

FREE!



Cooking the Books, p18



Harmeny AC Race Success, p47

C&B NEWS

CURRIE • BALERNO • JUNIPER GREEN • BABERTON MAINS • COLINTON



Marching Orders...

Elections approach for the Scottish Youth Parliament, p22

Balerno & District Schools Pipe Band Competes in Peebles, p39

Photos: Balerno and District Schools Pipe Band; Harmeny AC; Stef Lyons

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Launched in 1976, *C&B News* is a volunteer-led, independent, non-profit-making community magazine written by and for the residents of Currie, Balerno, Juniper Green, Baberton Mains, and Colinton.

We publish 10 monthly issues each calendar year, including two "double-month" editions (December/January and July/August) marking our summer and winter breaks.

Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the management. We reserve the right to edit or reject submissions.

PRODUCTION

Editor: Paul Fisher Cockburn
editor@candbnews.com

Advertising Manager: Moira Peterson
advertising@candbnews.com

What's On Editor: Catriona Matheson
whatson@candbnews.com

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MANAGEMENT TEAM

Chairperson: Gail Rankin
chairperson@candbnews.com

Donations Manager: Ros Salton
donations@candbnews.com

Treasurer: Michelle Donegan
treasurer@candbnews.com

Distribution Manager: Derek Douglas
c/o Currie Balerno Rotary Club

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Balerno: Gillian Davies, Michelle Donegan, Catriona Matheson, Kirsten Pringle
Currie: Caroline Brown, Graham Dane
Juniper Green: Derek Douglas, Ros Salton, Richard Watt, Gail Rankin.

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DEADLINES FOR NEXT ISSUE

ADVERTISING & LISTINGS: 10 OCTOBER
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After heavy rain, hard-working rangers from the Pentland Hills Regional Park recently spent several hours putting the stepping stones back into place at Green Cleugh.



The Balerno & District Schools Pipe Band marched and played along the Main Street of Peebles, after taking part in the town's September Highland Games. Coming fourth in the Juvenile B section, they won their first shield, carried proudly at the front! More on page 39.

BRIEFLY...

WELCOME NEW SCOTS

Currie Kirk's Mission, Outreach and Fellowship Team are joining with other churches in the valley to welcome refugees, who live in our communities, under a project called "New Scots". They are organising a Family Fun Afternoon on Saturday 14 October between 2pm and 5pm at the Gibson Craig Hall. The plan is to provide activities for the children and teens – crafts and games/sports – plus a "quiet" space for adults to chat with one another, form new friendships and make connections with local residents. Pizza, teas and coffees will be provided. More details, contact Fiona Pigott on 07874 282480.

20MPH SURVEY

The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) public consultation on 20mph speed limits, which closed in February, received 4,056 responses—"a good level of response". The final report is expected to be published following deliberation by the Transport and Environment Committee on 12 October. More next issue?

BINS, BINS, BINS!

Are you interested in the location of bins across the city? Hours (minutes?) of fun can be had with this online map from The City of Edinburgh Council. bit.ly/ubibins (You're welcome.)

DELL ROAD PATH

The Water of Leith Walkway continues to be closed from near Colinton Parish Church thanks to a landslide. Tenders received by CEC in August 2022 – more than a year ago – were considered too expensive. Alternative (ie, cheaper) options are apparently being considered.

GLYPHOSATE

The City of Edinburgh Council aims to introduce a phased end to the use of glyphosate-based herbicide for the control of weeds and unwanted vegetation

Just some of the quality plants, fruit and vegetables on display at this year's Currie Parish Horticultural Show. Congratulations to everyone involved! See pages 13 and 19 for more.



The Campbell Park "Adopt an Orchard Tree" scheme, which was launched in February of this year is doing very well, writes Shona Harrower

Six months after launching the concept, 25 of the 30 orchard fruit trees have now been adopted. All of the individuals and organisations who have adopted trees are invited to join the Friends of Campbell Park's next community event – on Friday 13 October – and if they attend they will be presented with a personalised ceramic tree plaque. Wonderful Natwest Community volunteers and City of Edinburgh Council parks staff will then help them to safely attach the plaques to wooden stakes in front of the trees.

There will be plenty of other activities to see and do on the day. In the morning Bonaly Primary school's P5 classes will come to plant trees in the orchard hedgerows and native woodland trail.

The Wildflower Meadow Sowing and Share Picnic is on Friday 13 October, from noon to 2pm.

To find out more please send an email to friendsofcampbellpark@gmail.com or message us at www.facebook.com/FOCPK



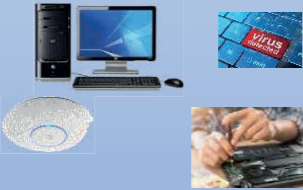
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Gordon Macdonald MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Edinburgh Pentlands Constituency



Monthly Advice Surgeries

Wester Hailes Library	1 st Friday of month, 10am
Carrickvale Comm. Centre	2 nd Friday of month, 10am
Currie Library	3 rd Friday of month, 10am
Oxgangs Library	4 th Friday of month, 10am
Ratho Community Centre	5 th Friday of month, 10am

NB: NO SURGERIES DURING PUBLIC AND BANK HOLIDAYS

Contact Details

By email gordon.macdonald.msp@parliament.scot
Home visit Available for those who cannot travel
By phone 0131 443 0595
By letter 9 Kingsknowe Park, Edinburgh, EH14 2JQ

f Gordon Macdonald MSP **@**GMacdonaldMSP

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C&B News Praised in Scottish Parliament

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
C&B NEWS

Both *C&B News* and independent news publication *The Edinburgh Reporter* have been praised in the Scottish Parliament for their founding involvement with “collaborative journalism outlet” *The Scottish Beacon*, in a motion submitted by Edinburgh Pentlands MSP – and regular contributor to *C&B News* – Gordon Macdonald (below).

Motions are short statements written by MSPs wishing to raise awareness of issues or to recognise the achievements of groups, businesses and individuals. They can be supported by other MSPs.

In motion S6M-10478, lodged on Tuesday 19 September, Gordon congratulated



C&B News and *The Edinburgh Reporter* “on joining with 15 other local news publications” to form *The Scottish Beacon*, and its aim “to strengthen the independent community-based media sector, bringing stories from

Scotland’s communities to a wider audience”.

He commended the publications “on their stated aim to re-invigorate local public interest news and overcome common challenges such as long-term sustainability”.

At time of going to press the motion has been supported by members including: local Lothian list MSP Sue Webber and Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Willie Rennie MSP.

Charity Seeks Volunteers to Help Tackle Loneliness among Older People

GEMMA WRIGHT
VINTAGE VIBES

Edinburgh-based charity project, Vintage Vibes, is encouraging residents in south-west Edinburgh to become volunteer heroes, offering companionship to older people with like-minded interests.

The award-winning charitable partnership brings people together through friendship matches, groups, and events to tackle social isolation and loneliness in the over the 60s across Edinburgh, which in 2014 was named as the loneliest city in the UK for older people—a statistic only exacerbated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Celebrating its eighth anniversary this October, Vintage Vibes has already helped nearly 1,000 older Edinburgh residents establish new one-to-one friendships.

“I’ve had so much fun since becoming a volunteer with Vintage Vibes,” said volunteer Alyssa Kuranowicz. “I was introduced to a lovely lady called Betty based on our shared love of coffee. On top of our weekly coffee shop visits, Betty and I have also enjoyed going for milkshakes, attending



concerts, going for beach walks, and attending events hosted by Vintage Vibes. Our connection has made a real difference to Betty’s well-being and quality of life and has also given me a great new friend and a lot of shared good times.”

Vintage Vibes is now seeking amazing new Edinburgh-based volunteers to expand the project and offer support to even more older people across the city.

“We’re delighted with the impact Vintage Vibes is making to the

lives of older people,” says Georgia Artus, Development Manager at Vintage Vibes. “Due to increasing demand, we’re seeking to expand our team of amazing volunteers. We’re looking for adults of all ages who can spare at least one hour each week, for a minimum of six months, to help an older person in need of friendship.”

For more information on volunteering, contact Vintage Vibes: hello@vintagevibes.org.uk or visit vintagevibes.org.uk

Sue Webber MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Lothian Region



Monthly Advice Surgeries

The first Friday of every month from 10am until 1pm in the constituency office at **546D Lanark Road, Juniper Green, Edinburgh EH14 5EL**. If this time is not possible you can make an appointment by contacting me via the details below.

Contact
Sue Webber

@ sue.webber.msp@parliament.scot
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BRIEFLY...

p3>>>

across the city from April 2024—excepting control of invasive weeds such as Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed. Glyphosate-based herbicides have not been used in the Balerno area for some time, at the request of local residents.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Balerno: Change of use of residential dwelling to short-term letting purposes (in retrospect), 1 East Rigg Farm. (23/03785/FULSTL) Comments by 6 October.

Currie: Proposed side extension, demolitions and internal alterations, 156 Muir Wood Road. (23/03930/FUL) Comments by 4 October.

Juniper Green: Proposed single storey extension to rear and porch to front, 19 Baberton Mains Wynd. (23/04124/FUL) Comments by 4 October.

Juniper Green: Proposed single storey extension to rear of property, 23 Baberton Mains Dell. (23/04181/FUL) Comments by 4 October.

Colinton: Enlargement of existing extension, 27 Bonaly Wester. (23/04240/FUL) Comments by 9 October.

Colinton: work on numerous trees, 50 metres south of 45 Spylaw Bank Road, Pentland Avenue. (23/04108/TCO) Registered on 6 September.

Colinton: Sectioned dismantling of cherry tree at 3 Bonaly Road. (23/04209/TCO) Registered on 6 September.

Colinton: Removal of dying/dead cherry tree, 20 Pentland Avenue. (23/04282/TCO) Registered on 11 September.

Colinton: Removal and reduction of various trees, 303-311 Colinton Road. (23/03819/TC) Registered on 15 September.

Colinton: Cutting back of several trees, 13 Woodhall Road. (23/04302/TCO) Registered 11 September. **>p7**

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Alice and the Mad Hatter Invite You to Tea!

SHERYL ALI
BALERNO THEATRE COMPANY

Preparations are well under way for this year's Balerno Theatre Company production, *Alice in Pantoland*, running from 6 - 9 December at the Church Hill Theatre, Morningside.

The cast and crew are busy rehearsing, making props and costumes, and raising funds to bring you another spectacular show. This year sees the company return to performing two matinee shows alongside the evening performances—as well as an extra special performance on the Thursday afternoon specifically for pupils from Dean



Park Primary School.

In the lead up to show week, the company will be hosting a Coffee Morning. So come along and meet the cast, support your local theatre company and take some tea – or coffee! – with the Mad Hatter and Alice on Saturday 28 October, between

10am and noon at Currie Bowling Club, 283 Lanark Road West. There will be cakes, books and gifts for sale and live music to keep you entertained.

For more info, visit www.balernotheatrecompany.co.uk

BRIEFLY...

p5>>>

Colinton: Felling of Cypress trees, 31D Gillespie Road. (23/04398/TCO) Registered 14 September.

Colinton: Undertake work detailed in survey report, Tree Works, West Mill Bank. (23/04464/TCO) Registered on 15 September.

PLANNING DECISIONS

Balerno: Removal of two 80 feet tall Fir trees, 43 Johnsburn Road. (23/03673/TPO) Granted, 1 September.

Balerno: Fell semi-mature Lime tree, 15 Johnsburn Road. Not make a tree preservation order, 1 September.

Colinton: Single storey rear extension and internal alterations, 21 Bonaly Road. (23/02758/LBC, 23/02768/FUL) Granted, 25 August.

Currie: Single storey extension, 40 Bryce Crescent. (23/03309/FUL) Granted, 4 September.

Colinton: Full removal of conifer in front garden and silver birch at 31 Woodfield Avenue. (23/03623/TPO) Permission is not required, 6 September.

Juniper Green: Felling of infected ash trees, 85 metres south west of 469 Lanark Road. Not make a tree preservation order, 13 September.

Balerno: Extend existing house and minor internal alterations, 2 Johnsburn Green. (23/03743/FUL) Granted, 15 September.

Currie: Erect extension, 19 Muir Wood Drive. (23/03279/FUL) Granted, 13 September.

Currie: Erect rear first floor extension over existing single storey. (23/03049/FUL) Withdrawn, 11 September.

Colinton: Full removal of laburnum tree over driveway, reduction of small oak, 48 Spylaw Bank Road. (23/04038/TCO) Not make a tree preservation order, 11 September.

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What About Our Common Good Assets?

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
C&B NEWS

Questions have been raised about the effective management of common good assets across Scotland.

These are a type of legally distinct property with its origins in the establishment of the country's Royal Burghs back in the 11th century. According to a 1491 law still in force today, these assets should be used "for the common good of the town". Ownership is currently held by Scotland's 32 local authorities.

Investigative journalism platform *The Ferret* (theferret.scot), believes the funds across Scotland are currently

worth an estimated £860 million. These range from works of art, financial securities and civic regalia to statues and public spaces.

There are relatively few within the five communities covered by *C&B News*, but they do include Campbell Park in Colinton, donated to the community by Duncan Campbell of Woodhall Mains Farm in 1935, and Bloomiehall Public Park, Juniper Green.

According to CEC's own accounts, a significant proportion of the common good fund has been spent, in recent years, on the maintenance of the assets. This is a perfectly acceptable use of the funds, although the exact amounts spent specifically on Campbell and Bloomiehall parks during the last few years – and the source of the funding – remain unclear.



Rev Dr Easter Smart Bids Farewell to Currie Kirk

ISOBEL WEBBER
JOINT SESSION CLERK, CURRIE KIRK

On Sunday 17 September the Rev Dr Easter Smart gave her final sermon in Currie Kirk. Easter has accepted a call to the Centre Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania.

"It has been my privilege to get to know each of you and to share in so many of your joys as well as your suffering," she said. "From our spirited Sunday worship, complete with baptisms, as well as knitting hats for refugees and the snack lunches and guild outings. To our shared grief as we

experienced the loss of some really wonderful members. It has been my honour to be part of the Currie community."

The choir opened the service singing Easter's favourite introtit "Lead me Lord". The Kirk Singers concluded the Service with the Battle Hymn of the Republic and a tearful "Our Sung Blessing" to guide Easter on her way to the USA.

The following Sunday, in the Gibson Craig Hall, the congregation presented Easter with gifts from Harmonies in Wood and a Dollar cheque to remind her of her time here in Currie.



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Edinburgh Airport Community Fund Looking for New Applications

AARON MCKEEN
SUSTAINABILITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER,
EDINBURGH AIRPORT

The Edinburgh Airport Community Fund exists to financially support groups, organisations and projects within the communities closest to it. The fund highlights the airport's commitment to fostering meaningful connections with its neighbours, having been established with a clear objective of promoting local development and engagement. Throughout 2023 it will award up to £140,000 to an array of different projects.

At its core, the fund aims to ensure that the success of Scotland's busiest airport is shared with surrounding communities. By providing financial support, the fund bolsters community group and charity projects dedicated to enhancing opportunities, facilities, the environment, and services for local residents.

The Community Fund's decision-making body is made up of key representatives from both Edinburgh Airport and the local community. These members independently evaluate funding applications, ensuring a balanced and informed selection process.

Projects must align with the pillars of Edinburgh Airport's "Greater Good" sustainability strategy: zero carbon, enhancing Scotland, Scotland's best business, and trusted neighbour. Priority is given to proposals benefiting communities nearest the airport, addressing issues like climate change mitigation, local environmental impact reduction, biodiversity support, sustainable partnerships, upskilling, and employment opportunities.

Not-for-profit organisations such as charities, community councils, local school groups, and community interest companies are eligible to apply, with a funding cap of £7,000 per project. The fund emphasises lasting, tangible impacts and self-sustainability of projects.

The next available round of funding began receiving applications in early September for discussion at the meeting of the Board on 24 November. Please check the community fund webpage for more information, and follow Edinburgh Airport on social media.



