

YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY NEWS MAGAZINE • EST 1976 • 495 • APRIL 2024

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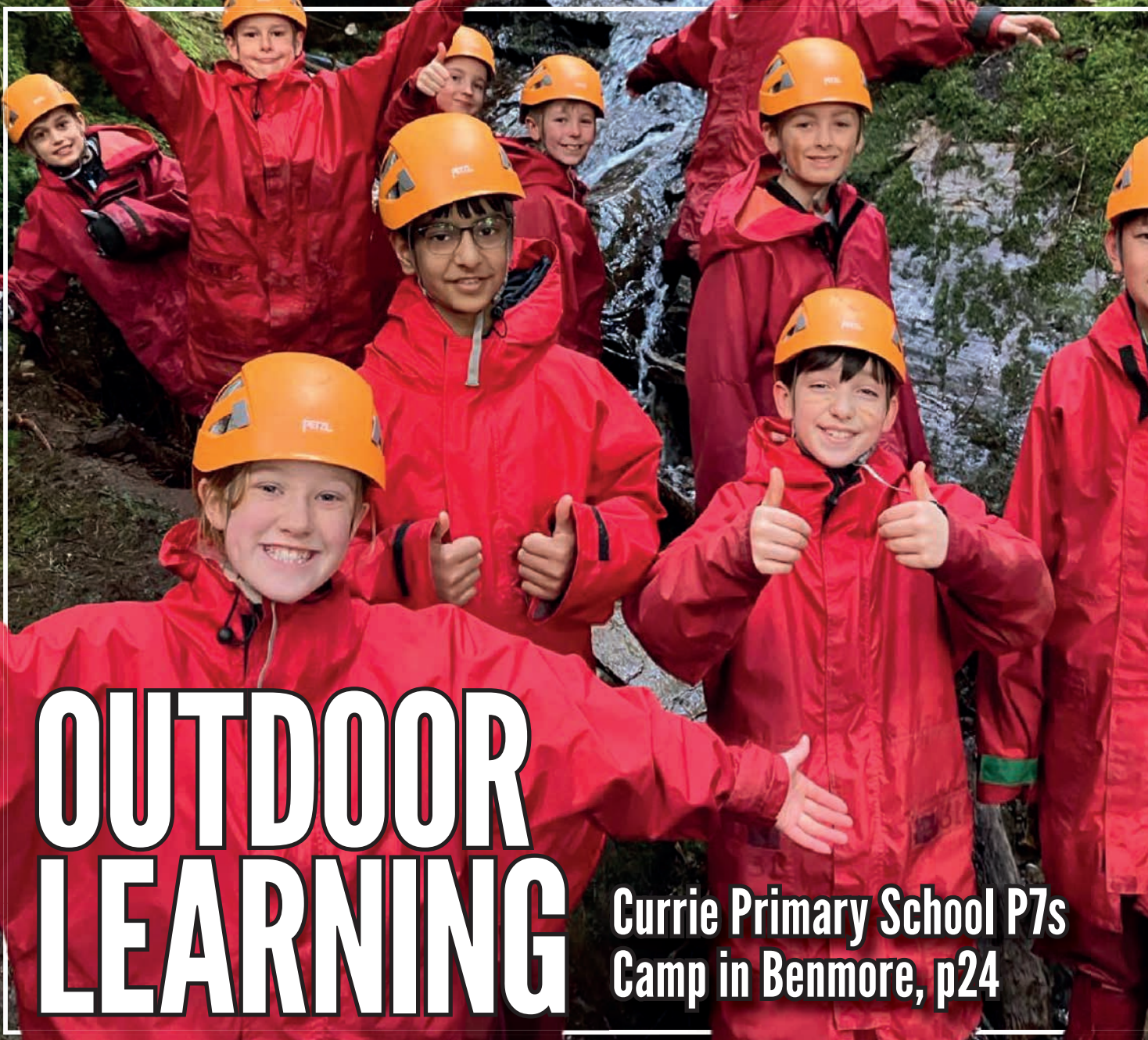
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C&B NEWS

CURRIE • BALERNO • JUNIPER GREEN • BABEY MAINS • COLINTON



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Camp in Benmore, p24

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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 winter and summer breaks.

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

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DEADLINES FOR NEXT ISSUE

ADVERTISING & LISTINGS: 16 APRIL
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Before and after: work to reopen the Katesmill Walkway Footbridge (aka the "pipe bridge") in Colinton Dell is underway at time of writing, and expected to be completed by mid-April.



Above: Andrew, Pam, Alasdair, (one distracted dog) and John – members of Currie, Balerno and District Round Table – crossed the Firth of Forth and reached Burntisland in the local Round Table's quest to circumnavigate the coast of Scotland. It feels like members have made good progress so far, but there's still plenty of coastline left – so if you're interested in joining them, email: enquiries@cbbdrt.com



Left: The City of Edinburgh Council is actively looking to source funding to reopen access to the Water of Leith Walkway from Dell Road. Local councillor Scott Arthur suggested at a recent Colinton Community Council meeting that the work will focus on creating a new safe route rather than rebuilding the "slipped" landscape – the latter option being considered too expensive to undertake.

Below left: Currie Primary School P7 pupils get their boots wet while enjoying Camp at the Benmore Outdoor Centre in Argyll. See more images on this issue's centre pages.

Below : Meantime, other pupils at Currie Primary School enjoyed some "March Madness" in support of Comic Relief.



BRIEFLY...

ELECTION CANDIDATES

With a UK General Election expected this year, candidates so far confirmed in the Edinburgh South West constituency are (in alphabetical order): Cllr Scott Arthur (Scottish Labour), Joanna Cherry KC MP (Scottish National Party), Richard Lucas (Scottish Family Party), Sue Webber MSP (Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party), and Bruce Wilson (Scottish Liberal Democrats). Other candidates will be announced in due course.

GALA LICENCE FEES

The City of Edinburgh Council has introduced new, significantly-lower "amusement device" licence fees for non-commercial community events across the city. This means organisers of the annual Balerno Children's Gala Day will not now have to pay the same rates as commercial operators to set up bouncy castles, funfair rides or merry-go-rounds – the additional four-figure cost of which had brought the long-established and popular local event close to folding last year.

BUS TIMES

Edinburgh's new bus tracker screens are unlikely to provide real-time service information until the summer, according to a report in *Midlothian View*. Reasons include challenges testing the system and updating the GPS tracking technology across Lothian Buses's 700-plus vehicles.

BUS TO CRAMOND?

Current CEC-subsidised bus service 63, linking Balerno and Currie with Hermiston Park and Ride, the Gyle Shopping Centre and (ultimately) South Queensferry, is expected to be replaced this summer by a similarly subsidised and routed service terminating

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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

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f Gordon Macdonald MSP **@**GMacdonaldMSP

Representing: Baberton, Balerno, Blinkbonny, Bonaly, Broomhouse, Buckstone, Calders, Colinton, Colinton Mains, Currie, Dregghorn, Fairmilehead, Firhill, Hermiston, Juniper Green, Kingsknowe, Longstone, Oxgangs, Parkhead, Ratho, Redhall, Saughton Mains, Sighthill, Spylaw, Stenhouse, Swanston, Wester Hailes and Whitson.

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Plans Submitted for Colinton Telephone Kiosk

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
C&B NEWS

Plans to regenerate the long-decommissioned telephone kiosk at the junction of Bridge Road and Spylaw Street have been lodged with The City of Edinburgh Council's planning officers.

The work proposed by Colinton Village Enterprise SCIO includes repainting the K6 Telephone kiosk the correct red colour, swapping worn panels with "like for like" replacements, installing a "discreet" lock, and installing internal shelves.

The Box, a Category B listed "building", was adopted by CVE several years ago, but is currently unused and falling into disrepair. The restored box would be brought back into community use, in part acting as a "pointer" to CVE's numerous activities at "The Shed" in Spylaw Park.

• Comments on application 24/00865/LBC should be made by Sunday 7 April. Email: planning@edinburgh.gov.uk, visit <https://tinyurl.com/yc48wvdc> or use the QR code below.



New Balerno Children's Gala Court Announced

SINÉAD MACKAY
BALERNO CHILDREN'S GALA

Last month, ripples of excitement went round P4 and P7 at Dean Park Primary School, Balerno, when the Gala's yellow-clad committee members arrived one morning to explain the process behind choosing this year's Gala Court.

