblae can be really useful here as it helps to inform service providers about the community’s views and concerns and provides a better chance of addressing these views and concerns with new development. The results from the Auchenblae Planning for Real exercise have been sent to the Planning Gain Officer so he is aware of the views expressed by those who took part.

Karelia Wright  
Community Planning Officer

## Auchenblae’s Got Talent

Towards the end of 2008 the winter nights drew in and we all settled down in front of the fire & the same old television programmes..... Well, some of you did, but some of us packed the Village Hall to watch “Auchenblae’s Got Talent and what a show we were treated to.

Space does not permit a comprehensive list but the ‘talent’ included Craig Anderson, Millie Keddie, Scott Hendry, Heather Murdoch, Lindsay Roberts, Lucie Hendry, Ronan Keddie Autumn Wilson Smith, Abby Grundy, Rachel Colbeck, Eliza Burgoyne, Sarah Gillanders and Rebecca Leigh. We were highly entertained by a selection of dancing, singing, musical instruments from the harp to the keyboard.

Much of the show was traditional with just the right amount of contemporary music to achieve the balance that a family show requires to keep everybody interested. Worth a special mention was the original dance routine created by Ronan Keddie & Rebecca Leigh and performed to an all too familiar tune (!) and was entitled Ceilidh Frog.

A big well done to all the performers, producers and anyone who helped make the show a success.  
I don’t think Jenny Thomson would mind if I quoted her from an email:

*“It was a brilliant show, one of the best we’ve ever had I think. The compere wasn’t bad either!”*

## Mr.& Mrs.—Auchenblae style!

So, we picked a nice couple in the village & asked them the same questions and of course, for those of you who remember the show, you get back some answers and most of them are correct, right! - read on! We've left out the names to see if you can guess who they are from the answers.

- 1. How long have you lived in Auchenblae?** HIM: About 13 years. HER: 14 years this summer (AM: Hmm, moved here at different times)
- 2. Where did you go on your first date?** HIM: Aberdeen Alternative Festival Club. HER: Still waiting to be asked (AM: Must have been another girl!)
- 3. On what date did you get engaged?** HIM: 19th March 1989. HER: 18th March 1989 (AM: Different girl and a different date!)
- 4. What's your Favourite Sunday Newspaper?** HIM – me, the Times, she has no favourite; HER – me, no time to read them, for him The independent (AM: well, the broadsheets all look alike!)
- 5. What's your Favourite Film?** HIM – Lord of the Rings 1,2&3 for me and Mama Mia for her. HER – Me, any black & white from the 50's & 60's (AM: are ABBA that old!!), for him anything with Jamie Lee Curtis in it. (AM: she must have been one of the Hobbits)
- 6. Who's the best cook?** HIM – Me. HER - Kitchens are for watching people cook whilst sipping wine. He is definitely more at home slaving over a hot stove. (AM: Not exactly a win for the fairer sex, but they both agree!)
- 7. What colour toothbrush does he have?** HIM – Green/Blue for me, hers is pink  
HER – me, Pink, him Blue (AM: ok, we'll give them that one)
- 8. DOB of youngest child** HIM & HER: 16/06/97 (AM: yippee!)
- 9. Favourite holiday place?** HIM & HER: New Zealand (AM: this is looking better!)
- 10. What's your Favourite Colour?** HIM – me, Blue and purple for her  
HER – me, definitely not blue & I think he may be colour blind judging by the wardrobe
- 11. What's his Favourite Band/Group?** HIM – AC/DC for me & Portishead for her  
HER - AC/DC for him & Kaiser Chiefs for me (AM: 50% - Rock on!)
- 12. Where were you born** HIM – Me, Aberdeen, her, Newport. HER – Me, Newport-on-Tay, him, Aberdeen (AM: ok, so he forgot the 'Tay')
- 13. What school did you attend (secondary)** HIM – Northfield Academy Aberdeen  
HER – Madras College St Andrews (AM: 2 out of 2!)
- 14. Favourite drink** HIM – Beer for me & white wine or gin for her. HER – Champagne (of course) for me and malt whiskey for him (anything if someone else is paying!) (AM: 'nuff said!)
- 15. Do you snore?** HIM – I do, she doesn't. HER – No and as for him, I feel sorry for the neighbours. (AM: ZZZZZZZZZZZZ)
- 16. Last film you saw at the cinema** HIM – I Can't remember but she saw Mama Mia (AM: ah, yes, her favourite film!). HER – me Mama Mia. Him, probably some James Bond.
- 17. Favourite restaurant** Him – Don't have one for her any one would do!!! HER: Don't get out much (sob) but probably the one in Catterline ( so long since I was there I can't remember it's name). (AM: Hope he is reading this & taking note!)
- 18. Do you play a musical instrument** HIM – No & No. HER Too busy paying for kids music lessons. (retirement project is to learn the harp (AM: well hopefully all of us will do that one day!)
- 19. Do you like Sudoko?** HIM – me, yes, her no. HER – me, yes him, still not moved on from crosswords (AM: so, that'll be none down & none across then!)
- 20. Must see television programme** HIM – News for me and anything for her.  
HER - Any crime drama. Trial and Retribution, Morse etc. HE INSISTS Everything stops for Bargain Hunt! (AM: well he got the 'any' bit right and the 'Bargain Hunt' tells a story!)