First Menopause Cafe Event Launched in Currie

EMMA HOKAYEM
EH FITNESS

On Friday 8 September, more than 45 women met in The Corner Cafe, Currie, to participate in south west Edinburgh's first Menopause Cafe.

Menopause is an inevitable phase of a woman's life, yet often comes shrouded in silence, discomfort, and uncertainty. For many, discussing this natural transition can be challenging and isolating. The Menopause Cafe aims to be a place for women to share, learn, and create a supportive haven for each other.

The cafe was born from the shared passion and experience of Emma Hokayem from EH Fitness and Steph Price from Managing your Menopause, both women who own businesses focused around women's health.

"We want the Menopause Cafe to be a safe, inclusive space for women to connect, share experiences, and seek support around this often taboo subject matter," said Emma Hokayem. "As coaches, myself and Steph often work with women who are struggling physically and mentally with the effects of menopause."



"By helping women through this stage in life, we can improve their way of living and overall quality of life. This unique event was designed to break the silence and foster a community of understanding and empathy. Based on the success of the first cafe, there will be more!"

The Menopause Cafe is not just an event; it's a movement that aims to rewrite the stigma surrounding menopause. By creating spaces like this, we can empower women to embrace this natural stage of life with confidence and knowledge.

To hear about more events like this, follow through their social media at [eh_fitness_edinburgh](https://www.eh_fitness_edinburgh.com) and [Managingyourmenopause](https://www.managingyourmenopause.com)



October is here and with it the short Balerno Music Festival, writes Wendy Williams. "Our first evening is on Sunday 1 October—so may already be over by the time you read this."

"However you may still be in time to get tickets for the amazing Forth Valley Chorus. This talented group have successfully competed internationally at Sweet Adeline events and are now hoping to travel to Louisville again soon."

"Come and see them at Balerno Parish Church on Saturday 7 October at 7.30pm, and discover just how energetic and tuneful they are."

More information can be found on the Balerno Parish Church website (<https://www.balernochurch.org.uk>) and tickets are available through Eventbrite

BRIEFLY... PLANNED ROADWORKS & ROAD CLOSURES

Juniper Green/Nether Currie: SGN gas main renewal between Juniper Avenue and Nether Currie Road, working westwards: two-way temporary traffic lights and Juniper Avenue closed until end of November.

Juniper Green: Lanark Road at Gillespie Crossroads, Scottish Water pipe renewal, with city-bound (left turn) lane closed on approach to crossroad, 2-9 October.

Balerno: Lanark Road West at Bridge Road; BT clearing blocked cable ducts requiring off-peak three-way traffic lights, 4 October only.

Baberton Mains: Baberton Mains View, re: phone mast at end of A720 off-slip; mast and cabinet maintenance requires road and off-slip closure, 16 October only.

Colinton: Bridge Road, outside/opposite Post Office; for forestry work, two-way temporary traffic lights, 19 October only (TBC).

Balerno: Mansfield Road/Cockburn Crescent bus terminus; water main connection to Harmeny School, work extended by another six weeks. Three-way temporary traffic lights in place until late October.

Pentland Hills Regional Park: Development of Threipmuir car park. No parking on Mansfield Road between Scottish SPCA and 200 metres south of Threipmuir car park, and on East Farm Rigg for c400 metres from Mansfield Road. Until end of November (TBC).

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ANNIE MACDONALD
PESTICIDE FREE BALERNO

A City of Edinburgh Council Transport and Environment Committee (TEC) meeting in September discussed the need to stop using glyphosate for weed control, city-wide.

Along with recent media coverage from The Edinburgh Reporter and Edinburgh Evening News, here were some of the main points.

"Not only the cancerogenic properties that are well established but it's a contributor to the health crisis that is being inflicting on society"; "glyphosate is know as a 'forever' chemical"; "the impact on biodiversity that we can already see is something we should take very seriously"; "there is a consensus that we

should be ending the use of glyphosate"; "we recognise that in Edinburgh there is a petition of over 5,000 signatures"; "there are an number of UK councils which have moved to a chemical ban"; "appetite from residents to keep their communities in a good state for the look and feel of an area"; "we do equally recognise that there is a growing range of alternatives".

Balerno was recognised and thanked for its committed work by the convener, Cllr Scott Arthur.

The overall outcome of the meeting was a ban of glyphosate-use in Edinburgh's green spaces from 2024.

This may appear as a positive step forward; however, pesticide applications will still continue right outside people's homes, on streets, pavements and hard standing areas across Edinburgh. These are precisely the areas where residents have requested the council stop chemical use.

Green spaces should never have

had glyphosate applied anyway. In 2017, the EU only narrowly revoked to re-licence glyphosate, with the strong advisory to minimise use in public spaces such as parks, playgrounds and gardens.

Pesticide Free Balerno was under no illusion that change would be achieved overnight; however, CEC have been discussing the urgency of change since 2016. Councillors are also now well aware of the growing petition.

After numerous reports of residents and pets becoming ill following exposure across Edinburgh, and support given to CEC while they trial safe methods – via four years of Balerno volunteer weeding – we would really expect to see, at the very least, a minimum level of safe alternatives introduced into a safe integrated approach.

A ban from 2024, affecting merely greens spaces, is just embarrassing.



Expect Fireworks!

ALASDAIR GORDON
CURRIE BALERNO & DISTRICT ROUND TABLE

As we head into autumn, we're looking forward to the annual fireworks display on Sunday 5 November at King George V Park, Currie.

Gates will open at 6.30pm with the fireworks lighting up from 7.15pm.

Tickets are available at www.cbdrt.com/ and www.facebook.com/cbdrt/

Entry will also be available on the night by cash or card, but please note that numbers in the front field are limited and it's "first come, first served".

As always, there's free entry to the rear field and we encourage anyone that can to put a donation into the buckets for Currie, Balerno & District Round Table. All profits made on the night will go towards local charities and good causes.

For anyone wanting to volunteer at the event, there are lots of jobs to be done during the afternoon, evening and morning after. Please do get in touch: enquiries@cbdrt.com

Ticket prices: Adults £10 (£9 online), unaccompanied under-16s £1, under-16s with parents free.

www.facebook.com/candbnews

Currie Kirk Guild Off to a Great Start

LOUISE LAMONT
CURRIE KIRK GUILD PRESIDENT

The Guild has got off to a great start in the latter part of 2023, having held two meetings already. There was a good turnout for both, and we already have five new members.

October sees our first fundraiser for "Beat Eating Disorders" with a coffee morning on Saturday 21 October, from 10am-noon. As well as home baking there will be a tombola and book stall. Tickets are £4 and will be available from Currie Kirk Office or Guild members.

Sunday 29 October is our Rededication Service, which will be led by Rev Fiona Tweedie in Currie Kirk at 10.30am.

Next month brings Tommy McGovern talking about "Burtons Biscuits"—hopefully with free samples! (7 November, 10am)

Each meeting costs £3 for members, with annual subscriptions of £15 waived for new members. Visitors pay £4 per meeting. All meetings held in the Gibson Craig Halls.

For further information please email elf.lamont@blueyonder.co.uk or phone 466-3472.



'Flowers from Felt' at Balerno SWI

SHEILA MASON
PRESS SECRETARY, BALERNO SWI

How quickly time flies and here we are back again after the summer break. And hasn't the weather been really kind to us?

Some members were still taking their holiday breaks but in September our President, Catriona, welcomed three potentially new members to enjoy a demonstration and subsequent hands-on fun as we made "Flowers from Felt" guided by Tracey Spencer, herself a Rural member in Bathgate.

We sat round a table sharing scissors, glue guns and using felt brought by Tracey. Thus we were able to chat about how we were progressing our flowers and how realistic they looked. We made

Lavender, Poppies and other daisy types depending on our ingenuity. It was a lot of serious fun and we were delighted with our prowess!

Catriona thanked Tracey for her time and enthusiasm with this skill.

After all the chatting the usual "Rural cuppa" was most welcome, and we were reminded that next month we will celebrate our 88th "Birthday" with a Quiz Night. And there will be birthday cake with the cuppa!

We meet at Balerno Community Centre at 7.30pm, Tuesday 3 October. Any lady thinking of joining us will be welcome.

Competition Results

Flower of the Month: Donna Pride

Handmade Birthday Card: Bridgid Moncur (first); Catriona Reid (second); June Duff (third).

LOCAL UPDATES • LOCAL UPDATES

Balerno Bridge Club—in Currie!

SANDRA RENTON
BALERNO BRIDGE CLUB

Balerno Bridge Club started more than 30 years ago in Balerno High School, then moved to Currie High School and now operates from the Gibson Craig Halls, Currie.

We held a summer lunch in August last year to celebrate both our 30 years and a hopeful return to playing the game after three years of Covid-19-related lockdown.

While the Club has survived, it is smaller now than it once was, and we would like to reach out to anyone in the local area who plays bridge and who would like to come and join us.

We play on Monday afternoons, from 1.20pm for a 1.30pm start. We play approximately 18 to 21 boards, depending on the number of tables. We are a small friendly club and anyone coming along would be most welcome.

Further details from the Chairman, Sandra Renton on 07504 306062.

Thursday Club Back in Colinton

TESSA KELLY
THE THURSDAY CLUB

A new season is soon to begin at The Thursday Club, based at St Cuthbert's Scottish Episcopal Church on Westgarth Avenue, Colinton. We are looking forward to welcoming members old and new!

Previously known as Colinton Townswomen's Guild, as the number of Guilds across Scotland fell, we decided to go it alone.

We have an interesting programme to look forward to this autumn and, as always, there will be tea/coffee, biscuits, the occasional lunch club, and of course friendship.

We meet every second Thursday of the month from 2.15pm, and hope to see you there!

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me, Tessa Kelly, on 07766 232184.

Boys' Brigade Fun Summer Adventure

BILL BROWN
65TH EDINBURGH (CURRIE) COMPANY
BOYS' BRIGADE

The 65th Edinburgh (Currie) Company Boys' Brigade spent a great September holiday weekend at the Battalion's Adventure Centre at Craggan, Loch Tay.

There was great fun from start to finish, especially on Saturday as the boys spent almost six hours on the water receiving canoe and kayak instruction from the excellent David Walsh of Emmaus Adventure.

While it rained heavily on the Friday, we were blessed with glorious sunshine on the Saturday and a fairly dry Sunday. Great fun had by all boys and staff. We're looking forward to our next visit!



Balerno Monday Club Returns

LIZ CARRIE
BALERNO MONDAY CLUB

A social club in Balerno primarily for older members of the community – though younger members are also welcome – has started again after its summer break.

The Balerno Monday Club meets on the first and third Mondays of the month for an hour from 2pm in the St Joseph's Centre (location of The Mill Cafe) at Balerno Parish Church. It provides an opportunity for a bit of conversation – with occasional



entertainment such as talks, music performances, quizzes and games – along with tea and biscuits. We also have an annual summer picnic and a Christmas dinner.

The Club is also always looking for volunteers to share any interesting hobbies, careers or

skills via talks or activities with our members. If you could spare an hour to share your special interest please get in touch.

If you, or someone you know, would like to join us please come along or email us at balernomondyclub@gmail.com

A Fresh Start for Pentland Flower Club

WENDY WILLIAMS
PENTLAND FLOWER CLUB

It was lovely to welcome members back to the new year of the Pentland Flower Club. We had a wonderful evening with Becky from Becky's Flowers in Bathgate. While rapidly assembling bouquets



and arrangements for many occasions she chatted about her very busy life as an award-winning florist.

Our next meeting will take place on Friday 6 October and we will welcome Audrey Buchan from Arbroath with an aptly named demonstration entitled "Autumn Watch".

Looking ahead to 3 November, I am sure that Ada Paul from Ayr will be sparkling with "Hi Ho Silver".

Our meetings start at 7pm and take place at Balerno Parish Church. We continue to look forward to welcoming friends old and new.

LOCAL UPDATES • LOCAL UPDATES

2023 'Horti' a Great Show!

SHEILA MASON
SHOW SECRETARY, CPHS

This year was our 143rd Show and took place on Saturday 26th August in the concourse at Balerno CHS. The committee were delighted with the number and standard of entries our communities of Balerno, Currie, Juniper Green, and Baberton produced – many of them competing for the first time. We also encouraged entries from Colinton, Ratho and Kirknewton.

It is always a pleasure to see the excitement – if that is the correct phrase – showing on the faces of the new exhibitors, especially if they are lucky enough to spy a place card on their exhibits! There are photos from the Show on our website (www.currieshow.weebly.com) so please take a look and perhaps you will see that your growing and home skills are equally as good as the entries from this year.

The Show was opened and prizes presented by Gail Rankin the Chairperson of C&B News, standing in for its editor, indisposed by Covid-19.

The main prizewinners were:
For Plants and Flowers: Connie McDonald, Bob Douglas and Patricia Hampton.

For Vegetables: George Harrison and Rob Horsfield.



Floral Art and Handcrafts: Julian Jefferson.

Baking: Nan Chapman.

Needlework: Lorraine McCafferty.

Novice (16 and under): Emily Dow.

Composite Class (4 items on the table): Juniper Green SWI.

Congratulations to these competitors and here's to next year and we hope more of the readers will contemplate supporting this very old Horticultural Show.

As Show Secretary I should like to thank the committee for all their work in getting the Show "off the ground" and I should also like to acknowledge the support we received from the



janitorial staff at Balerno CHS for the invaluable help they gave in assisting us. They say "many hands make light work" and it is certainly a very truism.

The In-the-Ditch Quilters are to be thanked for giving all who visited the Show a beautiful display of their handiwork. Such talented people we have in our midst.

Hope you all have a good winter with time to plan your entries for the next Show. When the handcraft items have been selected I shall ask C&B News to announce them through the appropriate edition to give ample time for you to prepare them. So watch this space!

Autumn Planning

LESLEY HENDERSON
BALERNO FAIRTRADE VILLAGE GROUP

2023 brought disasters, lost harvests and huge hardship to much of our world. Nearer home, our energetic national Fairtrade/Fair Trade organisers bring a little hope. The recent Dundee conference of the Scottish Fair Trade Forum (SFTF) urged all to campaign afresh right now for people and planet, in the fight for global justice: the very reasons why FT matters so much. The UK-wide Fairtrade Foundation (FTF), with similar aims, has also begun a great renewal process, including healthy regional consultation on the whole shape of Fairtrade campaigning.

What might this mean for FT locally? For instance, for 2024 FTF has decided to move Fairtrade Fortnight from the former February-March slot to 9 – 22 September. However, because they already know that Balerno's much-loved Schools FT Art Competition wouldn't work during the summer holidays, they're happy for us to time things in line with local needs, advised by our schools' own experts. We know the competition still really helps our children learn, as they work out and show us why caring about each other and our world matters.

Details remain to be finalised, but provisionally please expect a spring competition, we hope with a presentation, exhibition, FT stalls, and refreshments. We'll mark the new FT Fortnight too, glad that in September it surely won't be snowed off! Please also read C&B News, and our Facebook page, for news of FT's role in other local events.

At Balerno Fairtrade Village Group's first meeting of the autumn, we welcomed the two lively new Dean Park School FT representatives. The continuing commitment and imaginative planning of all our schools are so important.

Contact us via Balerno Fairtrade's Facebook page, email balernofairtrade@gmail.com, and/or come to our next meeting on Tuesday 7 November at 7.15 pm in the Shepherd Room, Balerno Parish Church. Many thanks for your support.

Round Table Autumn Update

ALASDAIR GORDON
CURRIE BALERNO & DISTRICT ROUND TABLE

As a group, we have two main areas of activity: events (that raise money) and charities (giving it all away again). The past month has seen us busy with both. Along the way we have a lot of fun, and we try to have a few social events too.

Our recent focus for events has been organising the fireworks display. "Remember, remember the fifth of November..." Details are published elsewhere in this issue! There's been a lot to forward plan, not least the rota of volunteers. It's a great opportunity to get involved if you



can spare any time on the Sunday afternoon or evening.