Just over a week later, all the nominations and permissions were in and the Gala committee chose names from a hat-type container. Congratulation letters were hand delivered and confirmed!

Discussions are now well underway about what colour their outfits will be, who is wearing a kilt, which flowers would look good and a myriad of other things.

The court will lead the parade on Saturday 18 May, kick-starting eight days of events which culminates in Gala Day itself on Saturday 25 May on the rugby pitches below Currie Rugby Club.

• This year's Gala Court consists of Naia Smith (Queen), Andrew Brown (King), Anne Reid Thomas (Queen's Escort), Eoin Robb (King's Escort), Sophie Brown and Chloe Lyndon (Heralds), Susie Leask (Flower Girl), and Alex Sime and Braydon Smissen-Smith (Pages).

• Look out for information about all the Gala Week events in C&B News, on the Gala's Facebook page and on the flyers available through Dean Park Primary School, at the Balerno Farmers' Market in May, and in The Mill Café and Balerno Library.

'Mother of All Community Spring Clear Ups' on Water of Leith

MIKE ROWE
CURRIE BALERNO ROTARY

The "Mother of All Community Spring Clear Ups"—that's how the Water of Leith Conservation Trust describe an event planned for Sunday 14 April, when they will be joined by Rotary members from across the Edinburgh City Area.

Volunteers will meet at 10.30am at the Water of Leith Conservation Centre car park, with teams picking up litter of whatever description from Colinton to Gorgie and from Longstone to Craiglockhart.

Members of Currie Balerno Rotary will be there, of course, and we look forward to making our contribution. Why not come and join us?



BRIEFLY...

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instead at Cramond. It remains to be seen if operating this somewhat shorter route will prove to be a sufficiently attractive proposition for either McGill's Eastern Scottish, Lothian Buses, or any other operator to take on. Cllr Graeme Bruce explains more on page 35.

PARK 'N' RIDE

C&B News has heard of plans to erect bus shelters by the bus stops at Hermiston Park and Ride to provide a little relief from the wind and rain for waiting travellers. However, there remains no word on providing invaluable toilet facilities. CEC is apparently seeking an alternative occupant for the existing building, following Lothian Buses' decision not to reopen its information counter (and adjacent public toilet facilities) post-lockdown.

MOTORBIKE IDIOT?

Edinburgh Live recently shared a driver's video of an "attention seeking" balaclava-wearing dirt-bike rider doing wheelies and riding the pavement along Lanark Road. On the plus side, at least they were not on the Water of Leith Walkway! <https://tinyurl.com/4ysfkv95>

TOOL LIBRARY SUCCESS

Edinburgh Tool Library South West – a joint venture between SW20, Edinburgh Tool Library and Colinton Village Enterprise SCIO (CVE) – based in "The Shed" in Spylaw Park, has gone from strength to strength since opening in May 2023. It has loaned nearly 300 tools out to members, while a team of friendly volunteers provide advice and guidance about the right tool for your DIY. Thanks to Currie, Balerno & District Round Table (CBDRT), ETL aim to launch a volunteer-run tool/knife sharpening service soon. Visit: <http://bit.ly/etl-sharp> for more information and <https://bit.ly/sw-etl-sharp> to sign up for details.

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Above: Cancer Card celebrated the opening of its new office and drop-in centre in Swanston with (left to right) Scottish rugby star and charity patron George Horne, Cancer Card CEO Ian Pirrie, founder Jen Hardy and Lothian Region MSP Miles Briggs.

Help for When Cancer Affects Your Life

BECCA GUILLER
CANCER CARD

Cancer Card – a charity which helps people affected by cancer to access information, services and support they need – has opened a new office and drop-in centre in Swanston, at the foot of the Pentland Hills.

Their online directory of local and national cancer support services signposts support, from financial assistance and transportation to complementary therapies and uplifting experiences.

Cancer Card is not just for patients; it's for their partners, family, friends, and employers too, according to founder Jen Hardy who grew up in Balerno. She launched Cancer Card following her own experience with stage 4 breast cancer, and experienced the challenges in sifting through scattered information across various websites and leaflets.

Cancer Card also offers a range of services aimed at providing crucial support and assistance to individuals and families navigating the challenges of cancer. Their "comfort boxes" include products specially curated to support somebody during their cancer journey; thoughtfully chosen to provide comfort and practical assistance.

• More information: www.cancercard.org.uk

Teen Voice 'Pop up' Book Festival Comes to Hub@531

ANNETTE WILSON
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, HUB@531

The team at Hub@531 were recently delighted to attract funding to support plans for a unique pop-up event that will focus on young people from P7 stage and upwards, happening on Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 May.

This event will offer a different focus to the established and popular Pentlands Book Festival held each Autumn. We will use our intimate and accessible space at the Hub to host some exciting author talks and interactive workshops to small audiences, with a focus on bringing local talented writers, illustrators, comic and podcast makers to the younger people in our local community.

We are busy confirming our guests and programme as we write; by the time this issue of C&B News is available in April, we should have our full programme and details of how to book on our booking site and Facebook



page. Please watch out for posters and social media posts when we launch our programme and booking information. We're sure that anyone with children aged 11+ will want to get involved!

We're grateful to Scottish Book Trust and C&B News for their generous support—thank you!

• Follow us on Facebook (The Hub at 531), on Instagram (hubat531), or email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com to join our Friends of the Hub email list and keep up to date with all our news, events and opportunities to be involved.

Community Policing Update

MARK COULL
PS 5040 SOUTH WEST COMMUNITY
POLICINGTEAM

It has been another busy month for your Community Officers. They have been patrolling the area in vehicles and on foot. With the weather now improving, we also will be out on our bikes patrolling the Water of Leith Walkway and the Pentland Hills.

Over the Spring we will try and patrol along with the Pentland Rangers to speak with dog walkers about sheep worrying, particularly during lambing season. Please take extra care with your dogs in the area at this time. Patrols have also been carried out in plain clothes following recent housebreakings. We are pleased to report that arrests have been made across the city, but please remain vigilant with your home and car security.

"Coffee with a Cop" has returned, and we have had good engagement at the community centres in Currie and Balerno.

Unfortunately, antisocial behaviour has returned to Heriot-Watt University with young people attending the main buildings and the Oriam sports centre causing damage, stealing and being a

general nuisance. There are positive lines of enquiry through CCTV. Please make sure you know where your children are in the evenings and what they are up to!

In February PCs Scott and Breen were both trained as "Keep Safe Ambassadors". This initiative works with a network of local businesses to create "Keep Safe" places in the community for anyone feeling lost, frightened or who has been a victim of crime. "Keep Safe" staff are trained to offer assistance if required. Look out for the logo in local businesses. "Keep Safe" cards are also available for elderly, disabled and vulnerable people. These cards detail information such as communication requirements, health concerns and who to contact in the event of an emergency.

The cards are particularly useful for people who have a learning disability or have dementia/Alzheimer's.

• If your local business would like to be part of the Keep Safe Initiative, please contact diversityunit@scotland.police.uk

• For more useful information, visit: www.iammescotland.co.uk

BRIEFLY...

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COMMUNITY COUNCILS

The second phase of CEC's consultation on the revisions to the city's Community Councils – how they're organised and their geographical boundaries – remains open until Friday 3 May, and can be accessed via the council's Consultation Hub. <https://tinyurl.com/mv925jvy>
Email: community.councils@edinburgh.gov.uk

COFFEE WITH A COP

Your local Community Police Officer invites you to meet and chat with them over a coffee at either Currie Community Centre, 280 Lanark Rd West (from 10am on Mondays 1 and 22 April, and Wednesday 1 May) or Wester Hailes Library, 1 Westside Plaza (from 10am on Thursdays 4 and 11 April, and Friday 3 May).

BIKE TRACK REOPENED

Volunteers from SW20 and Edinburgh Tool Library recently cleared an overlooked bike pump track in Hailes Quarry Park, just off the Union Canal. The track, which had become significantly overgrown since the Covid-19 lockdowns, is once again usable—though it will take some time to get back to the original gravel to enjoy the bumps and jumps fully! For more details, visit: <https://bit.ly/hqp-track>.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Currie: Remove existing porch and erect smaller replacement, 107 Nether Currie Crescent. (24/01191/FUL) Comments by 5 April.