Don't laugh too loud—you may be asked next time!!!!



## Pantomime Review

Christmas is one of my favourite and most magical times of year and the festive celebrations would not be complete if they did not include a Pantomime!

This year's was very aptly titled 'Santa and The Vikings' or 'Smuts saga' is another version, which conjure up images of scandalous Nordic activities so where Santa fits in is later revealed.

They certainly produced a different slant on the 'usual' pantomime subjects and went on to deliver a very funny and delicious taste of eccentric and mad cap humour based around the days of the Vikings. when they raged the country stealing, kidnapping women and generally causing havoc with absolutely no regard for personal hygiene. These roles are typified perfectly by Eric Big Axe; one of the burly Viking's played by Craig Sandeman and his partner in crime Thor Smallsword (Kris Newstead)

It is opened with Snorri Snorrison, played convincingly by Gillian Siddons who dramatically introduces the next saga; her costume is brilliant as she sits mystically unravelling the latest Nordic tale.

The leader of the Vikings is Smut played brilliantly by Kevin Newstead who is a brutish villain with an immense lust for power but relies on his 'muscle' 'Big Rollo, wonderfully played by the very tall and very 'not so capable' Nick Targontsidis to lead their forces into an adventure. What talent from the Newstead family! At the same time Svein the dashing Viking Prince played by Gayna Sandeman, makes a heroic attempt to cross land and country to rescue 3 kidnapped children and also finds and marries the woman of his dreams.

One of my favourite characters whose comical presence dominated the pantomime was Dame Dustpan played by Simon Leigh.

She or rather 'he' delivered cringe worthy jokes and narration in a hilarious manner and captures the audiences imagination throughout the pantomime as she sets in search of her 3 children Tum, Dickson and Harold played by Ronan Keddie, Chrissie Saville and Nikita Sharp, who go missing after getting captured by the Vikings. They all did a wonderful job, as did the mini Vikings played by Thomas Leigh, Mary Saville and Millie Keddie.

I also found filofax played by Marianne Robson absolutely hilarious and she played the cynical surly dwarf superbly..

Judith Houghton was as ever superb in playing the horrible 'Helga Fork beard'.

I was literally overwhelmed by the most spectacular entrance made by the silver bird 'Stuka the Valkyrie', played by April Pressley who is magnificent and very magical as a supernatural being of immense power.

Throughout all of this exciting confusing and epic Norse Saga and exploitation of every Viking cliché available is Stoneheart 'King of the Mountain' alias Santa in disguise played by Tracey Harrison-Lewis.

Finally heroically Svein finds his beautiful princess, poor Radish, played by Natasha Downes and rescues her from Smuts evil grasp. Radish is indeed beautiful and plays her subtle role wonderfully as she is held captive under the evil rule of Smut.

The Director Sandy Noble did an excellent job of keeping quite a complex script and large and varied cast together and was aided by his very capable Stage hands Vhari Saville, Arne and Ronnie who did an impressive job of all the sets.

We are so lucky to have such extraordinary talent in such a small village and the 'Auchenblae Drama Group' should be very proud of their achievements.

I wait with bated breath for their next performance.....

**Donna Allen**

## Thanks

Elizabeth Singer would like to thank her customers and friends for the cards, gifts and good wishes given at the time of her retirement. The support shown over the last 13 years is much appreciated.



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## Thanks

Senior Citizens of Auchenblae thank WRI committees past and present for all the hard work, parties and entertainment you have provided over the years.

Also a big thank you to Drumtochty Social Group for the delicious Christmas dinner and party in 2008. All your effort are much appreciated.

Connie Smart

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## Corny Joke Corner

Three tomatoes walking down the street, Daddy, Mummy and Baby. Baby was lagging behind so Daddy went back, stepped on him and said ketchup!