At our September meeting we agreed on awards to 10 different causes, totalling over £9,000. We were delighted to be able to support some of our local organisations in doing great things including: Community for Food, Pentlands Book Festival,

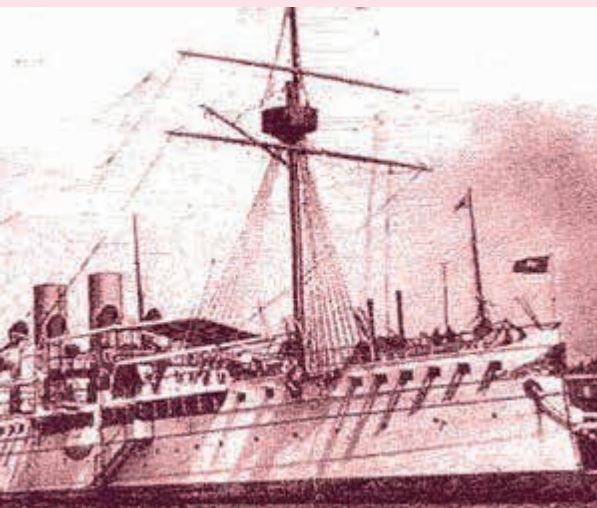
Currie Men's Shed, Currie Community Centre, Balerno Scouts and Currie Rugby Club.

Meanwhile, on our Scottish Coastal Walk we have now completed our third leg which brings us around to Dunbar, and leaves "just" 6,659 miles (10,717 km) to look forward to. enquiries@cbrtc.com

Snapshots of the Past



The Society Wedding at Riccarton House— with a King!



Top left: Celebrations at Currie Kirk, "fit for a King"? Top right: Riccarton House. Above: the King of Siam's Royal Yacht, Maha Chakri. Right top: King Chulalongkorn (aka King Rama V). Right middle: Henrietta Florence Gibson-Craig. Right bottom: Captain Robert S D Cumming. Both illustrations published in a contemporary issue of *Musselburgh News*.

DOUGLAS LOWE
CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Back in March 2019, I wrote about this particular photograph. It is clearly Currie Kirk, possibly during the late 1800s, judging by the clothes, and certainly during a fashionable wedding—going by all the ladies in their big hats! I have however been doing more research and have discovered some other bits of information that may interest readers of *C&B News*.

The "society wedding" that I thought this photo relates to, was held on 10 August 1897 at Riccarton House, not Currie Kirk. Henrietta Florence Gibson-Craig, the eldest daughter of Sir James Gibson-Craig, Laird of Riccarton, married Royal Navy Captain Robert S D Cumming. The couple were married by the Very Rev. J F Montgomery Dean of Edinburgh, under the forms of the Episcopalian Church of Scotland.

Captain Cumming had recently returned from a voyage to Siam (modern day Thailand) where he had been sent by the British Government to take charge of the King of Siam's Royal Yacht, a 2,500 ton armed cruiser named Maha Chakri – coincidentally built by Leith-based Ramage and Ferguson some five years earlier – and bring the vessel, the monarch and their entourage to Europe. The King was to embark on a European tour, having discussions with various heads of state including Queen Victoria.

Because of the connection, King Chulalongkorn of Siam (aka King Rama V) and party were invited to be guests at Captain Cumming's wedding. (Note: as Prince Chulalongkorn, the visiting monarch was one of the children educated in English language and customs by Anna Leonowens between 1862 and 1867, as depicted in her own memoirs, Margaret Landon's 1944 novel *Anna and the King of Siam* and, perhaps most famously, the Rodgers and Hammerstein 1951 musical *The King and I*.)

Six hundred invitations were sent out and, among the many titled guests, landed gentry and numerous naval officers, it was the anticipated appearance of the King of Siam and his royal entourage that would have created additional



Colinton Local History Society is Back!

DEREK DOUGLAS
SECRETARY, COLINTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

We are almost about to start our new season of meetings in Colinton's Dreghorn Loan Hall commencing on Monday 2 October at 8pm.

The summer has seen us very busy working on our archives and I am pleased to say that we are now ready to open them to the public. As I mentioned previously they are now situated in two stationery cupboards in the computer room of Colinton Library, where Callum and his staff have kindly allowed us to hold "open mornings" every Tuesday from 10am until 12.30pm.

A member of our committee will be on hand to allow people to look through the files and photographs and answer any questions which they may have, so why not come along and explore them?

In addition to these "Open Days" we currently have exhibitions in the library and one in the Swing Cafe, Colinton Parish Church, covering "Mills of the Colinton Area". Both are well worth seeing!

Not only are we starting off our new season with another spectacular array of speakers, but we have also decided to modernise our image by introducing a new logo and are working on further developing our website.

Next month we will resume exploring some of the Society's archive materials for you, starting off with an architect who not only designed many of the larger houses in Colinton but was responsible for a considerable number of well-known buildings in Edinburgh and beyond, in addition to much work on Episcopalian Churches.

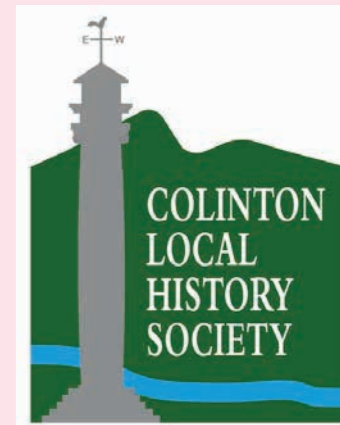
excitement on Riccarton Estate and in Currie and Hermiston villages.

Edinburgh's newspapers were similarly excited, recording King Chulalongkorn and royal party shopping on Princes Street. Having come by special train to Edinburgh, the royal guests – with police escort – were driven in carriages out via Gorgie and Hermiston to enter the grounds by the North Lodge. Sailors and boys from Captain Cummings previous ship the *Caledonia* lined the drive into Riccarton and the ship's band provided the music.

Both the exterior and interior of Riccarton House, the North Lodge gateway, as well as Hermiston and Currie villages and Currie and Curriehill railway stations, were bedecked in bunting, flowers and greenery, including Siamese flags. Looking at the photo; in front of the Kirk there are some guests in what appears to be naval uniform, so that would tie in with the naval connection, and there are flags on the chimneys of the old school. Were these flags of Siam? If only the wind had chanced to unfurl the flags for our photographer!

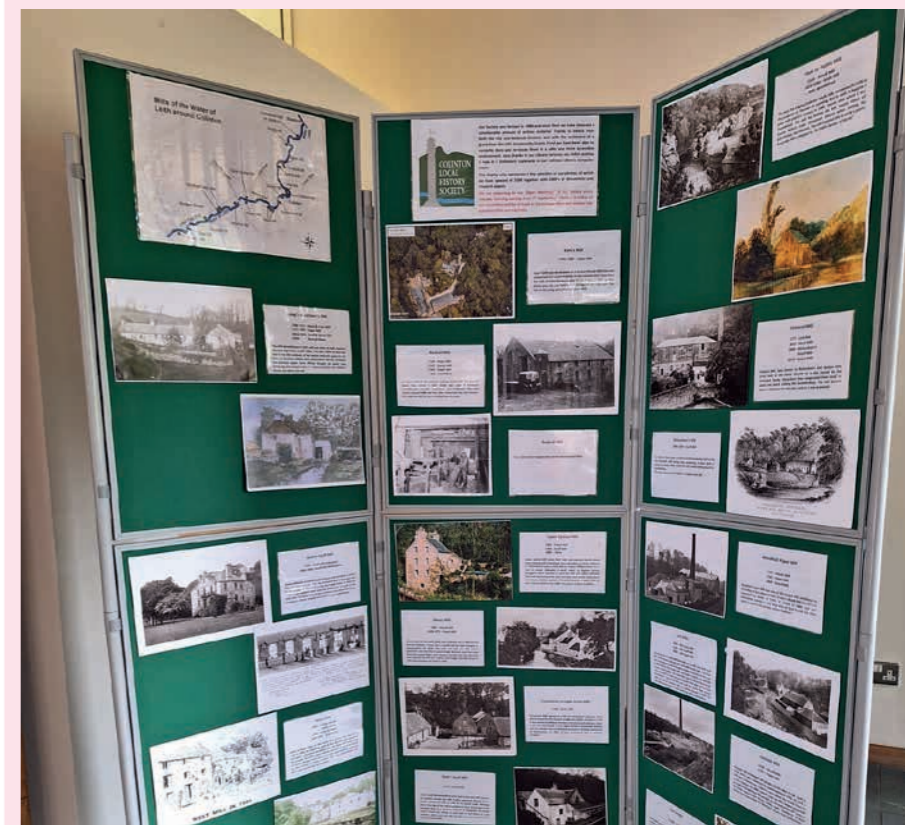
The wedding ceremony was conducted in the dining room of Riccarton house. Contemporary newspaper reports mention that there were around 300 guests and that it was so crowded that many of the guests were unable to hear the ceremony. Afterwards, King Chulalongkorn agreed to sign the marriage certificate as one of the witnesses. The guests repaired to the garden for photographs and it was reported that a tree was planted in the grounds by the King—although the Riccarton gardeners and ground staff would likely have been on hand to tramp it in!

On leaving, the King and party were taken back to the North British Hotel (now The Balmoral) in Edinburgh via Currie, Juniper Green and Slateford. The newlyweds, meantime, left Riccarton to catch the 4.20pm train for Carlisle, which was stopped specially for their convenience at Curriehill station. A large crowd of well-wishers had gathered at the station to see the couple off to start their honeymoon in North Wales.



Our first three meetings (all starting at 8pm in Dreghorn Loan Hall) are:

- Monday 2 October: Chipping away at Hugh*: Kath Hay discusses Hugh Miller—esteemed geologist, poet, editor and fierce supporter of the Free Kirk.
- Monday 16 October: Napier the Herbalist, by Eric Melvin.
- Monday 6 November: Are we nearly there yet? Bruce Keith shares the history of milestones.



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THIS MONTH IN... 1978 CURRIE & BALERNO NEWS 31, 7p

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
C&B NEWS

Although this issue's front page lead story was on the familiar subject of buses – specifically the introduction of a new joint Lothian Region Transport/Eastern Scottish-run service 61, linking the city centre with Currie via Sighthill and Riccarton – an accompanying editorial noted that “nothing in particular” had suggested itself as the subject for this editorial, so perhaps it is a suitable moment to reflect on Editorialising and expressions of opinion in *C&B News*’.

Editor Graham Priestley explained how the editorials were “supposed to express the paper’s considered opinion of events” but had “all been written by the same pen, albeit with some canvassing of colleagues”. The paper had been less than successful in getting others to make the same commitment. “Many people have been approached for ‘One Person’s View...’ or ‘Guest Editorial’ pieces but without result.” Perhaps this is why, 45 years later, *C&B News* has essentially done away with regular editorials altogether, leaving the opinions to reside within our “Views” pages!

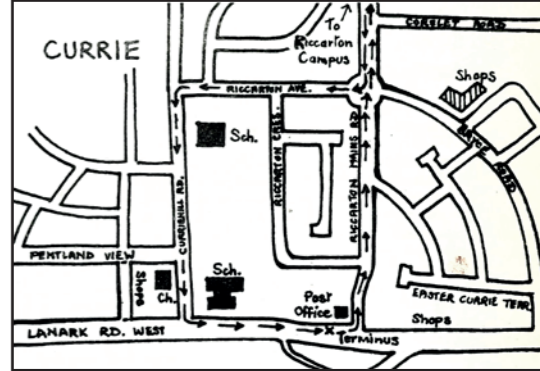
It’s not as if there wasn’t anything happening locally to discuss. Despite continuing opposition from the then-Edinburgh District Council, there was growing support and suggestions of action locally – several years down the line, admittedly – to the creation of new community councils serving the local communities along the Water of Leith valley. “It is not too early to start reminding local

CURRIE & BALERNO NEWS No. 31 October 1978 7p

NEW No.61 BUS SERVICE

From the end of September... This will be a trial service... Since our original intention...
 From the end of September, a new bus service will link Currie with Sighthill and the city centre. From Sighthill the route will be along the A71 Calder Road to Hermiton, then up Riccarton Mains Road with a stop at Riccarton Campus, turning right along Lanark Road West at Currie Post Office, right again down ‘Currie’ Road, right along Riccarton Mains Road and from there again to Hermiton, Sighthill and Edinburgh.
 There will be 27 services each day during University terms, but only seven per day for the remainder of the year. The full fare will be 29p (children 5-15 years 10p). The first service will leave town at 6.30 a.m.

Plenty to see at Currie Flower Show



residents about Community Councils,” wrote contributor Alan Wilkie, “and to start people thinking about whether or not we want to establish one in Currie.” There were also happy memories

to share from the previous month’s Juniper Green Village Hall Association’s picnic, which provided “a splendid afternoon” for 250 people. “Students of welly boot throwing will be astonished to hear that Colin Richardson won the men’s event with a throw of 93 feet 7 inches,” explained the paper. (That’s 28.5 metres in new money.) No one appears to have contacted Guinness World Records to check if this feat (pun intended) was worth recording.

Photographs were still a generally rare aspect of *Currie & Balerno News* at this time—not least because of the additional production costs involved in scanning them for publication. So it was a genuinely big thing that this issue gave over a full double-page spread to the latest Currie Horticultural Society Flower Show. “A magnificent display that made my mouth water and my eyes boggle,” explained former tenement dweller – and now Currie-based man “with a camera” – Martin

Bone. “A stimulus to have a go next year – right now though I’m going down the garden to give a pep talk to my recalcitrant tomatoes!”

Another local social event worth talking about was the 11th annual Pentland Art Club exhibition, officially opened during “a convivial preview party” on 1 September by Bob Calendar from Edinburgh College of Art. He “complimented the club on the consistently high standard of the work”, while remaining diplomatically silent on whether he had a favourite among the 280 works on display. Sales of the members’ hard work were apparently “sufficiently increased from last year to meet the higher costs (eg. 50% increase in accommodation costs) and still make a contribution to the club’s funds”.

And finally, if all else failed, there was the weather: curiously, this was achieved not in the editorial but via the paper’s long-since departed farming column. During 1978 a “long spell of showery weather” had “delayed the grain harvest in this district” with “very little combining” having been done. “The farmers need at least four weeks of reasonably dry weather to rescue the harvest from disaster,” explained writer A Taylor. “It is already at least a fortnight later than usual.”

Admittedly, he pointed out that the rain had “kept the grazing pastures well up to standard for dairy cattle”, with positive consequences for both the cows and their offspring. Swings and roundabouts. And, as someone who loves their chips, I was pleased to learn of 1978 seeing a “very good crop” of potatoes, “though prices have fallen greatly from the fantastic heights of the past two seasons”. Was that anything to do with the 1976 heatwave? Discuss.



For a few years from 1978, Currie was the terminus for a “special” Service 61, run jointly by Lothian Region Transport and Eastern Scottish, which travelled from the city centre via Sighthill and Heriot-Watt University’s Riccarton campus. Unsurprisingly, the route wasn’t without criticism, and it would eventually be withdrawn once direct competition between the deregulated bus companies grew fiercer. Photo: James A Cockburn.

Cooking the Books



and leisure for the rest of the day. It will get hungry mouths off your back when you need to feed your family but also get on with everything else you are supposed to do. Do I love everything in this book? No. Is it blooming wonderful anyway? Yes.

Our Nigella, who Art on Telly, Hallowed be Thy Cookbooks...

That's right. I'm going to bang on about Nigella Lawson again for the next 500 or so words. If you aren't such a fan (I am aware that they exist) please don't immediately turn the page. You may not always love the person, but my goodness she's an awful help to loads of us in our hour of need. I've prayed to her at the altar of my hob and searched through her hallowed tomes in many a desperate time. And there are none so desperate as when the kids go back to school. They return home inexplicably starving, and you must get them something to snack on lest they expire immediately, while also making sure the prospect of dinner is somewhere in the near and tangible future.