Colinton: Removal of existing garage and erection of new single storey rear and side extension, 17 Redford Terrace. (24/01253/FUL) Comments by 6 April.

Colinton: Phone kiosk to be

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SW20 (South West Edinburgh 20 minute neighbourhoods) has provided free access to its electric cargo bike for more than a year now, with spring bookings already starting to come in, writes SW20's Paul Bullen. "We recently added a 'normal' step-through e-bike to our free-to-borrow inventory. Borrowed by itself, this gives a great introduction to using an e-bike in a familiar, lightweight format—hills become 'flat' and carrying shopping is easy. When combined with the larger cargo bike, a total of two adults and three children can be carried." • For more information, please visit: <http://bit.ly/sw20-ebike>

Proposed 'Visitor Levy' Will Have Little Benefit for Local Pentland Businesses

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
C&B NEWS

Scottish Government plans to enable local councils to impose a "visitor levy" on overnight accommodation will bring little benefit to the upper Water of Leith valley, according to a local hospitality business owner. A cash-strapped City of Edinburgh Council has already made it clear that it welcomes the idea of a visitor levy: indeed, in an interview with *The Edinburgh Reporter's* editor Phyllis Stephen, CEC leader Cllr Cammy Day stated that the capital had been "lobbying the Scottish Government for more than a decade" on the issue. "The introduction of a levy will provide a funding stream that would be reinvested in the city and our infrastructure," said Cllr Day, "to the benefit of our visitors and, crucially, the people who live here in our great Capital city all year round."

Research undertaken by CEC suggests wide public support for a levy, although a majority of residents believe that the money raised should benefit them more than tourists, particularly regarding investment in the capital's infrastructure.

Ben Watson, owner of the award-winning Balerno Inn, is in principle also "for" the levy, at least "when applied to central venues that will gain from it."

However, he doubts that any benefits will be felt around the upper Water of Leith valley. "The money should be spent on public services across Scotland," he told *C&B News*, "but what will happen is, it will disappear into a pot and or be spent on things that don't benefit Balerno. I'm utterly certain no measurable benefit will ever be seen here."

In fact, he worries that all the levy will do is introduce additional work. "A 'wee' place like TBI could live without the additional admin woes," he added. "After all, we already collect VAT for HMRC and aren't credited or reimbursed for the massive admin that goes with it."

Edinburgh Pentlands Constituency MSP Gordon Macdonald is a member of the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee which last month scrutinised the Visitor Levy (Scotland) Bill currently progressing through the Scottish Parliament. "Across the world, 22 countries have a visitor levy which includes our top holiday destinations of France, Greece, and Spain or (as it is known in Bhutan) the Daily Sustainable Development Fund, which was introduced in 1974," he told *C&B News*.

"A Visitor Levy will allow local authorities to introduce a charge for overnight accommodation if they wish and, if it is introduced, they must consult with the

hospitality industry about how such funds should be used to improve the visitor experience," he said. "Uses range from street cleaning, marketing, to support for culture and protecting our heritage—some of which is currently being borne by Edinburgh residents through their council tax."

"Edinburgh is on track to become the UK's first city to formally adopt a visitor levy if the Visitor Levy (Scotland) Bill is passed later this year."

• MSPs are expected to vote on *The Visitor Levy (Scotland) Bill* in June. More details: <https://tinyurl.com/3dxunkbf>

• <https://www.balernoinn.co.uk/>

This article is part of a collaborative effort by The Scottish Beacon—a coming together of 22 independent, community-based publications based all over Scotland. By working together, we hope to amplify the stories from Scotland's communities, as well as highlighting shared issues and potential solutions. To see the other articles from our partners, visit: www.ScottishBeacon.com



BRIEFLY...

p7>>>

restored, painted correct red colour with replaced panels, discreet lock and internal shelves, 15 metres (16.4 yards) west of 64 Bridge Road. (24/00865/LBC) Comments by 7 April.

Colinton: To fit Gecko secondary glazing on inside of all windows, push-fitted over individual panes. Existing sashes to be retained, 13 Woodhall Road. (24/01069/LBC) Comments by 7 April.

Balerno: Use of farm steading as rural events venue (agritourism), Cockburn Hostel, 7 Cockburn Farm, Cockburnhill Road. (24/00719/CLE) Register 15 March.

PLANNING DECISIONS

Colinton: Proposed raising of existing flat roof to rear garage to accommodate new family room, plus alterations to rear window to garage, and added decking to provide access (in retrospect). (23/06712/FUL) Granted, 4 March.

Currie: Erection of six dwellings with associated landscaping, access, parking and infrastructure (as amended), land 46 metres (50 yards) east of 10 Currievale Park. (22/06111/FUL) Granted with legal agreement, 7 March.

Balerno: Prior notification for farm-related building works (non-residential), 1 Listonshiels Farm, Wester Rigg. (24/00153/PNA) Permitted development, 8 March.

Currie: Internal alterations, extension to side and front, 70 Forth View Crescent. (24/00666/FUL) Granted, 11 March.

Colinton: Removal of rear conservatory, excavation of raised rear garden, construction of single storey to rear and double storey extension to side, conversion of garage to habitable room with new window to front elevation, 104 Woodfield Avenue. (24/00295/FUL) Granted, 11 March.

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EMILY STONE
NET ZERO SUPPORT OFFICER, HERIOT-
WATT UNIVERSITY ESTATE OFFICE

Plans for a new walking and cycling route connecting Heriot-Watt University with the neighbouring community of Currie have reached an advanced stage.

Designs are being finalised for an improved, lit path linking Curriehill Station with the University's Edinburgh campus. Construction is expected to begin in mid-2025. Once complete the route will be fully adopted under the City of Edinburgh Council's road maintenance programme.

The project is being spearheaded by Heriot-Watt's Sustainability team in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council and the walking, wheeling and cycling charity, Sustrans through its Places for Everyone funding scheme.

Emily Stone, Net Zero Support Officer for Heriot-Watt University, said: "Plans are progressing well to create a direct link between the University and Currie. This collaborative project will provide neighbouring communities with a new link with which to access our beautiful campus grounds as well as establish an important connection for students and staff."

"The path will also help connect the Currie area to the National Cycle Route 75 (Union Canal), via links across the campus."

The path's design has been informed using survey and consultation feedback, gathered in summer 2023 from community

members as well as students and staff.

The route will enhance rail connectivity to the University, helping support a decrease in overall vehicle emissions and improve connectivity for local residents wishing to access the campus' green space and amenities.

Kasper Schwartz, Grant Advisor for Sustrans, said: "There is currently no safe, accessible or direct route for walking, wheeling and cycling between Curriehill Station and Heriot-Watt University. This project aims to change that by making it easier for people to combine public transport into their everyday journeys, and also to access a range of amenities on the campus, like the Oriam sports complex, and venture further via National Cycle Network Route 754 along the Union Canal."

"We'd like to thank the local community for their input to help get these designs to where they are today, and we look forward to seeing them realised in future."

Design sketches show the path starting at Curriehill Station car park, before continuing along the north side of Curriehill Road and entering the campus, adjoining the existing "Trim Trail" in the woodland border.

The route will be lit to ensure personal safety of users, with lighting design chosen to minimise the impact on local wildlife.

The roadside section will be segregated with a designated zone for cyclists and pedestrians/wheelchair users. Once within the woodland, it will become a shared-



use path, partially surfaced with tarmac over a base designed to protect the roots of surrounding trees. The remainder of the Trim Trail will remain unsurfaced.

Heriot-Watt's policy is to re-plant three trees for every one felled. Since the path expands into young woodland, a number of young birches will need to be replaced along with a sycamore beside the station exit. Ecological and tree surveys conducted in December 2023 recommended a comprehensive re-planting plan, ensuring no protected or ecologically significant species are harmed.

The path is scheduled to open to the public in late 2025.

To share your thoughts on the designs or suggest something that you would like to see along the route, such as benches or a community mural, please contact SustainableHWU@hw.ac.uk



BRIEFLY...

p9>>>

Currie: Proposed single storey rear extension and internal alterations, 30 Dolphin Gardens West. (24/00527/FUL) Granted, 12 March.

Currie: Demolition of existing shed and barn and construction of two new dwelling houses with associated roads, drainage and infrastructure, Middle Kinleith Farm, Harlaw Road. (24/00127/FUL) Refused, 13 March.