You do all this while you finish work, reply to emails, scrub sinks and Hoover floors, generally trying to stop your progeny from messing up the house that was tidy and quiet only hours before. My partner and I both work from home, so it is the two of us picking up discarded shoes, empty water bottles, all the while wondering what on earth we are going to feed them. Again.

Enter Queen Nigella, the Fixer of Dinners, Breaker of Boring Weeknight Menus, and Mother of Easy Joyful Cooking. Her 2007 cookbook, *Nigella Express*, is the bible you need for when you're back from work, hungry, and want to fix something tasty. Even when you only have store cupboard things in. It will fill empty tummies, help you do that last minute cake you said you'd make for something that you utterly forgot about. It even means you can throw some stuff in a pot in the morning and eat something wonderful in the evening, having gone about your business

Got some people popping by for drinks? Why not throw together her juicy beef skewers with horseradish dip? Had a bad day? There's a whole chapter entitled, "Instant Calmers" with a recipe for Rapid Ragù, Butternut and Sweet Potato Soup, Berry Crumble-in-a-Cup or even Roly Poly Pudding. When my first born was little we would wizz the Pineapple Upside Down Cake together because it was quick and delicious and easy baking for me and my two year old. I also substituted the fruit freely and easily for whatever I could find at the shops.

The Free Company (a wonderful farm in Balerno that sells their fruit and veg in boxes they deliver to your door) are about to deliver some plums to me as I type. I think a plum upside-down cake would be utterly delicious. Perhaps with a large dollop of double cream. Other family favourites are the crispy duck (which is basically "put a duck in the oven") and the Hokey Pokey (which is cinder toffee to some people and honeycomb to others).

This week we had the Coq Au Riesling, which I threw together while the kids were at swimming lessons and it was ready well before I had to head off to choir.

Easy. Quick. Delicious. Nigella's cooking is all about joy and love. And whoever said that had to be laborious? Amen, Nigella. Amen.



with Balerno Resident STEF LYONS

Fabulous Primary 1s at Dean Park Primary School

CLARE THOMSON
DEAN PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

We have welcomed our Primary 1 children during the last few weeks and have really enjoyed getting to know them and their families.

The children have been exploring our shared play areas and our new outdoor learning space in our ECO garden.

Play is important for brain development, and it encourages problem solving, social skills and building relationships with others. It also helps develop important skills for learning, life and work.



A Hub for the Community

ANNETTE WILSON
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, HUB@531

Hub@531 Lanark Road in Juniper Green opened in February 2023 and, thanks to the commitment from a team of hard-working volunteers, has already offered a varied programme of events throughout the year.

The purpose of Hub@531 is to provide nearby communities with a small, welcoming and accessible facility that can be used by local people to organise groups, events and classes—and, in particular, gives somewhere to go for those who feel isolated or alone. Many of the activities at the hub are free, although a small donation to cover the costs of refreshments is appreciated.

Mondays at the hub are all about coming along to meet other people. Doors open at 10am for "Come for a Cuppa", and you'll receive a warm welcome! The kettle is always on, the biscuit tin is open, and there is usually an optional game of scrabble or similar going on. The welcome continues at noon with "Mindfulness", an opportunity to spend some time together when the focus is more on being than doing. Then at 1.30pm it's our regular baby group, an opportunity for new parents to meet others and make new friends. Regular "BookBug"

sessions are included by Susan, featuring nursery rhymes, songs and stories.

Firm favourites in the hub's programme include the Tuesday morning knitting group who meet to knit together, sharing experience and helping novice knitters improve their skills. From baby clothes to blankets and jumpers, much of their prolific output is donated to local charities. On Wednesday afternoon at 1.30pm, Pentland Sporting Memories group use the hub to get together and chat about anything (and everything) to do with sport—a chance to get out the house and meet like minded sports fans over a cuppa.

Crafting is a popular use for the hub. We've already hosted crochet, glass painting and macrame evenings and afternoons, and autumn dates are in the calendar for Halloween

cake decorating (parent / child), Christmas decorations and wreath making. Many thanks to the wonderful volunteers from SWI who support our craft events.

When it's not being used for community groups or events, the Hub@531 is available to hire. The hub offers a large room, suitable for up to 24 people, with tables and chairs and basic kitchen facilities for making tea and coffee. It has ramp access and a fully accessible toilet, and it's kept clean and tidy, well heated and lit.

Details of all the activities at Hub@531 can be found on the C&B News "What's On" pages and we keep our own Facebook page up to date. If you have an idea for a new community group or wish to hire the facility, please contact our Development Officer, Annette Wilson, by email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com



Blooming Successes at Currie Horticultural Show

GAIL RANKIN
C&B NEWS

It was a real pleasure for me to be asked to present the prizes at this year's Currie Horticultural Show, at the end of August. The show really is a celebration of our community's talents: from the beautiful flowers and perfect fruit and vegetables to great crafts and delicious looking home-baked treats, the entries showed off the skills and creativity of entrants of all ages.

Beyond the lovely exhibits, I must also mention the friendly atmosphere created by the organising committee. Their warm reception to myself and all who visited the show made the event feel really inclusive and welcoming. The cakes in the tearoom for the show were also, as you could imagine, top notch!

As I handed out the prizes, I couldn't help but feel a bit inspired. So watch out fellow gardeners, bakers, artists and crafters—I just might be aiming to win a prize at next year's show rather than handing out the prizes!

If like me, you would like to be part of next year's show, keep an eye on future issues of C&B News for updates and tips.

Tea, coffee, biscuits, knitting and company—all at Hub@531

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MIKE ROWE
CURRIE BALERNO ROTARY

In fact we love everything about our natural environment. The protection and improvement of the local environment is one of Rotary's priorities.

In 2002 we initiated the redevelopment of the area around what was then the Currie Post Office, working with The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC). We purchased barrel planters, wall planters and a commemorative bench and, since then, we have maintained the flower display every year.

Another highlight came in 2005 when we undertook a project, working with the Pentlands Hills Rangers, to develop the Harlaw Wildlife Garden. We have maintained this commitment over the years.

This year our focus has been the planting of trees within Currie's George V Park. In March we purchased 25 fruit trees, which we planted in partnership with Pentlands Eco Network, Village Green and CEC. We now have a sign made by the Pentlands Men's Shed for display at the site. We are very grateful to them for this—another example of the co-operation we enjoy with many local organisations.

But that's not all. Now it's to be cherry trees in George V Park—a Rotary initiative and fantastic collaboration between Rotary and CEC. We were



Stewart Still from the Pentlands Men's Shed with the sign they made for Currie Balerno Rotary.

ready to purchase the trees but the Council offered not only to provide 12 cherry trees but also to plant them. At time of writing they have started the preparation with equipment we could only dream of. We are very impressed and very grateful on behalf of both ourselves and the local community.

Every project described here has been achieved through co-operation locally. Currie Balerno Rotary works with the local community for the local community and we achieve so much more together.

If you want to know more about Currie Balerno Rotary go to our website www.cbrotary.org or follow us on: [facebook.com/cbrotary1020](https://www.facebook.com/cbrotary1020) and twitter.com/cbrotary1020, or contact Mike Rowe on 449 5701

Short Back and Side, Please!

JAMES BELL
HEAD GARDENER, MALLENY GARDEN

The "Four Evangelists" have had a haircut. These four fine, 400-year-old yew trees in Malley Garden have had a drastic trim. Thankfully for them, they can't look in a mirror to see what we've done!

Part of the "Twelve Apostles" yews, the story is they were planted to commemorate the "Union of the Crowns" (of Scotland and England) in 1603. With eight removed in the early 1960s, four remain to stand watch over the garden.

At the beginning of September, we hired a

cherry picker to access the trees and prune them back to their original shape. Having grown larger over a couple of decades, it was time to be ruthless. Thanks to a team of NTS staff and volunteers, their true shape was revealed for the first time in perhaps 20 years. The old pruning line was clearly visible inside the recent growth, so it was quite straightforward to trim back to that line. The challenge was having a head to heights—the tallest of the four being about 14 meters (46 feet). Interestingly, looking closely, there's a clear second shadow 30cm inside the outer line—perhaps a gap in pruning during the second world war?

It's not clear if, 400 years ago, they were intended to become neatly clipped specimens or not. It seems plausible it's just happened over time, little by little. Every single gardener in the garden's four century history will have had to care for these trees, but... regarding the shape? I suspect they are this shape, not by design or desire, but because it's the shape which is comfortable to place a tall ladder against them and not fall off. That's how they were trimmed originally, from the top of a 10-meter (33 feet) wooden ladder! We're not allowed to do that now – thankfully! – so a cherry picker is a welcome alternative.

While the trees now look quite bare, new growth will appear next spring and, once they have greened up, they will get another trim in a couple of years. Hopefully we will get the section we had to leave unfinished. We didn't "miss a bit", but had to leave an area around a nesting pigeon undisturbed.

Volunteers make a huge difference to the National Trust for Scotland. There are many benefits to volunteering with the Trust. If you, or someone you know, might like to volunteer with us, please do get in touch at mallenygarden@nts.org.uk, visit: <https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/mallenygarden>



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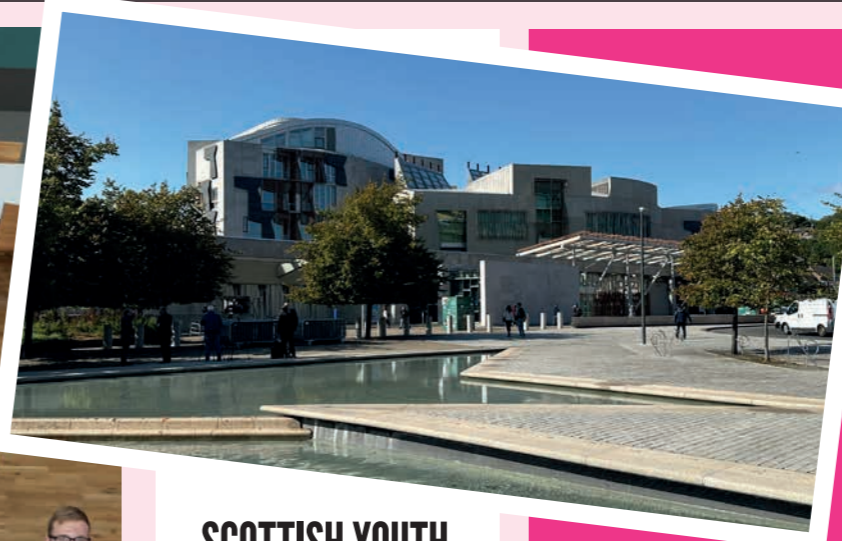
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C&B Q&A

With elections fast approaching for the next Scottish Youth Parliament, *C&B News* speaks with current Edinburgh Pentland representatives *TK Adebayo* and *Katie Hardie* about their two years representing local young people.



Currie Library Says Goodbye to 'Fair do's' Calum Brooks

CAROLINE BROWN
C&B NEWS

Currie Library team leader Calum Brooks is in the process of moving to take up the same position at Morningside Library.

A well known face at Currie Library for nearly eight years, Calum will be succeeded by Vanessa Ford, who is moving from Wester Hailes Library. Their "handover" process includes covering local contacts, council contacts, shortcuts and on-the-job training.

Calum was, among his many duties, an entertaining "Bookbug" organiser for a scheme which he felt epitomises the core value of a lifelong love of literacy and social integration. "Bookbug enables a sense of togetherness and prepares children for pre-school, nursery and primary school," he said.

Many a parent will miss Calum's calm, friendly demeanour, his familiar Bookbug singing voice, and the regular phrase he used, totally unique to him—"Fair do's!"

I, for one will miss his quiet yet helpful nature and the nonchalant reaction when I occasionally returned late books, waiving the fine!

His knowledge of the children's books, trilogies and recommendations for titles they might not normally select definitely played a part in my own children's love of reading.

Once I lost my wallet on the street and it was handed into Currie Library. Calum and the team hand-delivered it to my door on their way home!

Now, Currie's loss is Morningside's gain. His new job will be slightly less of a daily commute, but it's the opportunity to bring fresh ideas to the role that is enticing him to move. Morningside Library was also his first location within Edinburgh Libraries, so he will benefit from a little local knowledge.

What will Calum miss most about Currie Library? "A very friendly community," he said. "We welcome a wide variety of people who are always happy to be in the library. I will miss the customers. I really enjoyed the mix here."

Congratulations on the new role Calum. We think you will do well and, in your own words, "fair do's"!

SCOTTISH YOUTH PARLIAMENT: THE BASICS

- Young people across Scotland elect around 160 MSYPs – two for each Scottish Parliament constituency, like Edinburgh Pentlands, and two for each of our National Voluntary Organisations (NVOs).

- Young people across Scotland will vote to elect the MSYPs who will represent them for the next two years, between 6 and 19 November 2023.

- All 12 to 25 year olds in Edinburgh will be able to vote online, using their Young Scot National Entitlement Card.

- You can find out more about the Elections on the SYP website at syp.org.uk/elections and look out for more details in the coming weeks on SYP's social media channels—@OfficialSYP

SCOTTISH YOUTH PARLIAMENT—WHY?

"The Parliament has a proud history of delivering youth-led campaigns that deliver meaningful change and have led to many improvements to the lives of young people not just here in Edinburgh but across Scotland," says Cllr Joan Griffiths—Education, Children and Families Convener, The City of Edinburgh Council.

"Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament have been vital to us in efforts to set up Edinburgh Youth Action, which is a mechanism to ensure that young people's voices will be heard in local decision-making. The MSYPs have been part of the steering group, playing a full part in bringing the project from an idea to a reality," says David Maguire—Principal Officer, Engagement and Involvement, The City of Edinburgh Council.

anti-racism workshops from Intercultural Youth Scotland, or projects I've been involved for in, such as the Women's Empowerment Group, my greatest lesson has been putting myself out there. I have definitely developed the skills and confidence to know that my voice matters as a young person.

Why should young people get involved with SYP and what it does?

TK: It is a great way to stand up for what you believe in and to represent a group of people, it helps with confidence and public speaking. I would especially urge young ethnic minorities and young women to get involved and speak on the topics that impact them as they have the best experiences around them.

Katie: It's so important for young people to have their voices heard, and SYP does just that. It provides amazing opportunities for young people to engage with decision makers and creates a safe space to share their opinions.

How did you both get involved with the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP)?

TK Adebayo MSYP: My teacher is the one that emailed me the opportunity and gave me the upliftment to go for it.

Katie Hardie MSYP: I got involved through school! It was posted on a Teams page by one of my teachers and that was the first I'd ever heard of it, and I'm so glad I did!

How does the SYP interact with the Scottish Parliament in Holyrood?

TK: SYP's Committees work with their counterparts in the Parliament, with some Conveners and Deputy Conveners providing evidence at their meetings.

Katie: In many ways—through successful campaigns, events and more. Our Chair, Mollie, recently spoke on a youth activism panel at the Festival of Politics. Some of the Edinburgh MSYPs and I had the privilege of attending First Minister's Questions and meeting with Lothian MSP Foysol Choudhury. On top of this, one "Sitting" per term – which is when all of our MSYPs gather together – is hosted in the Parliament chamber itself, which is very exciting!

What have been the best and worst experiences of your time as a representative of the young people in Pentland Hills?

TK: I would say interacting with the older age group when it comes to the election process and getting their opinions on certain policies is the

most challenging for me, but the best bit has been all the Sittings in different places across Scotland and The Right Way project that I was grateful to have been a part of.

Katie: One of the more challenging aspects is getting enough responses and getting everyone involved while collating your constituents' opinions. With that said though, allowing young people from my constituency to have their voice heard by voting on Motions is such a privilege!

What have you learned most from your time as a member of the SYP?

TK: The importance of listening to others, and taking on their perspectives when working together, and the importance of youth voice and the impact we can and have made.

Katie: Whilst I've learned valuable information about important topics through workshops, like our



Main Photo: The current members of the Scottish Youth Parliament. Above left: TK Adebayo MSYP. Above right: Katie Hardie MSYP. Photos: Scottish Youth Parliament. Top right: Scottish Parliament Building. Photo: Paul Fisher Cockburn

Walking into Autumn



Main: On the Kinghorn coastal path. Photo: Roger Jonathan. Above: Archerfield. Photo: Jongky Harlim. Next page bottom right: Refreshment stop. Photo: Betty Murray

GAIL COUSINS BALERNO RAMBLERS

The beginning of September heralded the start of meteorological Autumn, with the Autumn Equinox on 23 September, meaning shorter and cooler days and longer nights.

We are all aware of the jet stream, it has been mentioned a great deal on the TV news and in weather forecasts in recent weeks. In July, the jet stream was sitting far south acting as a barrier between the high-pressure system over Southern Europe and North Africa and the low pressure in the UK. The tilt of the earth and its position in relation to the sun changes where the jet stream flows. The jet stream is about 100 miles wide and is like a ribbon of wind flowing from west to east that reaches up to 200 miles per hour and sits about 6 miles above the earth. As a result, July was wet and August a mixture of dry days, cool days, and wet days—a typical British Summer whereas the Mediterranean endured a “heat dome”.

In September summer returned. The jet stream was pushed well to the north of Scotland allowing some very warm air to be drawn north. Seven days of over 30°C in September was a new record in England, however in Scotland 25°C was very pleasant and enjoyable. Now there is a definite autumnal feel to the weather with colder mornings, darker evenings, and fewer than 100 days until Christmas. Some leaves are beginning to turn, while trees are laden with rosehip, haws, rowan berries, elderberries and, of course, blackberries. On reflection, our green and pleasant land, with a temperate climate, and potentially three seasons in

AGM

The Balerno Ramblers will be holding their AGM on Monday 23 October at the Gibson Craig Hall. After the business of the meeting there will be plenty of home baking to enjoy.



Three Nights Away at Pitlochry

Prior to Covid-19 restrictions the Balerno Ramblers offered weekends away to venues in Scotland or Northern England in late Spring and the Autumn. At the end of October, a group of 15 Ramblers will be travelling to Perthshire, staying at Pitlochry Hydro and a local B&B. The group size was determined by the number of beds available as the hotel is now fully booked. A programme of short and longer walks has been organised for the four days. These weekends combine walking in beautiful scenery with good food, enjoying excellent company, and a couple of evening quizzes. The social side is just as important as the walking.

one day is preferable to the “heat dome” encountered by the Mediterranean countries this summer. Fine for a holiday but it is good to come home.

Since mid-August, Balerno Ramblers have organised two walking opportunities a week—altogether eight walks involving 116 Ramblers.

For all our walks remember you must contact the walk leader to register. Registering for a walk is important because the walk leader needs to know who is attending and where the walker plans to join the walk. Also, the walk leader coordinates cars, drivers, and seats in cars from the meeting point—either Pentland View Car park for weekend walks or Currie Library for midweek walks. Finally, a contact number is required in case of a last-minute change of plan, or traffic hold-ups.

As a group we have decided that no dogs are allowed on our walks. Many of our walks are in the Pentland Hills, with grazing hill sheep, or through agricultural areas. Dogs need to be always kept on a lead, and the walk leader is responsible for the whole group. Our Rambler's insurance does not cover the group for owners or dogs that may misbehave.

In August, a group of 12 ramblers headed to Carlops for a circular walk and a visit to Peggyslea farm. Despite the warning about Storm Betty, the weather stayed dry but was blustery. At Peggyslea farm the group had a tour to see some of the animals, the ponies, chickens, goats, and some huge pigs. Clydesdale horses were seen in the stables before we headed inside for a lovely tea with cake and scones with homemade jam. A very enjoyable outing.

Two linear walks took place along the Fife Coastal path, Kinghorn to Kirkcaldy; then the next section East Wemyss to Kirkcaldy attracted altogether 36 Ramblers. Bus passes were needed, and the walking direction usually fits in with bus timetables, though it is preferable travel by bus first and have a leisurely walk back to the cars. Nothing ruins a walk than clock watching to catch a bus. The walk leader plans to repeat the latter walk more for the midweek group but with a limit of 20 walkers.

Coastal walks are always a favourite in any season and offer peace and tranquillity, especially off season. Braving the sea breeze is often required. The weekend group enjoyed the coastal vistas of Yellowcraigs and Archerfield, while the Midweek group the Dalmeny Estate and coast to Hound Point and onwards to South Queensferry.

A local walk that is always popular in any season is from Currie, via Roley's Wood, to Heriot-Watt University grounds, then back via Donkey Lane. Lots of paths to explore with the bonus of the cafés at Orium and Student's Union, ideal for a comfort stop too.

The weekend group headed to Melrose for a

challenging walk up Eildon Hills, across Bowden Moor, before descending Rhymer's Glen. A recent midweek walk from Bonaly to Glencorse found two steep inclines that challenged some walkers; calf and quadriceps muscles felt the strain, as did the lungs. But the views were superb. On a walk sometimes it is good just to stop, turn, and look at the view for a few moments while you get your breath back.

On the most recent weekend walk along the Water of Leith from Slateford to Leith, the highlight of the walk was the sighting of two kingfishers, one near the Gallery of Modern Art and the second by the bridge in the Dean village. The group of 13 Ramblers were treated to good views as the beautiful birds sat on branches, skimmed along the river, and dived for food. A wonderful experience.

Introductory Walks

It is encouraging to see that some walkers who attended earlier Introductory walks are now joining weekend and/or midweek walks. New walkers can attend a “Rambler's” walk for a trial period of a maximum of three walks, then they need to join Ramblers for insurance purposes.

Balerno Ramblers are offering a third Introductory 4.5-mile walk on Saturday 7 October, meeting at 9.15am at Pentland View Car Park. The route will join the Water of Leith Walkway, just below Pentland View Car Park (PVCP), to Balerno and return on the track near Mallyen House via Lymphoy to Currie. It is a pleasant mix of riverside and countryside scenery with places of interest. The group will stop for a mid-morning snack and drink on route, so bring a friend too – if you would like. Remember to wear comfortable clothes appropriate for the weather forecast, waterproof boots or walking shoes. Contact Hamish on 07980 377107 to book a place on this walk.

Further Introductory walks will be offered on the first Sunday of November and December. More details for all our walks can be found on Balerno Rambler's Facebook page that has a link to the Rambler's website.

All our walks are open to members and non-members and new members are always welcome. For more details and contact numbers please refer to: enquiries@balernoramblers.org.uk; www.ramblers.org.uk/balerno or www.facebook.com/Balerno-Ramblers.

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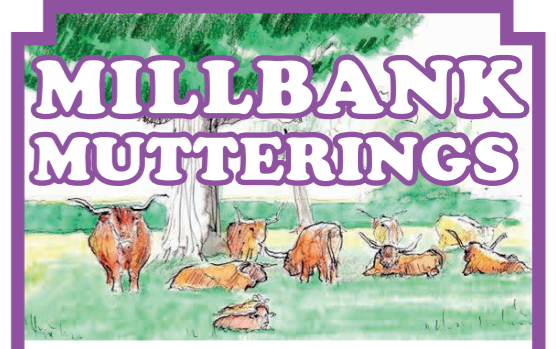
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Oops!

Firstly, the "hired help" would like to publicly apologise to Douglas Lowe, whose "Snapshots of the Past" article last issue was erroneously credited to Derek Douglas of the Colinton Local History Society! At least the editor didn't accidentally combine the two names into "Douglas Douglas".

Secondly, regarding last issue's picture of an old Edinburgh Corporation bus working for Eastern Scottish, photographer John Clark contacted us to say that the image actually dates from 1977, not the "1980s" as the text suggested. Apologies!



MILLBANK MUTTERINGS
 by TAURUS CERAMICUS BARBATUS
 196: HOARDERS

Horse Dung

Delighted to see the letter [last issue] from Reta MacLennan; well done.

I have been trying to get through to the Water of Leith about the "dung" left by horses on the path for quite a while, it could have medication in it! Young children plus adults, bikes and dogs; elderly people with bad eyesight, enjoying a walk have to be aware.

Various countries horses wear a collection "poo" bag! Please, horseback riders, think and act in the appropriate way!
 Be responsible!

Alex Robertson
 Currie

Local Re-Wilding

Was it not Alexander Pope who said: "Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame"?

Can I express a public "Thank you" to the anonymous public-spirited person (or persons) who gave us the wonderful re-wilding verge in the vennel at Nether Currie?

What an amazing welcome it gives when one returns home from town!

Doug Clark
 Currie



What the...?

This sign, still seen frequently around Colinton Village, begs the obvious question...

What would an "impolite" sign look like?

Please do not send in any suggestions!



For as long as I can remember, I have collected things. The older you get, the more you have acquired. But what's going to happen to all those jars of bits that "might come in useful"? I didn't learn that lesson when I went to jumble sales where mountains of pre-owned clothes were stacked untidily on a table, old gramophone records were heaped in a pile and chipped toy cars in a box waited for someone to love them anew.

Now I have my own treasures to share. The biggest is the Hornby Dublo railway in the attic. Anybody know of a school, museum or institution that might appreciate it? Then there are the vast numbers of books whose covers remind me of many an enjoyable read, while the large quantity of digital photos are unlikely to interest anyone. And what do we do about the leaking wellies, old clothes with patched elbows and frayed cuffs, bone china ornaments beloved of a previous generation, faded paintings of (and by) an unremembered family member with unusual artistic skills, and those barrows and garden tools we inherited from our parents?

I can't imagine anyone will be interested in my developing handwriting skills, evident in the tattered school jotters. Some people are quite disciplined in what they keep and if something hasn't been used for three years, then it gets binned. However I'm not like that. I find the books on people's shelves far more revealing about their personalities than their highly-polished dust-free dressers. Someone after me is going to have a problem!

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PLANNING BY ARCHIE CLARK

Schools and RAAC

Recent disclosures that local schools may need some reconstruction because of the presence of reinforced aerated autoclaved concrete (RAAC) are worrying. This lightweight concrete is roughly a quarter of the weight of normal concrete and was popular for large building programmes as it enabled lighter structures, had heat insulation properties and resulted in cheaper buildings. The current concern is about schools, but it featured in public buildings, universities and hospitals from the 1950s. It has failed in some places so it is necessary to check where retaining it could be dangerous. Like asbestos, there may be ways to re-engineer buildings to reduce the number needing replacement.

For entirely different reasons, I have long thought building big schools incorporating multi-roomed tower blocks, was not a good idea. In 2006, the City of Edinburgh Council's Children and Families Department advised that the optimum school size was either 900 or 1,200 pupils—before building a 1,450-pupil High School in Portobello. Meanwhile the replacement Currie Community High School is



designed for 1,000 pupils while neighbouring Wester Hailes High School is designed for 800. Currie Primary School (when fully built) would cater for 750 pupils.

One saving grace of the present Currie High School is that it was built in phases using different palettes of materials. The oldest parts date from 1966 and it was extended in 2000 and 2010. Part of the school has RAAC but, in 2017, CEC received reassuring reports from consultants saying that “identified issues” in the school had probably existed from its inception, and that the structure “may be expected to have a reasonable future lifespan”. How much RAAC needs to be replaced—a lot or a little?

Large buildings erected using the same components (thus minimising construction

and administrative costs) have a downside when the entire structure cannot be used. So retaining older local buildings not only benefits communities but minimises the impact when Covid-19, or structural failures, close big buildings. Where can you decant the occupants near their homes? Remember the knock-on problems when the Sick Kids Hospital experienced protracted delays? Bigger isn't always cheaper.

Councils not maintaining their buildings to a planned maintenance programme is one reason why we end up with costly structural problems. A senior SSHA architect once commented that the capital cost of a block of flats is only 10% of its lifetime cost. Maintenance costings need to be built into whole-life building costs, not ignored.

The Extra Costs of Housebuilding

Some years ago, a local authority sold some scrubland in the middle of a housing estate. The unpromising piece of land was covered with self-seeded trees whose main function was to absorb moisture.

In due course, a planning application appeared for two large houses. The council rejected it. Another was submitted for 10 houses. That too was knocked back. Now an application for six poky four-bedroom houses, with drives but no garages, is being processed.

Planning approval tends to arrive with strings. In this case, the council's education department lodged a memorandum: “The construction industry has been affected by unprecedented market volatility across all sectors resulting in material shortages, labour shortages and inflationary pressure exceeding industry pricing indexing. In November 2022 the Finance and Resources Committee accepted an increase of 30% for construction project costs as a reasonable uplift on costs. The costs to deliver education infrastructure have been increased accordingly which has also increased the contributions sought from developers.” There followed a calculation suggesting that the infrastructure cost for education alone would amount to over £24,000—per house. Nearby, a new school is being built with government funds.

Six years ago, a 200-house site two miles away required the developer to pay £1,100 per house for various requirements, the education-related contribution being nearly 50% of the total. Even if the education uplift for this small site included all other infrastructure costs, that is an enormous addition—and probably not unique.

Drainage problems could make this a very expensive development. With mortgage lending

>p30

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Kirk Brae Parking

Currie used to be an important country village surrounded by productive farmland. However, Kirk Brae cannot be widened so ad hoc parking is a problem for the traffic it now carries, especially with daily traffic jams on Lanark Road.

CEC's usual solution is

to line out such roads with double yellows so no-one can park. Not a great answer when you have a kirk and a graveyard in close proximity plus blind bends, horse riders who legitimately use country roads and a car park that seems to have been taken over by a commercial company forcing people to park on the road.

If our farmers are to receive food for their livestock, drive

their combine harvesters between their farms and ship bales from one area to another, they are seriously inconvenienced when cars are parked dangerously near corners. If we are not to see the Council impose its own form of control, can we be a bit more thoughtful about the needs of others and park off street where we can (or in the company car park)?

Planning application 23/02074/FUL for a block containing two one-bedroom flats at the far end of the car park behind

the former Currie Bank of Scotland site has been refused, on the grounds that the proposal did not comply with the development plan

and did not have regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Currie Conservation area.



PLANNING BY ARCHIE CLARK

p29>>>

The Extra Costs of Housebuilding

rates rocketing, perhaps an alternative use needs to be considered – if the site is to be developed at all – or maybe re-enviored as a “wee forest”. Rightly or wrongly, it looks like the council is trying to prevent development on land it once owned.

20-Minute Neighbourhoods—Avoiding Loneliness

I have commented previously on the City’s definition of 20-minute neighbourhoods as places “where people can access services which meet daily needs within a 10-minute walk/ wheel of their house, equivalent to a 20-minute round trip”. But is that description too materialistic?

People who are house-bound or have limited mobility cannot easily do that. The concept may make sense for the able-bodied, but how do we address this deficiency for those with restricted movement?

It is worth thinking about how services can be brought to people who over time find themselves less able to travel even the half-mile implied by this definition. In large housing-only estates where the turnover of residents is low, this could be quite a problem.

Dispersal of family members, as the children grow up and depart to distant places leaving the old folk behind, is not a new phenomenon but relying on electronic communication to enable family members to enter our house by a door on the opposite side of the world does not address the basic need for person-to-person contact. People are naturally sociable and to avoid loneliness need to meet face-to-face. Maybe the travelling grocer’s van will make a comeback!

Road Report

I was surprised to learn from Councillor Arthur (C&B News September 2023) that the Council has limited powers to co-ordinate the increasing number of utility companies. I hope that in seeking powers to force utility companies “to work smarter and faster” CEC will recognise that, as taxpayers pay the Council to run the City for them, and that the Council must be aware of what is being done to our infrastructure, it must take responsibility for ensuring our facilities are co-ordinated. It is reasonable to expect CEC to manage the long term installation of new and replacement services, and maintain our highways and pavements. That may require co-ordination of its own departments as well but I suspect that charging utility companies for occupying a bit of road will not prove as simple as councillors expect, especially when CEC may be one of the contractors.