Currie: Proposed rear extension, side extension and front porch, 11 Muir Wood Crescent. (24/00509/FUL) Granted, 15 March.

Juniper Green: Adding fabricated open metal trellis/panel atop existing stone wall to front garden not exceeding 1.5 metres, 455 Lanark Road. (23/07291/FUL) Withdrawn, 15 March.

PLANNED ROADWORKS & ROAD CLOSURES

Balerno: Mansfield Road below the SSPCA centre; CEC carriageway subsidence and repair, requiring road closure and diversion via Cockburnhill Road - East Rigg. Ongoing.

Currie: Lanark Road West at Stewart Road; two-way temporary traffic lights and closure of Stewart Road for junction improvement and installation of new puffin crossing, until 5 April.

Oxgangs: Oxgangs Road North at junction with Colinton Mains Drive: SGN gas main alteration, requiring temporary traffic lights, 22 April to 12 May.

Dreghorn: Redford Place at Colinton Primary School, closed for delivery of portacabins, 8am - 4pm, 4 June. Parking restrictions in neighbouring Redford Walk/Bank/Place/Gardens/Grove.

LOCAL UPDATES • LOCAL UPDATES

Time to Think About This Year's Currie Horticultural Show

SHEILA MASON
SHOW SECRETARY

Time marches on and Spring is here. The Currie Horticultural Society is delighted to let everyone know that the Schedule of "classes" for our Annual Show – taking place this year on Saturday 31 August, in Balerno Community High School – is now on sale for anyone interested in competing or visiting this year's Show.

To be eligible to enter, you must be a member of the Society—don't worry, purchasing a copy of the Schedule constitutes membership! Meantime, details of the competitions are now on our website. Now is the time to plant seeds for showing your flowers and veggies in due course.

We will be particularly happy to welcome entries from Colinton residents, as we have extended our catchment area to include them as well as those from Kirknewton and Ratho. There are also competitions for the younger members of our communities; it would be wonderful if they could make or bake or grow something for this from the Schedule.

We look forward to receiving your entry forms in the week leading up to the Show.

Happy gardening and remember we are all amateurs.

• Our published schedule can be purchased through our committee members, in some local shops, at the Balerno Farmers' Market on Saturday 11 May, or by contacting us via our website: www.currieshow.weebly.com

POTHoles & ROAD SURFACES

At the Colinton Community Council meeting on 12 March, Cliff Hutt and Sean Gilchrist from The City of Edinburgh Council's Roads and Infrastructure Department gave a presentation about the city's "risk-based approach to safety inspections and defect repairs" and answered questions from both CC members and more than 30 members of the public. A copy of their presentation is now available via www.colintoncc.org.uk

Fairtrade Morning a Great Success

LESLEY HENDERSON
BALERNO FAIRTRADE VILLAGE GROUP

What's your favourite memory of our Fairtrade (FT) Morning in Balerno Parish Church Halls, on 2 March?

Sheer relief when overnight snow stayed up the hill? That the skills of our generous First Aider weren't needed? Maybe pedalling a FT Banana Smoothie, helped for years now by Edinburgh Bicycle Cooperative's very welcome local members? Or Scotmid's now traditional sponsorship of ingredients? Winning a tasty Mill Café cake or a FT chocolate hamper? Relaxing with the Guild's famous hospitality, FT refreshments and homebaking? The trail, quizzes and other activities for the children, some with Co-op sponsorship?

On the day, visitors learned more about FT, sampled Co-op FT goods, and stocked up from Pentland Eco Group's great Seed Swap. Stallholders reported worthwhile sales for True Origin, the One World Shop and Hadeel, now needed more than ever by suppliers and communities around the world.

For many, though, the highlight was the display of prizewinning work from 2024's Balerno Schools FT Art Competition, with young artists from Balerno High, Dean Park Primary and Harmeny Schools showing so brightly why fairness in and to our world matters. We loved it, and the happy faces of the children, their families and other grown-ups when (kindly helped by Nicola Kurth, Dean Park's head teacher) the Right Honourable the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Robert Aldridge, presented their prizes and then stayed to talk and listen to so many people.

Boosted by aftersales and further donations, a healthy amount from the event goes now, as promised, to Transform Trade, "a global community of farmers, workers, collectives, campaigners, donors and supporters [who] fight together for trade that values people over profit".

Thank you so much to everyone, far too many to list here but all really appreciated, who made this FT Morning possible. Of course



there's more to do, with new help always much needed. So to help plan, please come along to our AGM (see below) or email: balernofairtrade@gmail.com

• Our AGM is on Monday 22 April, 7.15pm - 9pm, in the Ogston Hall of Balerno Parish Church.

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Round Table Funding

ALASDAIR GORDON
CURRIE, BALERNO & DISTRICT ROUND TABLE

Above: Balerno Community Centre plays its role in some recent filming. See pages 20-21 for more details.

Plans for this year's Currie Beer and Curry Festival, on Friday 7 and Saturday 8 June, are coming together.

St Andrews Timber and Building Supplies are confirmed as our first big sponsor. The main sponsor is still to be announced and we have several other sponsorship opportunities available—if anyone is interested in these, we'd love to hear from you.

Details of the beers themselves are still under wraps. "Doctor Beer" (above) was asked to comment for this article and has said they are still strictly in the "tasting and testing" phase!

There's also a correction to the bands we published in last month's C&B News—the bands will be: Bedlam House Band and Blue Soul (Friday), and Auld Hat and Bobby's All-Stars (Saturday).

• Email: enquiries@cdbdt.com

Good Start for Balerno Village Trust in 2024

VAL REID
BALERNO VILLAGE TRUST

Normally the first part of the year is quieter for Balerno Village Trust but 2024 has had a really busy start!

The first Farmers Market of the year took place in February, followed by our annual Tattie Day in March. The weather chose not to "play ball" on either day, both being a bit cold and "dreich" but Tattie Day still saw more than 600 visitors through the Market. We still have tatties and onion sets that we are advertising through our website and social media, and will have these at the April "Spring Fling" Farmers Market on

Saturday 13 April too if you didn't venture out in March!

Balerno Gardeners have been planning what they are going to be planting this year at Malleny Gardens; they'll be back in the Garden soon, while the Friends of Marchbank Park are planning a walk around the Park to discuss plans for this year—dates to be confirmed.

The Community Centre is getting a bit of a makeover too! We have a 10 year lease from The City of Edinburgh Council on the proviso that we make improvements to the sustainability of the building. As I type this we have put in dehumidifiers to help with condensation and are coming to the end of a three-week rewiring of the Community Centre, with LED lights being fitted. Next week there will be solar panels and a battery going in followed by roof insulation. Thank you to Harlaw

Hydro and CARES for providing the funds for this work to go ahead. We should hopefully have a much warmer Community Centre next winter!

Next steps will be getting the ceiling replastered. Then, the plan over the summer is to get the Centre painted inside – we'll be looking for a team of volunteers to help with this; teas, coffees, bacon rolls will be provided – and also look to replace/repaint the outside fascias which are looking a bit tired.

It's going to be another busy year!

• If you're interested in getting involved with any of the groups mentioned above, please email hello@balernovt.org.uk

Woodlands Trust comes to Balerno SWI

SHEILA MASON
PRESS SECRETARY, BALERNO SWI

With our usual venue, Balerno Community Centre, closed for rewiring, Catriona welcomed everyone to our March gathering in the meeting room at Ravelrig Riding for the Disabled, when we had a most informative talk from Benedict Bate from the Woodlands Trust—a voluntary organisation formed in 1972, and the UK's largest conservation charity.

We found his presentation most informative and educational as one just accepts seeing woodlands as part of the landscape and does not consider their age or whether they had any purpose in life. In three words Benedict outlined the main aims of the Trust: to "Create", "Protect" and "Restore" what remains of the ancient woodlands which previously covered much of Scotland. To achieve this, Trust volunteers go collecting the seeds from the trees they wish to restore, passing them on to a facility whereby they will germinate before being planted as saplings in the designated areas. Protecting trees that are still growing requires not just the elimination of disease but also



some culling of the predatory wildlife: deer eat trees while sheep eat anything!