Perhaps the Council could address some ongoing issues. Take signage. We have a vast number of signs that drivers are required to read and interpret, even when they are faded, hidden by trees, on the opposite side of the road, oblige one to check one’s watch and remember which day of the week it is. Lanes can be quite confusing even when driving a familiar road, but at an unusual

time. In darkness or during and after a shower, what’s left of the road markings may have disappeared, and the proliferation of speed limits – sometimes in places where discs are missing - just adds to driving confusion. Is it not the responsibility of the Local Authority to clean dirty signs and ensure they are not hidden by foliage?

I recently drove along the A71 at night near the dangerous Dalmahoy/ Ratho junction and came across some new unlit 30mph signs. They were difficult to see against the backdrop of trees. CEC is supposed to be installing a full set of traffic lights there. Perhaps CEC should just do so instead of erecting more signs. And will some of the schemes being rolled out lead to CEC having financial difficulties like bankrupt Birmingham who spent £10m converting a wide lane on a major commuter route for the benefit of a few cyclists? Stick to essentials - though that depends on who decides what is essential!

Living on a Different Planet?

We know we have a climate crisis. We are told this is related to our dependence on fossil fuels. We are planning to replace our 30m diesel and petrol vehicles with electric machines. Governments demand that in the next few years, new houses will have to be provided with electric heat pumps instead of gas boilers. These green policies look grand - until you look at the knock-on effects.

First, where is the power coming from? The recent *en masse* failure of prospective suppliers to bid to provide electricity from wind by 2030, the need to upgrade the national grid and the widespread lack of accessible working vehicle power charging points, plus a lack of UK-made batteries are known problems. The politicians’ insistence that we use (electric-powered) public transport, or



bikes, to travel is dependent on the existence of both equipment and power supplies neither of which are likely to exist for years beyond their time in parliament. Because of recent government policies, I read that a very large housing development under way at Winchburgh now requires so much more electricity than planned that the builders have had to cut back on the number of houses they can build. I suspect that the very large electrical demand will be reflected in the size of our fuel bills, and those people who charge their electric cars overnight will get a shock when they see how much the overnight tariff has cost them.

Perhaps our “green” policymakers should investigate some alternatives. Why not look at replacing

fossil fuel vehicle exhausts with exhausts that collect or neutralise the particulates? Why are we not exploring a hydrogen-based gas as a serious replacement for “natural” gas and petrol and diesel? Why are we mining huge quantities of minerals to make batteries when we haven’t even got a recycling system that would cope with the discarded batteries when they need replacing in five years’ time?

Before we go green, we need to address the “what next” and “what if” questions and plan comprehensively. Meanwhile we will be distracted by wars, water shortages and catastrophes that will require urgent and costly attention. We must look at the whole picture and not just the buttercups in the foreground.

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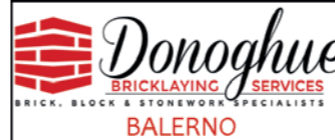
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JOANNA CHERRY MP
EDINBURGH SOUTH WEST

LOCAL POWERS

Having spent a very interesting Saturday morning at the recent Balerno Farmer's Market, I had the chance to chat about local energy production. There is huge potential for more smaller-scale renewable energy schemes like Harlaw Hydro, but the potential for growth is blocked by the rules that govern the energy system.

Energy produced at Harlow cannot be sold locally. A proposed Local Electricity Bill would have allowed for that, as would amendments to the Energy Bill currently going through the UK Parliament. But, as my SNP colleague Dave Dougan said in the Commons, there's been an "abject abandonment of community-owned energy projects in this Bill. It is patently obvious that any just transition to net zero is simply not possible if local communities cannot sell the energy they produce to local customers".

I pressed the UK Government on their recent failed wind auction; this is bad for Scotland's energy supply chain, as a steady stream of projects are needed for the industry to make its own investments in skilling up and in new technology.

I also raised the Home Office's intransigence on safe consumption spaces for drug users and welcomed the Lord Advocate's decision not to prosecute people for simple possession offences. I strongly believe this matter should be treated as a public health issue.

Finally I raised the petition which has been signed by over 10,000 women calling for action on the escalating campaign of threats and intimidation against women standing up for their rights, and secured a meeting with the UK Government minister to discuss this.

I am looking forward to speaking at Balerno Rotary Club at their meeting in October about why we need to have Human Rights Legislation. I hope to see many people there.



GORDON MACDONALD MSP
EDINBURGH PENTLANDS

NEW SESSION

The start of every new parliamentary session provides the Scottish Government with the opportunity to set out their ambitions and focus on the coming parliamentary term. This was the first delivered by our new First Minister Humza Yousaf and builds on the work done by his predecessor with an unwavering commitment to eradicating poverty.

One area of particular interest to many Currie and Balerno residents is the increase in pay for social sector workers. I know from working with people in the local area that accessing both care at home and early years care has often been a struggle. The announcement means that private and voluntary sector staff working in Adult Social Care, Children's Services and funded Early Learning and Childcare will be paid at least £12 an hour from April 2024. This is an increase of more than £2,000 a year for some, and 10.1% from the minimum rate that was introduced in April 2023 for those eligible. It also represents a minimum increase in pay of 15.2% for workers in Children's Services who previously received National Minimum Wage.

Increasing pay for those who care for our young and vulnerable is vitally important and will make a huge difference to social care workers not just across the city but across the country. While the minimum wage for adult social care staff is already around £900 a year higher in Scotland than it is in England, this uplift reflects the invaluable work done by those caring for the most vulnerable members of our society. This policy will see up to 100,000 of whom four out of five are female benefitting.

In addition the increase also reflects the Scottish Government's wider priorities on child poverty and fair work while recognising the critical services these workers deliver throughout our communities.



SUE WEBBER MSP
LOTHIAN REGION

NEW RULES AT FMQs

There are new rules at First Minister's Questions, designed to stop MSPs rambling on for too long. Politicians do love the sound of their own voices and, frustratingly, have an aversion to answering questions. MSPs asking questions are now limited to 45 seconds, while the First Minister must answer within a minute. Far more questions can be asked of the First Minister on Thursdays now.

This meant I was able to ask the First Minister about a very pressing local issue, one that had triggered parents to contact me either by email, phone or FB messenger. The "before" and "after" school club at Currie Primary was in trouble and it looked like there would be no provision from mid-October. This was the same fate that had befallen the club at Nether Currie PS.

I had spoken with the Headteacher at Nether Currie from the beach in Spain and I knew she had a plan to make sure parents and families were not going to be left high and dry. I now have equal confidence in the Currie PS Head too. Before I sat down that Thursday, she had responded to my office's calls for more information on alternative plans.

Questions still need to be asked about processes to vet the childcare providers, and to ensure their business is resilient enough to deliver what they are contracted to do.

But with our local teachers working closely as they do, I know that our families will have the needed support, although the time it takes for the alternatives to be up and running might still be cause for concern.

Finally, September saw Rev Jim Dewar, the minister at Juniper Green Parish church retire and, after eight years at Currie Kirk, Rev Easter Smart leave to take up a ministry in Pennsylvania. I wish them both all the very best for their futures and thank them for their support across our communities.



CLLR SCOTT ARTHUR
COLINTON/FAIRMILEHEAD

A GROWING CITY

The 2022 census data published in September shows that Edinburgh's population grew by 7.6% between 2011 and 2022: we now have 264,000 females and 248,700 males in the city. This growth is testament to the quality of life in Edinburgh, and the strength of the local economy.

It's a shame, however, that the Scottish Government funding for Edinburgh has not kept pace. A growing city is welcome, but we need additional funding for schools, GPs, roads, etc. The census shows that house building is lagging population growth, resulting in higher rents, bigger mortgages and homelessness. Sadly, this is being repeated across Scotland—particularly where affordable homes are concerned.

In 2022-23, 3,303 households were assessed as homeless in Edinburgh, and there are now 24,500 households currently on the waiting list for an affordable home. On average, each one advertised gets 196 applications.

On the very day in February that the Scottish Government set the budget in Holyrood, Shelter Scotland was protesting outside because the Scottish Government were choosing "to deprioritise social housing in their spending plans by disproportionately slashing that budget".

In August Shelter Scotland intervened again when data was published showing that the total number of homeless children had risen to 16,263. Shelter Scotland were again clear on their position: that "there is no mystery surrounding the solution to this emergency, no need for more summits or round tables to puzzle out an answer. We need more social housing, and we need it now".

I hope Edinburgh continues to thrive in the coming decade, but the Scottish Government must ensure that a fair share of the taxes and business rates collected here are used to tackle the lack of affordable housing.

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CLLR GRAEME BRUCE
PENTLAND HILLS

'BUBBLY CONCRETE'

The past month has been busy with varying requests from grass cutting to increasing the number of bins. In relation to the latter, I have been asked to see if it is possible to have more sensory bins located near Currie Community High School to help deal with the litter problem in this area. Further update to follow.

Staying in Currie, I have been constantly questioning the council to explain why the pool at the high school is still not open to pupils and local clubs. I have now been told that the pool will now not re-open due to RAAC (bubbly concrete for a more explicit term) in this area of the school. I know this will be disappointing to all pupils and clubs etc who are desperate to have the facility open again but safety must come first.

Last month I talked about getting in touch with Lothian Buses regarding the X44. Again they reiterated that there was still not the demand back to the levels pre covid. However, they have agreed to put on an extra 44 service in the evening from the city centre to Balerno. I have since challenged that extra service in the sense of if they can put on an extra 44 service then why can't they put on an extra X44? Further update to follow in due course.

In Juniper Green I was asked recently by the local Community Council to fix the handrail from the Water of Leith up to the music shop. The latest update I have is that the work should take place in the autumn; however, this will be subject to contractor availability.

It was a pleasure to attend the Balerno High School Academic Awards ceremony for 2023. I would like to congratulate all the pupils who received an award and wish them and all other pupils success for the future. It was also a pleasure to attend the Currie Horticultural Society 143rd Annual show at Balerno High school recently with fantastic displays of flowers, fruits and vegetables along with baking and crafts section. Well done to all the winners and participants!



CLLR NEIL GARDINER
PENTLAND HILLS

BUS PROPOSALS

I recently attended a meeting with council transport and procurement officers, transport consultants, bus companies and bus users to discuss subsidised bus services in "rural west Edinburgh". I made clear that the views of users and communities should be considered before any procurement takes place. In addition to representing constituents in Ratho, I made clear the importance of the 63 service - from Balerno and Currie to Hermiston and onto the Gyle - as it provides links to hospitals, work and shopping.

Consultants suggested that potentially this route may in the future go on to Cammo rather than Queensferry, which with a shorter turn around could make it more frequent and able to keep to regular timetable. I also raised the issue of lack of toilet provision at Hermiston Gate. Unreliability has clearly been an issue for this service. We will have to see what comes back following market engagement and tenders.

Oscars inability to recruit a senior member of staff to support after-school provision has resulted in them pulling out of the Currie area at ridiculously short notice. Having raised the issue with officers, they are investigating alternatives to support parents and children.

I am supporting the Balerno Community as it makes the case for community use at the Police Station, as Police Scotland consider what to do with the building.

Congratulations to coaches and players and all associated with Currie Football Club, in achieving the "Best Community Football For All Project" for South Eastern Region, presented by the Scottish Football Association, which highlighted after-school coaching with schools in Currie and Balerno, with a summer initiative in Clovenstone. The quality of this set up - with onward links to Edinburgh Caledonia FC, Heriot Watt FC and Currie Amateurs FC - provides fun for those involved and a positive onward pathway.



CLLR FIONA GLASGOW
PENTLAND HILLS

DOLLY, UKRAINE & ME

I attended the wonderful event at the City Chambers to celebrate the Ukrainian Day of Independence, led by the Lord Provost. It was a touching ceremony that was attended by many Ukrainian families and dignitaries. Edinburgh continues to offer a safe haven to those fleeing the devastation of war.

I also had the opportunity to visit some of the various festival venues and hear about the tremendous work done with schools to encourage young people to engage with a variety of activities happening throughout the city. School pupils did a presentation about their experiences to an audience of their peers and members of the Culture and Communities committee; it was an amazing chance to hear the thoughts of young Edinburgh residents about their city's famous Festival! Some of us love the Festival, others avoid at all costs, but it has to be said that Edinburgh becomes the richer for all vibrancy and excitement it brings.

I was invited to hear about the Dolly Parton charity "Dolly's Imagination Library" that provides free books to under-fives. There is a plan to find partners in Edinburgh to deliver this wonderful idea with all the benefits that books bring to children. It is open to any organisation that is willing to get involved.

In terms of local issues there have been a number of issues around childcare that have been very distressing and all avenues are being explored to find a solution. The primary schools affected have been working hard to resolve this awful situation. The Juniper Green and Baberton Mains Community Council arranged a walkabout in Baberton Mains to look at the green spaces and a number of residents are keen to be involved.

On a final note Currie Community Council has been successful in gaining new members to their numbers which is fantastic!



CLLR JASON RUST
COLINTON/FAIRMILEHEAD

BUS 'SERVICE'

The main contacts I've received over recent weeks have been around the effective withdrawal of the Service 10 Bonaly bus due to the utility works on Bonaly Road. Those less mobile through age or infirmity who depend on this bus are particularly suffering from the lack of service and there is much frustration about the length of time this situation has gone on—with the duration of works over months. There are also concerns about the impact on the local store. I have been in touch with both Scottish Gas Networks and Lothian Buses in relation to this matter.

The response from Lothian Buses is that there have been various alternative suggestions including a diversion via Bonaly Crescent, Bonaly Terrace, Bonaly Drive and Bonaly Avenue, but that none of the other options appear to be viable. For instance, in relation to that proposed route, it is advised by Lothian Buses that even with parking suspensions and 100% compliance that it is not suitable as a bus diversion route from a road geometry point of view, and is further ruled out by the unsuitability of Laverockdale Crescent and Dreghorn Loan for two-way bus operation. That said, residents do recall previous temporary lights there and there is bewilderment that a feasible solution cannot be found to assist the local community.

On a more positive note it was I was advised by the department in August that cleaning of the Colinton War Memorial would take place in the next few weeks. I have contacted the Department again to request a specific date for cleaning to start. The painting of the entrance gates to the southern graveyard has now been completed. Hopefully we will have all work complete for Remembrance Sunday.



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RICHARD M HENDERSON
BALERNO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

PRIVATISATION

Last month I wrote about the privatisation of community assets: case in point, the future of Balerno Police Station. This was discussed by Balerno Community Council on 7 September with the benefit of the results of a survey conducted by our partners Balerno Village Trust. This had attracted some 200 responses; such a high level of response not only adds credibility to the comments which BCC have submitted to Police Scotland but also demonstrates that people care about what makes communities tick. There was almost complete unanimity (97%) that the Police Station should be retained for community benefit, with 85% also saying that it should not be sold on the open market.

The survey was prompted by the simple question posed by Police Scotland; should the station be disposed of? Our answer is a resounding “No”. But that begs the questions: what should it be, and how do we secure that? There is a longer game to be played.

A range of possible uses were put forward in the survey returns including gym, co-working spaces, community hub, youth club, small business units and child care facilities—with a medical centre some way ahead in the voting. Across Lothian in 2021, the average practice list size in General Practice was 8,295; that appeared to be the second highest across Scotland behind Grampian. I don’t pretend to be a statistician, but I would guess that Balerno’s population is now around 8,500—that might suggest it was time to look again at GP provision in the Upper Water of Leith Valley, especially if you add the “20 Minute Neighbourhood” policy into the mix.

What that range of suggested uses also indicates is that the infrastructure which supports our community does need to be developed, and a rather more granular approach taken when assessing planning needs across the board.



KEVIN KEALY
CURRIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

OSCARS

The sudden closure of Spring-OSCARS after-school and breakfast clubs at Currie and Nether Currie primary schools has left local families in turmoil. This situation underscores the pressing need for better support for working parents and improved communication from service providers. Unfortunately, it remains unclear why the company decided to withdraw from both schools without prior notice or consultation with stakeholders.

OSCARS had offered a safe and engaging environment for their children’s after-school care. The absence of alternative arrangements has left them struggling to balance work commitments with childcare responsibilities. It is crucial for any new service provider to establish early and consistent communication with schools and stakeholders. Moreover, Spring-OSCARS should provide a transparent explanation to affected parents regarding the sudden closure.

In a separate development, recent inspections at Currie Community High School have revealed concerns about the structural integrity and safety of certain sections of the building due to the use of Reinforced Aerated Autoclaved Concrete (RAAC) in its construction. RAAC, developed in the 1950s, can deteriorate over time, especially when exposed to moisture. Given its extensive use in post-war construction, including schools, hospitals, and government buildings, the potential this may turn out to be the largest infrastructure bill the state has ever seen.

Head Teacher Jenny Hutchison has reassured parents that student and staff safety will not be compromised. Areas with RAAC have been identified and secured. The City of Edinburgh Council, in collaboration with experts, has conducted a comprehensive survey with a full impact assessment due in October. Fortunately, our new school is set to open in February 2025, alleviating any long-term disruption.

We continue with our new regular column, in which our recently disabled contributor shares thoughts on, and examples of, their suddenly different perspective on the world around them.

And we don’t just mean getting used to seeing things from a seated position!



2: MOVING ON SMALL WHEELS

WORDS BY M
ILLUSTRATION BY KMCL

For six months I’ve been trying to get used to restricted mobility and now use a manual wheelchair. What an eye-opener...

Apart from people talking to my “companion” and not me, and being unable to see, let alone reach, anything in the supermarket above the third shelf, I’m learning a totally new perspective on life.

Journeys I once took for granted now need careful planning.

To get to the nearest shops I now have to negotiate pavements that almost literally shake you to death. Through my new insights can I raise the need to also plan for those on four small wheels, rather than two big ones; for those of limited physical ability rather than the lean lycra clad speedsters who dominate thinking at Sustrans—and therefore City planners.

I haven’t used my bus pass recently because the city centre has no appeal: “Just jump on the 44,” they say. But many shops have gone, the tourists are a nightmare and many places are ill-served by public transport. If you have to push your loved one up Riccarton Mains Road to the bus stop you’re knackered before the bus arrives.

“What about the train?” they say—but get your wheelchair over the bridge at Curriehill station if you can.

So it makes more sense to get into the car and drive to Livingston where parking is easy and supermarkets congregate. Everything is easy, on the flat and undercover.

The answer is specific local solutions for local issues. Please write and tell us your experiences and ideas.

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To the Peebles Highland Games

CATHAL MCCARTHY
PIPER & S3 PUPIL, BALERNO HIGH SCHOOL

On a very sunny 2 September, two weeks after playing at the World Pipe Band Championships 2023, the Balerno and District Schools Pipe Band went to Peebles to take part in the pipe band competition that's Peebles Highland Games. The pipe band would play at a Highland games for the first time at 11.30am but, before that, we warmed up and practised in the shade of the trees.

When we were just about to play we found out that we would be marching while playing for a bit, something we hadn't done before at a competition. We had practised it before though, so it was fine.

Most of the band thought we had played "The Sweet Maid of Glendaruel", "Corriechoillie's 43rd Welcome to the Northern Meeting", "The Earl of Mansfield" and "Greenwood Side" pretty well, but we would have to wait until later to find out.

In the meantime though, there were things to do and see, such as watch other bands, watch other events in the Highland Games, like the caber toss, Highland dancing or haggis hurling. (There was also the open haggis hurling which anyone could take part in, or you could try one of the games or rides they had there.)

We gathered together again at 4.30pm, about half an hour before we found out where we had come, so that we were all ready to join with the other bands and take part in a mass pipes and drums in front of the Games Chieftain. As part of this, we marched as one for a short distance before the results were announced. Once all the marching had happened, we played another tune and the Chieftain gave a short speech of thanks and it was revealed that we came fourth in our section, which is novice juvenile B. We got our first shield for this placement.

After this, we all marched and played through the Main Street of Peebles. The marching was fun and was pretty cool. It also ended off a good day very nicely!



Pentlands Book Festival Returns

RUSSELL SALTON
PENTLANDS BOOK FESTIVAL

The Pentlands Book Festival is back with a vengeance this November, with a return for Denise Mina, turning from *Garnethill* to real but historical crime, and talking to Douglas Skelton. Will it be daggers at dusk, or discourse over dinner?

From the darker side take a walk in the sunlight and join Liz Beevers on her tour of Malleny Gardens or a trip to the Botanic library. If you miss out on these, Kirsty Wilson of Beechgrove and Garden Manager at the Botanic will be coming to us to discuss sustainable gardening. Staying in the Botanic, Sara Sheridan (of *The Fair Botanists* fame), in another welcome return, takes us back to 1822 Edinburgh and the scent of scandal.

Swapping garden borders for the Borders, Chair of the Trimontium Trust, John Reid's latest research will provide thought-provoking reassessments of many aspects of the story of the Romans in Scotland. James Crawford, presenter of BBC Scotland's *Scotland from the Sky*, will introduce us to many lost places in his *Wild History*: from the ruins of prehistoric forts and ancient burial sites to abandoned bothies and boathouses and derelict traces of old, faded industry.

If poyums are your thing then do come and hear Scots Performer of the Year 2021 and *The Herald* columnist, warrior poet Len Pennie.

We will also hear more about Colinton resident Dorothy Dunnett, queen of historical fiction and creator of *The Lymond Chronicles* and *The House of Niccolò*, while our debut authors will take us back to our childhoods, and to Ukraine before Putin's invasion.

And if all the above just leaves you confused, the very person to help you make sense of the world is former BBC correspondent, and Chair of the Edinburgh International Book Festival, Allan Little.

The Pentlands Book Festival runs 6-20 November 2023. <http://www.pentlandsbookfestival.org/> and Facebook page.

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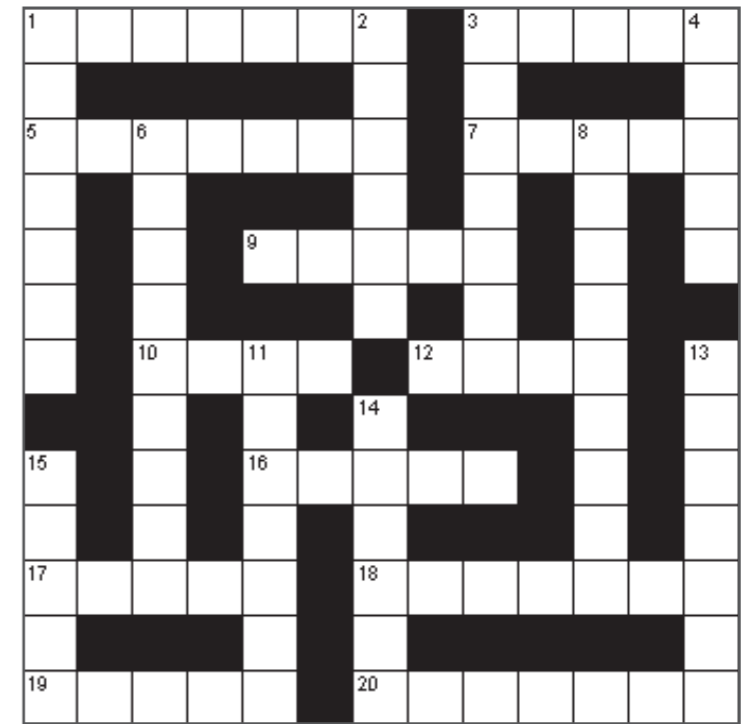
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- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ACROSS | | DOWN | |
| 1. He played the titular character in the 2004 film, <i>Alfie</i> . (4,3) | 3. ___ Loy was named "Queen of the movies" in 1936. (5) | 1. ___ Alba is Sue Storm in 2005's <i>Fantastic Four</i> . (7) | 2. Dennis ___ starred in Steven Spielberg's 1971 film <i>Duel</i> . (6) |
| 5. Frank ___ was Danny Ocean in 1960's <i>Ocean's Eleven</i> . (7) | 7. John ___ played Gus Polinski in the 1990 film, <i>Home Alone</i> . (5) | 3. Jason Connery played this Shakespearean character in the 1997 film of the same name. (7) | 4. Ed Harris is Virgil 'Bud' Brigman in 1989's, <i>The ___</i> . (5) |
| 9. Christopher ___ played Jack Lewis in <i>The Remains of the Day</i> . (5) | 10. ___ Sharif was Sheikh Riyadh in 2004's <i>Hidalgo</i> . (4) | 6. Jack ___ is Edward Cole in 2007's <i>The Bucket List</i> . (9) | 8. Cary Grant and Ingrid Bergman starred in this 1946 movie directed by Alfred Hitchcock. (9) |
| 12. Alexandra Medford in the 1987 movie, <i>The Witches of Eastwick</i> . (4) | 16. Sigourney Weaver is Ripley in this 1979 film. (5) | 11. F Murray Abraham is Antonio Salieri in this 1984 film. (7) | 13. Bruce Willis is Officer John McClane in this 1988 film. (3,4) |
| 17. ___ Zellweger starred in <i>Bridget Jones's Diary</i> . (5) | 18. ___ Redgrave played Max in 1996's <i>Mission: Impossible</i> . (7) | 14. Robert Newton played the title character in the | |
| 19. Played Charlie Wilson in 2007's <i>Charlie Wilson's</i> | | | |
| | | | |



NAME

ADDRESS

POST CODE PHONE

1954's *Long John* ___. (6)
15. Colin ___ is Harry Bright in 2008's *Mamma Mia!* (5)

SOLUTION: SEPTEMBER 2023



LAST ISSUE'S WINNER!

Our congratulations go to David Sim from Balerno, randomly selected to receive our £25 prize.

EASY					MEDIUM					HARD								
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What's On

To submit entries for What's On, please email Catriona, whatson@candbnews.com, including: Day/Date, Event Title, Venue, Time, brief details, and contact phone/email details as appropriate.

WEEKLY OCTOBER

MONDAYS

THE MEETING PLACE, Currie Scout Hall, Forthview Crescent, 10am-4pm. A community cafe for those 65 and over, all carers and anyone looking for good company. Free exercise class, refreshments and games. For further information email: themeetingplacejcb@outlook.com



BALERNO BRIDGE CLUB, Gibson Craig Hall, Currie. 1.20pm for 1.30pm start. Contact 07504 306062 if interested.

TUESDAYS

PENTLAND JUNIOR SINGERS, Balerno Parish Church 6pm-7pm. Fun, friendship and singing for ages 8-14. New members welcome! More information: pentland_singers@yahoo.co.uk

PENTLAND SINGERS COMMUNITY CHOIR, Balerno Parish Church, 7.30pm-9.30pm. Come and share the joy of singing! New members welcome. For further information: pentland_singers@yahoo.co.uk

WEDNESDAYS

BALERNO RAMBLERS MIDWEEK GROUP, meet for walks in the Lothians, Fife, the Borders and further afield. For walk details contact M Timmins on 07917878955. Follow Balerno

Ramblers on Facebook and also X (Twitter): @BalernoRamblers

THE OCTAGON CLUB, for Adults with learning disabilities. Gibson Craig Hall, Lanark Rd West, 7pm-9pm. Contact: Claire Maloney, 07999 410721.

THURSDAYS

PENTLAND BRIDGE CLUB, St Margaret's Court, Juniper Green, 7pm. We play competitive bridge in a friendly atmosphere. Less experienced players welcome. For further information visit: www.bridgewebs.com/pentland/ or email: mthkjb@gmail.com.

FRIDAYS

THE MEN'S SHED at the Scout Hall, 99 Forthview Crescent, Currie, from 9.30am. We offer various activities and a chat over a cuppa with new and old friends. Come on down! <https://pentlandsmensshed.org>

ALTERNATE FRIDAYS

TABLETOP GAMING IN JUNIPER GREEN/BABERTON/CURRIE, at Juniper Green Parish Church. 6pm-9pm. Play board-games, card games and wargames. Everyone welcome, adults, children and their families. For more information contact Eric Ducreux Juniper Green Board-Gamers @boardjg or visit: www.boardjg.co.uk

SATURDAYS



COMMUNITY CAFÉ, Currie Community Centre, 9am-noon. Returns after summer break. Barista coffee and delicious home baking.

SATURDAYS/SUNDAYS

BALERNO RAMBLERS WEEKEND WALKING GROUP: a busy walking group with a programme of interesting walks in a variety of locations. Some walks may be more challenging than the mid-week programme. Visit: www.ramblers.org.uk/balerno or www.facebook.com/Balerno-Ramblers, email: enquiries@balenoramblers.org.uk, or follow on X (Twitter): @BalernoRamblers

DAY BY DAY OCTOBER

SUNDAY 1 OCTOBER

RAMBLE ROUND THE RESERVOIRS fundraiser on behalf of The Pentlands Community Space, meeting at The Hub @ 531 Lanark Road, 10.30am prompt. A 10 mile (16.1 km) through the Pentland Hills via Torduff, Clubbedean, Harlaw and Threipmuir Reservoirs. Register by emailing pentlandscs@gmail.com

MUSIC IN ST JOSEPH'S—JAZZ PARTY, St Joseph's Hall, Balerno, 7pm-10.30pm. The Jazz Party topped off the first Balerno Music Festival back in 2008 and – Covid-19 excepting – there's been a jazz party every year since. Excellent music, great company, fantastic canapés from The Mill Cafe, and even a little dancing! Tickets are £18 available: after church services in St Joseph's Hall from 11am; at Balerno Farmers' Market in September; online from <https://tinyurl.com/2p8bd2tz>

MONDAY 2 OCTOBER

CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY, Gibson Craig Hall, 7.30pm. Kenneth Williamson talks about "Old Edinburgh and Leith Trams". More info: <https://www.curriehistory.org/>, email: secretary@curriehistory.org

COLINTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY, Dregghorn Loan Hall, 8pm. "Chipping away at Hugh": independent researcher Kath Hay gives an insight into Hugh Miller—esteemed geologist, poet, editor and fierce supporter of the Free Kirk. Guest membership £5 per session, annual subscription £15 (£25 for a couple). More: <https://colintonhistory.org.uk/>

TUESDAY 3 OCTOBER

BALERNO SWI, Balerno Community Centre, 7 30pm. A Quiz Night to mark the group's 88th "Birthday".

WEDNESDAY 4 OCTOBER

PENTLAND PROBUS CLUB, Juniper Green Parish Church Hall, 10am. "Members' mini

talks"; three of our members will each give a short talk. New members welcome. Further enquiries from Club Secretary Leslie Hannaford on (0131) 453 3012 or email: lesliehannaford@blueyonder.co.uk

FRIDAY 6 OCTOBER

PENTLAND FLOWER CLUB, Balerno Parish Church, 7pm. Audrey Buchan from Arbroath presents an aptly-named demonstration, "Autumn Watch". Friends "old and new" welcome.

SATURDAY 7 OCTOBER



COLINTON GARDEN CLUB PLANT SALE AND COFFEE MORNING, St Cuthbert's Episcopal Church Hall, Westgarth Avenue, 10am – noon. Donations of plants, clearly labelled, and garden produce, can be made at the Church Hall on the Friday evening (6 October, 7pm – 8pm) or on the Saturday morning from 8.30am.

MUSIC IN THE CHURCH—FORTH VALLEY CHORUS, Balerno Church, 7.30pm-9pm. Part of the Balerno Music Festival. Concert presented by Forth Valley Chorus, a world renowned women's barbershop a cappella chorus from Edinburgh. Eight-time UK Barbershop Champions, they have achieved international success as a member of Sweet Adelines International, a worldwide network of female barbershop singers with over 20,000 members globally. Musical director, David Sangste. Tickets are £12 (adult) and £6 (child) available: after church services in St Joseph's Hall from 11am; at Balerno Farmers' Market in September; online from <https://tinyurl.com/2t48yx8m>; or using the downloadable form <https://tinyurl.com/2p8bd2tz>

WEDNESDAY 11 OCTOBER

PENTLAND PROBUS CLUB, Juniper Green Parish Church Hall, 10am. "Politics Today," a question and answer session with Sue Webber MSP. New members welcome. Further enquiries from Club Secretary Leslie Hannaford on (0131) 453 3012 or email: lesliehannaford@blueyonder.co.uk

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“THE LIT”: COLINTON PARISH CHURCH LITERARY SOCIETY; Dreghorn Loan Hall, 7.30pm for tea, coffee and wine, with talks commencing at 8pm. Kath Hay shares a modern Nordic saga, “The Shetland Bus”. Who was the driver? What was the route? Who were the passengers? Was it a bus? Membership £15 for full programme of 17 meetings, or £3 per meeting for visitors. New members are assured of a warm welcome.