The Woodland Trust looks after 12,000 woods—and did you know that Scotland is an important area for the growing of wood for the furniture trade? Benedict's presentation was accompanied by some very informative scenes of woodlands in some remote

areas. Following a good few questions from our members, Benedict was thanked for his most interesting description of what the Trust does.

There was a very welcome cuppa before business was completed.

Competition results: Flower of the Month: Isobel Johnston.

Three Hallowe'en Cupcakes: (First) Susan McDonald; (Second Equal) Moira Stewart, Edingell Thomson.

• Our next meeting is on 2 April in Balerno Community Centre (hopefully) at 7.30pm, at which Homeopathy with Kendra Flockhart is on the agenda. New members are welcome.

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FRONT
COVER
STORY

Angela Miller: Friend, Neighbour—and Benefactor

PAM WARDELL
VICE-CHAIR & SECRETARY, COLINTON
VILLAGE ENTERPRISE SCIO

Last year, on 23 September, Angela Miller – our friend and neighbour in Spylaw Street, Colinton – quietly died on her 84th birthday. She is remembered by all as a “lovely lady.”

Angela, who had retired to Colinton in 2014, was a familiar figure in the neighbourhood, walking every day with Bertie (the Pug) to Spylaw Park—often stopping to talk to neighbours on the way and the many dog owners and families enjoying the green spaces along the Water of Leith Walkway.

However, we knew little of her background. Originally a pupil at Notre Dame High School for Girls in Glasgow, Angela studied at the University of Edinburgh, where she graduated with an MA and Bachelor of Commerce degree. In 1964 she was appointed as an economist to the Australian Government and was posted to Canberra, returning to Scotland in 1971 as a research assistant within the Federation of Scottish Bank Employers. She was appointed the Federation's Director in 1982, the first woman to hold the post.

How lucky were we when Angela offered to join Colinton Village Enterprise SCIO, a merging of two existing organisations into one new entity. Angela agreed to

become our first Secretary, and her calm presence and meticulous attention to detail was essential, as we began our project to buy “the Shed” in Spylaw Park from The City of Edinburgh Council and transform it into a community heritage hub. Even when her

“I really miss Angela.”—Archie Scott, aged 4.

“They had a lovely relationship, with Angela always inviting Archie into her flat for a biscuit and Archie proudly showing off his latest drawing/toy car/pre-school uniform.”—Stephanie and Keith Scott.

“Quietly, unwittingly our friendship developed [...] moulded by our years of hope and experience. We listened, we heard. She, wise, diplomatic and strong [...] sometimes we irritated, solutions not always found [...] but advice, encouragement and the mutual wish for the ability to go forward in life [...] despite all adversity [...] coming our ways.”—Diana Richardson.

Above: Angela Miller (centre) with some of
CVE's Art in the Park team.
Left: Always ready with a smile.

hearing and health began to deteriorate with age – leading to Angela resigning as CVE Secretary in February 2021 – she maintained a close interest in our ambitions, particularly in the fundraising required to restore and develop “the Shed” to increase social and creative interaction in Colinton.

Now we realise just how connected Angela felt to the community of Colinton with news in her will of her generous bequest to Colinton Village Enterprise.

“When Angela asked Pam Wardell and I to come to her place for a chat last year, imagine our great surprise when she informed us of her decision to leave Colinton Village Enterprise her property,” explained Lorraine O’Shea, Chair, CVE SCIO. “She didn’t want a fanfare made of this news, but wanted to emphasise her belief in the project by this amazingly generous bequest. We are incredibly thankful and humbled by Angela’s decision and will do everything in our power to make Colinton’s Community Heritage Hub a reality, in memory to our friend, volunteer colleague, and all-round supporter.”

We are indeed honoured to be the recipient of Angela’s beautiful property. This is a major development for our organisation and brings us closer to our dream of restoring and preserving the historic Shed building in Spylaw Park, bringing it back into regular use as an inclusive community space in Colinton Village.

Our heartfelt thanks to that “lovely lady”.

Spending Our Money Environmentally!

ANNIE MACDONALD
PESTICIDE FREE BALERNO

Since last issue, the City of Edinburgh Council have announced their 2024/2025 budget: “£2.4 million will be spent on parks, biodiversity and environmental protection”.

Although cost is often used by councils to delay safe alternatives being introduced for weed control, if used correctly, safe alternatives actually work out cheaper and more effective!

While CEC claim about their strained budgets – yet allocate substantial amounts of our public funds (£2.4 million) to parks, biodiversity and the environment, we can probably all agree that there is more than enough money to now accommodate the very reasonable request for safe alternatives like Foamstream/hot water systems for weed control on our streets and pavements—supporting Balerno’s initiative, and even for Edinburgh citywide.

A basic hot water or Foamstream machine can cost around £20,000, but is multi functional—it can also be used to clean, and remove chewing gum and graffiti.

Nowadays, it is a commonly known fact that the unnecessary use of pesticides for weed control is extremely harmful to not only humans but to biodiversity and the environment. A very easy and cost-effective way to protect the environment would just be to stop poisoning it by ending the citywide use of pesticides for weed control and switching to save alternatives.

With the new £2.4 million budget for parks, biodiversity and environmental protection, it will be very interesting to see how our Local representatives will democratically represent those who put them into power to make decisions on behalf of the Balerno public about where and how their public funds are spent for weed control.

• To get in touch, visit <https://www.pesticidefreebalerno.com/>, email: pesticidefreebalerno@gmail.com or text/call 07979 717485.

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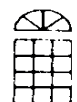
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Snapshots of the Past

Why Currie Kirk Clock Stopped, and Other Natural Phenomena

Main: The old schoolhouse in Currie from where Robert Palmer watched the rainbow and the lightning strike. Below: Kinleith Mill, showing two chimneys. Standing at 280 feet (85.3 metres) the large chimney – “Willie’s Lum” – was built in 1878 to alleviate pollution problems. (The previous chimney – 150 feet/45.7 metres tall – dates from 1864. Photos: courtesy Douglas Lowe.)

• For more information on Currie and District Local History Society, email: secretary@curriehistory.org or fill in the contact form at <https://www.curriehistory.org/contact/>

DOUGLAS LOWE
CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Last issue, I mentioned researching Robert Palmer (1797-1868), the Currie Schoolmaster, and the many strands of his interesting life.

Borne out by the text of two letters he sent to *The Scotsman* newspaper, he was also clearly interested in natural phenomena. In a letter dated 30 April 1833 (but not published until 4 May), he described an isolated “thunder cloud” collecting “on Kenleith Mill, one of the northwestern skirts of the Pentlands” between 3pm and 4pm, assuming “an exceedingly dense and threatening aspect” and moving quickly towards “Junipergreen” (sic). The sky westwards over Currie and beyond was clear and sunny.

A few minutes past 5pm there was a most vivid flash of forked lightning followed by a “terrific peal of thunder”. Palmer describes the lightning bolt being projected probably 300 yards (274 metres) east of the black cloud to hit a field of beans on the north side of Lanark Road, throwing earth 15 to 20 feet (4.6 to 6 metres) into the air. One man, 150 yards (137 metres) away, was knocked over; others were stunned and horses frightened. On examining the site (his sketch of which appeared in the paper), Robert found a

large ragged crater over a foot deep and a great many dead worms “in a soft, swollen, and [...] half-boiled state”.

In a letter dated 20 January 1834 (published 22 January), Robert describes another thunder storm. A little before

10am he had been standing at the door of the schoolhouse admiring “one of the most beautiful double rainbows” he had ever seen—“the surface of the earth cutting off a segment of not more than a fourth part of the diameter of the whole circle”. The brilliancy of the rainbow and the sun were “outshone for a moment by a most vivid flash of lightning, which was [...] accompanied by a tremendous peal of thunder”. Learning that the “electric fluid had struck a chimney stalk” at Kenleith Paper Mill, he went down to examine it. The “square built stalk,” 106 feet (32 metres) high “had been struck about 60 - 70 feet (18.3 - 21.3 metres) from the ground, upon one corner” several stones were dislodged and it was believed that a great part of the chimney would have to be taken down and rebuilt.

“Had the lightning struck one side instead of an angle, it would undoubtedly have brought down the whole structure, and the consequences might have been dreadful,” Robert informed *The Scotsman*’s readers. However, he appeared most interested in how, despite this latter storm coming “precisely in the opposite direction” of the previous dark cloud, he considered it “singular” that the two lightning bolts had landed no more than 200 yards (183 metres) apart.