THURSDAY 12 OCTOBER

THE THURSDAY GROUP (Formerly Colinton Townswomens’ Guild), St Cuthbert’s Episcopal Church Hall, Westgarth Avenue, Colinton, 2.15pm. A talk will be given about “A Schoolmaster and Sport”. This new group would like to extend a warm invitation to our next meeting, which ends with a cup of tea/coffee and a chat.

FRIDAY 13 OCTOBER - SUNDAY 15 OCTOBER

FRESHSTART @ BALERNO PARISH CHURCH, Rear Hall, 10am–noon (Friday & Saturday), 9.30am–noon (Sunday). Collection point for useful household goods and products passed on by Edinburgh-based charity to help those who have experienced homelessness establish themselves in their new homes. More details on suitable items to donate: call Sandra Lyall on 449 4375. More details on FreshStart: <https://www.freshstartweb.org.uk>

SATURDAY 14 OCTOBER



BALERNO FARMERS’ MARKET, Main Street, 9am–1pm. A selection of local producers and organisations, plus Balerno Craft Fair in the Community Centre, at the same times.

THE NEW SCOTS PROJECT, Gibson Craig Halls; 2pm–5pm. Extending a hand of friendship to refugees who have fled war, unrest, persecution and intolerance and find themselves living in EH14. Activities for

children and teens include crafts and games/sports; plus a “quiet” space for adults to chat, form new friendships and make connections with local residents. Pizza, teas and coffee will be provided. For more information, or suggestions, contact Fiona Pigott on 07874 282480, email: fpigott19@gmail.com

SUNDAY 15 OCTOBER

C&B NEWS: Editorial deadline for our November 2023 issue. Please email editor@candbnews.com if you need more time.

MONDAY 16 OCTOBER

CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY, Gibson Craig Halls, Currie, (back hall), 7.30pm. “The Nelson Monument and Curiosities of Calton Hill”, a talk by Jackie Sangster. For further details see <https://www.curriehistory.org/>

COLINTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY, Dreghorn Loan Hall, 8pm. Eric Melvin presents a talk on “The Fresh Air of the Summer Morning—the story of Duncan Napier, the herbalist”. Guest membership £5 per session, annual subscription £15 (£25 for a couple). More: <https://colintonhistory.org.uk/>

WEDNESDAY 18 OCTOBER

“THE LIT”: COLINTON PARISH CHURCH LITERARY SOCIETY, Dreghorn Loan Hall, 8pm. “The impact of the Islamic Revolution on me as a woman”—Frith Robb tells her life story, based on her memoir *In the Shadow of the Shahs*. Coffee, tea and wine are served from 7.30pm. Further details available at <http://www.colinton-parish.com/colinton-literary-society.html>.

MONDAY 23 OCTOBER

COLINTON GARDEN CLUB MEMBERS’ MEETING, Dreghorn Loan Hall, Dreghorn Loan; 8pm – 9.30pm. Stuart McKenzie, President of Federation of Edinburgh & District Allotments & Gardens Association, gives a talk on “Where Plotters Meet...” For more information visit <http://www.colintongardens.org.uk/>

TUESDAY 24 OCTOBER

CURRIE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY, Balerno High School, 7pm. AGM

WEDNESDAY 25 OCTOBER

“THE LIT”: COLINTON

PARISH CHURCH LITERARY SOCIETY; Dreghorn Loan Hall, 8pm. A family history of slavery. Alex Renton tells the story of slavery, through the experiences of his own family, as told in his book *Blood Legacy*. Coffee, tea and wine are served from 7.30pm. Further details available at <http://www.colinton-parish.com/colinton-literary-society.html>.

FRIDAY 27 OCTOBER

C&B NEWS—Our November 2023 issue will be in the shops, and also available online: <http://candbnews.com>

SATURDAY 28 OCTOBER

BALERNO THEATRE COMPANY COFFEE MORNING & TABLE SALE, Currie Bowling Club, 283 Lanark Road West, 10am–noon. Coffee, books, cakes, gifts sale, and live music. For more, visit: www.balernotheatrecompany.co.uk

SCOTTISH GARDENERS FORUM AGM, hosted by Colinton Garden Club at Dreghorn Loan Hall, Dreghorn Loan, 10am – 4pm. Chaired by Kathryn Pitts. Speakers TBC. Booking essential through SGF website; £15 fee payable to SGF includes lunch, tea or coffee, etc. Come and mingle with other gardeners from around Scotland.

MONDAY 30 OCTOBER

CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY, Gibson Craig Halls, Currie, (back hall), 7.30pm. “Ghostly Tales and Sinister Stories of Old Edinburgh”, speaker Bruce Jamieson. For further details see <https://www.curriehistory.org/>

TUESDAY 31 OCTOBER

BALERNO FOLK CLUB, Balerno Bowling Club, 5 Ladycroft, Balerno. Doors open 7.30pm for an 8.15pm start. Appearing this month is harmony singing trio “Choras”, an amazing trio of ladies, each highly respected in their own right, who are sure to entertain with a selection of traditional and new songs. “Members and Guests” welcome.

NOVEMBER

WEDNESDAY 1 NOVEMBER

PENTLAND PROBUS CLUB, Juniper Green Parish Church Hall, 10am. “Operation

Unicorn”. an illustrated talk by Tim Purves. New members welcome. Further enquiries from Club Secretary Leslie Hannaford on (0131) 453 3012 or email lesliehannaford@blueyonder.co.uk

“THE LIT”: COLINTON PARISH CHURCH LITERARY SOCIETY; Dreghorn Loan Hall, 7.30pm for tea, coffee and wine, with talks commencing at 8pm. “Travelling Scotland with One Yellow Welly”: Reta MacLennan gives us an insight into the real work of a Quality Adviser with the Scottish Tourist Board Membership £15 for full programme of 17 meetings, or £3 per meeting for visitors. New members are assured of a warm welcome.

THURSDAY 2 NOVEMBER

BALERNO COMMUNITY COUNCIL, Balerno High School, 7pm. Annual General Meeting.

CURRIE KIRK, Gibson Craig Halls, Currie, 7.30pm–10pm. Concert by Bathgate Brass Band. Entry free but donations appreciated. More information available from Currie Kirk office: currie_kirk@btconnect.com

FRIDAY 3 NOVEMBER

PENTLAND FLOWER CLUB, Balerno Parish Church, 7pm. Ada Paul from Ayr presents “Hi Ho Silver”. Friends “old and new” welcome.

MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER

COLINTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY, Dreghorn Loan Hall, 8pm. Bruce Keith presents “Are we nearly there yet?”, a talk on the story of milestones. Guest membership £5 per session, annual subscription £15 (£25 for a couple). More: <https://colintonhistory.org.uk/>

WEDNESDAY 8 NOVEMBER

“THE LIT”: COLINTON PARISH CHURCH LITERARY SOCIETY; Dreghorn Loan Hall, 7.30pm for tea, coffee and wine, with talks commencing at 8pm. “Old Churches—Why Bother?” Simon Green, from Historic Environment Scotland, celebrates Scotland’s rich ecclesiastical history. Membership £15 for full programme of 17 meetings, or £3 per meeting for visitors. New members are assured of a warm welcome.



It's Never Too Late—Walking Football for Over-50s at Oriam

EWAN CONNOLLY
WALKING FOOTBALL ORIAM

Walking football is exactly what it sounds like—a game of football where players walk instead of run. The growth of the game during

the past five years has been fantastic. It is designed to help people get off the couch, get fit and maintain an active lifestyle. Age does not matter: we have people from 50 to 81, and play in mixed age teams. Joining in a physical activity with people of a similar age can be

a breath of fresh air and give you laugh and a good time. There are many humorous moments on and off the pitch; plus, lots of drama in games as players bring the qualities of the good, the bad, and the ugly (loads of them). Other moments evoke Laurel and Hardy through

desperate defending to rescue the team from another fine mess.

So come along get the physical benefits. Walking football is a great way to get out more, meet new people, and feel better. You'll wonder how you survived without it!

As said before our ages range from 50 to 81; we come in all shapes and sizes—the long, the short and the tall. One of our players with an outrageous haircut is the lead singer in a world-renowned punk band, reminding us that – regardless of the years – football, like punk, is not dead.

Many of us have come through serious illness. One player had a heart attack in early May and resumed walking football mid-July. The sport is seriously good for your health and wellbeing.

We play at Oriam, Scotland's sport performance centre based at Heriot-Watt University's Riccarton campus. Currently we run three sessions a week on the academy synthetic pitch, one of the top facilities in Scotland. Session are on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 12.30pm to 1.30pm. Your first session is free.

For more details, contact Deric Oliver on 07803 508401 or email dericandjoan@btinternet.com

What's On



The most up-to-date information can be found on the [hub@531 Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/hub531), or by emailing: Hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

WEEKLY

MONDAYS:

COME FOR A CUPPA, 10am. pop in to have a cuppa, biscuit and a chat, join in a board game, or simply come sit in the

warmth and read a book.

MINDFULNESS SESSION, noon. A guided mindfulness session to help focus on the present moment, give your mind "a hug at the hub".

BABY GROUP/BOOKBUG, 1.30pm. Baby Group/Bookbug: meet other parents and carers for friendship and peer support, regular Bookbug sessions to learn and share nursery rhymes, songs and stories.

TUESDAYS

KNITTING GROUP, 10.30am. Other wool activities accepted, and have a chat too. New and experienced knitters welcome.

WEDNESDAYS

PENTLANDS SPORTING MEMORIES, 1.30pm. Sports



chat – anything from Scotland's football glory days to next week's rugby – with likeminded sports fans.

ADDITIONALLY WE HAVE A POPULAR MONTHLY BOOK GROUP THAT IS FULL. IF YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED IN STARTING A SECOND BOOK GROUP, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH!

DAY BY DAY OCTOBER

THURSDAY 12 OCTOBER

LET'S TALK CARE, 12.30pm. The first in a series on monthly events aimed at anyone interested in learning more about care for themselves or a



loved one. Research is clear: talking about care can be an emotive topic, and it helps to be well-prepared for the care conversation. Home Instead are partnering with The Hub@531 Lanark Road for a series of monthly "Let's Talk Care" events on the second Thursday of the month. Future topics include "Support for Unpaid Carers", "Power of Attorney" and "Financial Advice for Later Life".

THURSDAY 26 OCTOBER

HALLOWEEN CRAFT—CAKE DECORATING, 7pm – 9pm. Bookable in advance: email hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com for more details.

FRIDAY 27 OCTOBER

HALLOWEEN CRAFT—CAKE DECORATING, 2.30pm–4.30pm. Halloween cake decorating for children and adults. email hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com for more details.

THERE'S MORE ABOUT HUB@531 ON PAGES 18-19!



Harmeny AC Race a Success!

JOHN PRINGLE
HARMENY ATHLETIC CLUB

In a tradition which has continued for almost 20 years, Sunday 10 September saw members of Harmeny Athletic Club take part in the club's annual handicap race.

As a club with members who are a mixture of those new to running, social runners and also those competing at advanced levels, the handicap race is a highlight in Harmeny AC's annual calendar as it allows members of all levels to compete together with an even chance at a first-place finish.

At a little over 10km (6.2 miles), the race started at Balerno High School, with runners making their way along the Water of Leith before joining the canal at Kingsknowe, ultimately crossing the finish line at Harrison Park.

Despite the warm weather, there were some great running performances on the day. We had some really fast times but also

members completing their first 10km and those who hadn't ran that distance in several years all making their way across the finish line. Special mention goes to the day's winners with Meenakshi Jeyaraman and Alistair Mackenzie the first female and male to cross the finish line, and Rhona Scott and Lewis Kemp with the fastest finish times.

If you would like to find out more about Harmeny AC, the club are holding an open week starting on 10 October to coincide with World Mental Health Day. In recognition of the benefit of physical activity on mental health, our open week is free to attend and everyone is welcome, regardless of ability or experience.

The club holds several running sessions each week, including hill reps, an evening headtorch run, track session and weekend social runs, usually around the Pentlands. If you're interested in coming along to any sessions, email: secretaryharmeny@gmail.com



Community Tennis for 50+ at Juniper Green

PAUL MURPHY
JGTC

Juniper Green Tennis Club recently provided coordinated access to coach-led tennis-based activities to support community-based sports projects using sport and physical activity for positive change. Community Tennis for those aged 50 and over started on Thursday 13 July and ran through each week until Thursday 28 September 2023.

The fun tennis sessions – designed to support and improve thinking, reasoning, remembering, and learning – are



New Season Underway for Currie Chieftains

PHIL THOMAS
CURRIE CHIEFTAINS

After a long pre-season training ended with friendly matches in August, league competitions for Currie Chieftains' three senior men's rugby teams started in earnest in September. The Chieftains and Chieftains A teams played their first three matches on 2, 9 and 16 September, while the Chieftains 3rd XV played their first match on 16 September.

For the Chieftains, the Premiership is unchanged except for the relegation of GHA RFC and promotion of Kelso RFC to the league. However, this season, Chieftain A will play in a new 10-team Inter City Reserve League, covering clubs in central Scotland. Also, the Chieftains 3rd XV (who won the East Region Reserve League Division 3 last season) will play in a new eight-team East Region Reserve League (Division 1), consisting of Edinburgh-area clubs. This will reduce the travel demands on those players.

As to the season so far, Currie Chieftains currently have maintained a perfect start to their campaign, achieving three wins each with a try bonus point. They were 17-47 points winners away to Selkirk on 2 September,

54-7 points winners at home to Jed-Forest on 9 September, and 7-46 points winners away to Musselburgh on 16 September. After three games they are the only unbeaten team in the Premiership and leading the league table on 15 points.

Likewise, Chieftains A were 17-28 points winners away to Biggar 2nd XV on 2 September, 63-7 points winners at home to Stirling County 2nd XV on 9 September, and 31-66 points winners away to Musselburgh 2nd XV on 16 September. They also have maintained a perfect start to the season and are equal on 15 league points with Heriot's Blues 2nd XV, who are leading the table as a result of a better scored points difference.

Encouragingly, both the old-hands and new players are showing their impressive playing abilities, providing a real strength in depth within the squad (see inset DJ Innes seeking the gap a in the Selkirk defence). Thus, there is growing optimism about the squad's potential, notwithstanding the challenging club encounters yet to come.

Finally, on 16 September, the Chieftains 3rd XV lost heavily at home to Watsonians 2nd XV. However, the league is new, and the playing standards will take time to become fully established.

free of charge with funding provided by The City of Edinburgh Council's Physical Activity and Sports Grant.

Tennis is a sport with numerous health benefits for individuals of all ages. Regular participants experience mental benefits—including stress and anxiety management. When compared with other athletes, as well as non-athletes, tennis players scored higher in optimism and self-esteem, while scoring lower in depression, anger, confusion, anxiety, and tension. Tennis outperforms most other sports in developing positive

personality characteristics.

To find out more about JGTC please find our club website at <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/junipergreenTennisClub> or our Facebook page www.facebook.com/junipergreentennis.

All members are invited to attend our AGM in the clubhouse on Thursday 12 October at 8pm which will also double as a Cheese and Wine this year in the hope of encouraging more members to come along and share their views on how we can better improve our club, and to hear the committee's draft proposals for the future.

FREE!

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New Season, New Leagues

**Currie Chieftains
are back in the
game at home
and away, p47**

Photos: Currie Chieftains; Harmeny AC; Stef Lyons

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