Just over half a century later it was the visit of another natural phenomenon – an earthquake – that caused the clock at Currie Kirk to stop at 6.53am on 18 January 1889. The jolt also brought a clock in Balerno back to life.

James Robertson, the Miller at Newmills, was sitting down in his armchair after breakfast when he felt his chair pushed forward twice, and heard trays rattle. Unnerved by the experience, he rushed outside. His wife and daughter, who were engaged in housework, hadn’t noticed the tremors.

Nevertheless, flagstones on the floor of the dairy at Goodrees farm had moved and, throughout the whole area, there were reports of loud crashing noises being heard, houses shaking, small children tumbling out of bed, crockery rattling and loose bricks falling.

Although it only lasted one or two seconds, the tremor had alarmed many down the Water of Leith valley, given that most folk were awake. As it happens, there had been an earlier tremor reported at just after 2am, unnoticed by most!



Above: the front cover of the April 2003 issue. Right: the 2003 Balerno Children’s Gala Court in all their monochrome glory!

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
C&B NEWS

Outdated clubhouse or lucrative building site? So asked the photo caption accompanying yet another planning application making it onto the *C&B News* front page. The answer, of course, was both: Baberton Golf Club’s then-century old building was indeed considered “unsuitable for the [current] needs of the club” while its prime position on Baberton Avenue was of genuine interest to house-builder Cruden. Indeed, the estimated £1.5 million cost of constructing a new “modern, energy-efficient clubhouse” slightly further north within the golf course itself was planned to be entirely covered by selling off the original site for 40 new flats.

There were obvious concerns, reported by Ingeborg McNicol, about the proposal—not least about “the likely traffic conflicts” arising from neighbouring Juniper Green Primary and the “potential increase in traffic towards the golf club pedestrian access in Baberton Mains Bank where children are still lucky to have a relatively safe environment to play in the street”. Plus, of course, it involved the demolition of a listed building and construction on the green belt.

However, Ingeborg also pointed out some of the benefits in the new development: “one elderly resident of Juniper Green,” she wrote, “was interested in the prospect of moving out of her too large house into a smaller flat with great views, next to the golf course and still in the village”. We can’t help but wonder, 21 years later, if this resident actually made the move—visit the area today and it’s clear both the flats and the new clubhouse were indeed built.

Elsewhere in the issue, Currie High School announced it had become the first school in Scotland to install a vending machine selling low-fat snacks, organic cereal, fruit bars, yoghurt, fruit juice and Fairtrade chocolate. Aiming to help tackle pupil’s increasingly unhealthy diets, this “Green Machine” was going “head to head” with two existing machines “which sell the standard stock of sugary snacks and drinks”. Which vending machine “won”, we wonder?



Meantime, Balerno High School had recently hosted the Balerno Band Festival, with almost 600 young people treating “audiences and adjudicators alike to a feast of Concert Band and Jazz pieces that had feet tapping and applause outpouring”. The school had also enjoyed a highly successful Red Nose Day: “Loads of money raised, hundreds of Red Noses sold, fantastic face painting, dozens of pupils out of school dress but wearing red,” the paper reported. The highlight of the fund-raising, however, involved “the senior management team” going “into hairstyle role reversal”: headteacher Mr Mackenzie “miraculously developed a full head of hair while all the rest of his worthy team became bald!” We can only assume some wigs were involved!

Staying in Balerno, many locals were relieved by the reopening – after five months’ closure – of The Grey Horse Inn (“fondly known locally as Ma Brow’s” [sic], the paper explained). Some locals had feared that the building – dating back to 1848 – wouldn’t reopen “and regulars including the Folk Club, CAMRA, rugby supporters and the Dart and Domino teams would be left with only fond memories”—and nowhere to drink, presumably. New licensees Bobby and Mary Lewis, however, had given the building “an impressive revamp” (according to the anonymous reporter) with the promise of a family room and restaurant “serving traditional fare and ‘A la carte’ at weekends” coming soon.

Elsewhere, the 1st Currie Brownies celebrated their 70th birthday with a bumper weekend of outings to the Camera Obscura and Royal Observatory. The Juniper Green Village Association was organising a “Question Time” event featuring candidates for the Baberton Ward in the forthcoming City of Edinburgh Council election. And Dean Park pupil Kirsten Pringle (now part of the *C&B* team!) was announced as the Queen for the 2003 Balerno Children’s Gala Court, with champion Tom Brenner Hasset, herald Charles Hill, page Scott Livingston, ladies-in-waiting Gemma Tonkin and Amy Bean, and flower girls Kim Gourlay, Gillian Miller and Annabel Bruce. (Do get in touch if you’re reading this!)

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Floral Displays at Malleny Garden

JAMES BELL
HEAD GARDENER, MALLENY GARDEN

Our snowdrops and winter aconites may have completed their flowering display for this year, but they are replaced with an array of new flowers. Our daffodils are beginning to flower, many with a subtle fragrance that fills the air on a still day. Hellebore flowers ranging from white, pink, purple to almost black, a deep blue of a Pluemonaria (Lungwort) and the ever-popular cheerful tiny blue flowers of Chionodoxa are spread across the garden. The standout flower though, has been a large and very early flowering Rhododendron (possibly R calophyllum). Its pink flowers, with speckled red spots usually appear in March only to be lost by spring frosts. This year it has avoided frost and we have enjoyed many weeks of bright flowers.

More flowers will make a welcome appearance over the coming months, as will an additional gardener to Malleny. Eoghann will join us part time and, along with our volunteers, we hope to continue improving the garden. With nine acres to look after, we certainly have enough to keep us busy!

Work in the garden has progressed over early

spring. The lawns have been scarified and look quite terrible, but raking out the moss and thatch will improve them for summer. Always amazed by just how much rubbish is removed! Our shrub roses are summer pruned, but our climbing roses get attention now and are tied into the walls and pruned where needed.

The biggest bit of work to the garden has been the yew hedge next to the greenhouses. Having outgrown its space and shading the greenhouses, our volunteers carefully reduced its height by almost half from 8 feet (2.4 metres) to 5 feet (1.5 metres)! It'll take a couple of years to green up fully at its new size.

This is a precursor to pruning the main yew hedge in the middle of the garden, separating the top and bottom halves, which needs similar treatment—and will look quite drastic. However... that's for another day!

• *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, would like to volunteer with us, please do get in touch at mallenygarden@nts.org.uk or visit <https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/malleny-garden>*



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CATHERINE WINTON
COMMUNITY ONE STOP SHOP

Community One Stop Shop has been supporting people in the Broomhouse area for over 20 years. With the aim of alleviating the effects of poverty, it has adapted in response to the needs of its clients, developing new services as the demand arises.

Originally operating as an advice shop, it now runs an additional 12 services including a food bank, pantry, employability service and a baby bank—as well as acting as a distributor for vouchers issued by the Fuel Bank Foundation.

The newest service, the Calders Soup Kitchen, was launched in October last year in response to the desperate poverty experienced by people living in this area of west Edinburgh. It quickly grew in popularity, and now serves more than 50 people each week at the Community Flat in the Calders on Sunday evenings.

Each client is offered a hot meal and can select some surplus grocery items from the project's food bank. They are also invited to access all the project's other services and can apply to receive household items and clothing from the donations which we receive from our very generous donors.

The team saw just how vital the service has become before Christmas when a young child visited the soup kitchen by themselves. The volunteers sensitively gathered information about their living situation and provided some practical items to help the household, and make sure they had some treats and gifts to share on Christmas day.

With a small core staff team, Community One Stop Shop relies on the support of volunteers to operate many of these services. Around 30 people, from university students to retired professionals regularly give up their time to support clients face to face, behind the scenes, driving vans and stocking shelves, or using their professional experience to serve on the charity's board.

• *You can find out more about the work the project does at www.coss-broomhouse.org.uk*

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Cooking the Books

One day I'd like to pay for my shopping in beans. Cacao beans. It was fine for Mesoamericans, why can't I? Nowadays "cacao" seems to be the middle class way of pronouncing cocoa but it still hasn't lost the magic and importance it had even 5,000 years ago when it was first consumed. And lo! At time of writing, it's nearly the time of Easter, where we celebrate the resurrection of Christ by eating mini eggs and other chocolate delights.

I've been a bit silly in my introduction but chocolate genuinely has the most interesting history. As I mentioned, so important was it to ancient Aztec culture that the beans were used as currency. Jack selling his cow for some beans doesn't sound so bizarre now does it? I reckon I'd sell an old cow if it meant I could have a lovely hot chocolate instead. Actually, chocolate only came in its liquid, drinking form relatively recently. Once it made its way to Europe it was all the rage. William III of England (II of Scotland) even had Christopher Wren build him a kitchen in Hampton Court Palace for making the elixir. Just think: a whole kitchen, just for your hot chocolate.

Chocolate is amazing because its properties are fascinating too. It melts at body temperature. Does that make it the sexiest food stuff in the world? Some people might think so. Dark chocolate contains many nutrients that are good for your physical and mental health. So if and when I want my fix, to whom do I turn?

Weirdly, one of my best books on chocolate is named *Chocolat* (that's French by the way, not bad spelling) by Eric Lanlard. He is a chef with a passion for all things chocolate. *Chocolat* will teach you all about chocolate and its many forms: and how to temper it, if you wish to do so. (Tempering it isn't about improving its mood, but playing with temperature to make the chocolate shiny and better for dipping, moulding and eating in general.)

I have made millions of things with this book. The dark chocolate moelleux (French for a kind



of cake) is delectable and perfect for a simple but impressive birthday cake. I also attempted my first soufflé from this book. I can confirm they are delicious and not at all scary. An absolute banger and a favourite of the Lyons house is the double-baked chocolate meringue brownie (pictured with some berries and ice cream which pair perfectly). That is a cake that will stop your heart but every mouthful is worth it. If your taste runs to it there is also a white chocolate and passion fruit cheesecake that I haven't made or eaten enough of in my life.

Importantly for me, there is a chocolate mousse recipe too. A decade ago in Lyon, I had a dinner that was so filling that I couldn't finish the chocolate mousse dessert. It was so indescribably fabulous that I still feel sadness today that I didn't force myself to eat it all. Lanlard's book has a recipe for real french bistro chocolate mousse and it's almost as good. You serve it in a big bowl with a ladle. That's my type of pudding.

Some people don't like chocolate. That's not a stance I will ever understand. I don't always want it, but when I do, a square of something dark and divine is unbeatable. I might wish for it, but I can't grow a huge beanstalk from cacao in my back garden. In spite of that, I must admit, they really are some very magic beans.



with Balerno Resident STEF LYONS



When 'Hollywood' Came to Balerno...

VAL REID
BALERNO VILLAGE TRUST

One of the reasons that I enjoy my job with Balerno Village Trust so much is the variety: no two weeks are the same. In September last year I got a phone call that I've truly not had before, from a film production company wanting to come out and have a look at Balerno Community Centre with a view to it being used as a possible film location! I came off that call thinking: "Is someone pulling my leg here?"

But no: a couple of months later, in November, and – after several meetings, more visits and a lot of phone calls with Richard the locations manager, set/film crews, producers and directors – filming began. The Centre and Main Street were used for three weeks. I found it all fascinating, as did most of the folk in the village—I've never seen the pupils of Balerno High walk as slowly up Main Street at lunchtimes as they did when the filming was going on! The rumours as to what was being filmed were also many and varied, particularly when the actor Peter Mullen was spotted being filmed walking down the Main Street!

It was really incredible how quickly a locations and set team can transform buildings and the amount of attention to detail: Bill's Hardware Store became a camera shop (I believe he had a few "customers" who actually came in wanting to buy the prop cameras!), while the Pharmacy, Community Centre and Balerno Inn were re-signed to belong to the village of Arberloch. We even had fake posters and adverts put into the display board outside the Community Centre!

The transformation inside was just as dramatic. The Main Hall at the front was turned into a Tourist Information Centre/museum, and the back hall was split in two, with one half having a small office actually built within – a room

within a room – and the other half turned into first an Optician's and then a "messy office". Props were brought in from all over – filing cabinets for the office with "BBC – Shetland" labels on them, and it proved great "fun" getting a very heavy Opticians

Chair up the stairs! – and the Centre was completely transformed. It seemed very empty when everything and everyone left—although we were left some very nice bespoke-made window blinds for the Centre as a "thank you"!

I'd like to thank everyone in the village for their patience and good humour while the filming was going on: the crew all commented to me on how accommodating everyone was to them. They really enjoyed their time in Balerno, apart from the weather which chose to be a bit of a challenge!

I'd like to thank the following for helping me, as well as the Film Crew, out: Pam at Balerno Parish Church for "rehoming"

most of the Centre's lets; Linsey and the volunteers at The Mill Cafe for sustaining a constantly hungry/thirsty Crew; Balerno Bowling Club for also helping with our lets (and being used as a dining hall for the Mobile Catering Unit); the Balerno Inn for hosting various lunches and drinks meetings, as well as putting up members of the crew; the Grey Horse Inn for hosting the "extras"; Balerno Pharmacy for putting up with daily upheaval; and, last but not at all least, Bill at Balerno Hardware for being a "star"!

Editing is taking place at the moment and can take anything up to a year from when filming finishes, then the film will be put out for sale to distributors. Its fate will be determined by whoever buys it: it could be Netflix, BBC Scotland, Channel 4 Films or one of the streaming platforms.

In any case, I live in hope of maybe seeing *The Fall of Sir Douglas Weatherford* (if that title's retained) at a Balerno Village Screen showing in the future!



Above: The winning team from Ratho Primary School – Sam, Caleb, Cooper and Harry – receive their awards from Rotary President John Wilson.

Rotary Primary Schools Quiz Returns

MIKE ROWE
CURRIE BALERNO ROTARY

Currie Balerno Rotary were delighted to get our Primary Schools Quiz up and running again after a Covid-19-inspired break of four years.

This year's competition brought together teams from hosts Clovenstone Primary School and from Nether Currie, Balerno's Dean Park and Ratho Primary Schools. Together they fielded eight teams with a total of 31 determined young competitors, with each team supervised by a Rotary member.

There were eight rounds, each of six questions—and it was not easy! Fortunately, the Rotary members were not required to provide the answers themselves, only to mark the team papers when the answers were displayed on the screen.

The results were all impressive and it was a close-run thing but there had to be a winner and that winner was the Ratho Blue team, with the other Ratho team coming a close second—just one point behind.

The winning team now go on to the next round, the Area competition, with the winners there going on to the District Final. We hope to see Ratho progress to that Final.

This was a wonderful occasion. Clovenstone Primary School and Head Teacher Steven Jamieson provided an excellent venue and were most welcoming.

The children all enjoyed the competition, as did their teachers; and for our part we were delighted to see the return of the Primary Schools Quiz after that break of four years.

Balerno Ramblers Spring Forward



GAIL COUSINS
BALERNO RAMBLERS

Following the Spring Equinox on Wednesday 20 March, and our clocks turned forward to British Summer Time on Sunday 31 March, we can look forward to hopefully longer and warmer days, and lighter nights. Signs of hope to come and relief that we have hopefully escaped icy, snowy winter weather with the related travel chaos.

Since February Balerno Ramblers have offered two walking opportunities a week—altogether eight walks, involving 106 ramblers.

With thoughts of spring and lighter evenings the walk leaders are planning to walk further afield in Fife, East Lothian, and the Borders. Coastal walks are always popular and well attended.

Our weekend and midweek walking groups are still finalising their programmes and encouraging walk leaders to commit to leading a walk. More walk leaders are required. We need new ramblers to be mentored by experienced walk leaders to gain confidence so they will lead in the future.



Main: Climbing up Traprain Law. Photo: Roger Jonathan. Above right: Local introductory walk, Colinton. Middle left: Lin's Mill, Almondell circular. Photos: Liz Robertson. Left: Midweek group in Bakehouse Close. Photo: Gavin Johnston.

FUTURE WALKS

Our midweek group recently enjoyed a very informative historical walk along the Royal Mile from the Palace of Holyroodhouse to St Giles' Cathedral. This 4 mile (6.4 km) walk, led by Malcom Milne, will be repeated on Saturday 6 April: learn about hidden things in and around the Royal Mile, including Canongate Kirk, Chessel's Court, Tweeddale Court and Paisley Close.

At the end of the month, 10 Balerno Ramblers will travel to Rothesay, Isle of Bute, for the Scottish Gathering—joining 90 other ramblers from all over Scotland for three days of organised walks, a couple of talks, a ceilidh and plenty of good company. They're looking forward to coastal walks, fresh air, sunshine, and hopefully no rain.

Our weekend walks tend to be longer and more challenging than the midweek group's. Advance notice for "Munro Baggers": a date for your diary is the first weekend of June, with a Munro challenge of either Ben Chonzie or Ben-y-Hone—3,054 feet (931 metres) from Loch Turret Dam. Although this walk is described as "strenuous", it is only 8 miles (12.9 km); however, there is an

ascent of 2,362 feet (720 metres). Note: the weather forecast will determine the day. Hopefully, participants will have a clear day at the summit shelter and be rewarded with good views over Ben Lawers and the ridge. Transport will be by car sharing from Pentland View car park.

More details to follow and can be found on Balerno Ramblers' Facebook page, which has a link to Rambler's website.

To join any walk, use the link to Balerno Ramblers website www.balerno.org.uk/Ramblers or follow us on Facebook. Please register with walk leader to attend and advise if you have a medical condition relevant to your walking. We regret dogs are not permitted on our walks.

All our walks are open to all members and non-members. New members are always welcome.

For more details and contact numbers please email enquiries@balenorramblers.org.uk or visit www.ramblers.org.uk/balerno or www.facebook.com/Balerno-Ramblers

To sign up for our mailing list email: balerno-ramblers@googlegroups.com

Craft Corner:

Tips for upcycling, art and craft projects by Balerno's Lucie Novoveska

Ribbon Roses

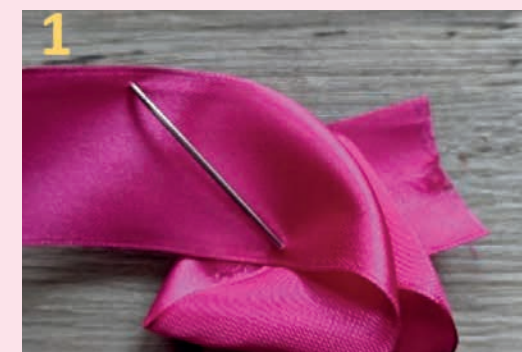
There is no substitute for real flowers. I enjoy both giving and receiving flowers but, when you cannot get them or grow them, you can make roses out of ribbon instead. These ribbon roses can serve as a quick, cheap decoration that will last forever. I will show you two methods: one using a needle, the other using glue.

For the method using a needle, all you need is a ribbon and a large needle (4 inches/10 cm). Make sure that the needle can actually go through your ribbon easily: some ribbons are very dense and difficult to penetrate with a large eye needle and you don't want to find out at the end of the process that you are (literally) stuck. Start by cutting a 20 inch (50 cm) long piece of ribbon. Pierce the needle through the edge of the ribbon, then again diagonally on the opposite edge (picture 1). Keep repeating until you collect all the ribbon on the needle. This is where the fun starts! Thread the ribbon through the eye of a needle (a wee piece will do) and push the needle through the collected ribbon (picture 2). If you rotate the needle while going through, it will create a swirl inside the rose. I had to get

pliers for the needle and a cup of tea for myself to get the needle through!

The second method uses glue – lots of it – and a cocktail stick. Cut at least 12 pieces of ribbon (each piece about 3 inches/8 cm long) and fold the edge inward and glue together. There will be a small gap in the middle (picture A). Then take these glued edges, fold them for a second time and glue them to the centre (picture A, second column). At the end of this stage, you will have 12 pieces of ribbon double folded and glued. Line up all 12 pieces (folded side down) and glue them together in a line (overlap on the side edge 0.2 inch/0.5 cm). Glue a cocktail stick to the beginning of the line and start rolling and glueing across the line of 12 pieces to build the rose (picture B).

I will let you judge which rose looks more realistic. In the end, I prefer the needle method, which is faster and more environmentally friendly but I would recommend trying both methods and – more importantly – buying yourself some real roses, so you can make a fair comparison!



**FRONT
COVER
STORY**

Currie P7 Camp at Benmore

**AISLING AND MILLIE
P7 CURRIE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The P7 Camp at Benmore Outdoor Centre was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. It was full of fun activities, learning about ourselves and others—as well as trying new things and making memories.

We were ecstatic when we saw the building. “It looks like a castle!” Abi from P7c remarked. We were sorted into our groups and set off on the first activity of P7 camp!

On the second day the excitement levels were just as high as the first. With the activities being great and

the food being even greater.

The third day was the day of our first inspection and it was also the middle of the week! It felt like the time had gone as fast as lightning.

Day four came around and we made the most of it because it was our last day! It was full of joy because there was a special dinner and we could go and watch a film or have a disco!

Then, sadly, it was Day 5. We finished with pancakes and soon we had to leave—but it was safe to say everyone had an unforgettable experience, learning about themselves and having fun!

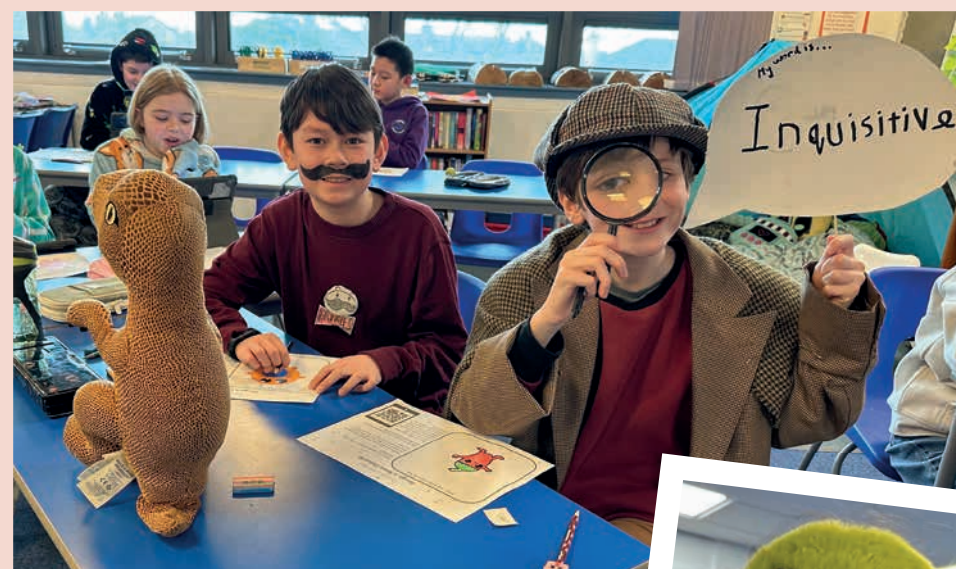
Main Photo:
Explorers cross
a burn in the
woods. Below
(left to right):
Happy cyclist;
four
drenched explorers;
home in the woods;
cyclists in line;
taking to the water
on canoes.



CURRIE PRIMARY SCHOOL**CURRIE PRIMARY SCHOOL****A Visit to Dynamic Earth**

EMILY
P4, CURRIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

One day we went on a class trip to Dynamic Earth. We went to learn about climates and weather. We went in lots of different rooms and enjoyed them all. A really good one was the 4D flight. We all really liked it. We also liked the rainforest because we found the animals fascinating to look at. At the end of the trip we went to the workshop to learn about weather and the water cycle and did some experiments on air. Then we packed our bags and went back to school.

**'March Madness' at Currie Primary**

SALLY HOURSTON
HEAD TEACHER, CURRIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

March is always a busy month in school! This year we have supported and celebrated three national events – Rare Disease Day, World Book Day and Comic Relief – with a variety of fun and educational activities. For Rare Diseases Day everyone was invited to 'Show their Colours' by wearing brightly coloured clothes to school and raising awareness of the 300 million people worldwide living with a rare disease, as well as their families and carers.

World Book Day is always fun: this year everyone was invited to dress as a word or punctuation mark! Classes listed the words and punctuation marks everyone came as, then wrote imaginative story with them. Books were celebrated with mystery readers in classes, the making of book marks and emoji symbols, as well as designing characters and animating them using our iPads.

Comic Relief is always a firm favourite in our school calendar where P7 organise a variety of events for everyone to take part, including wearing red and "Spalt the P7" – we all love throwing wet sponges at our P7s! The rainy weather this year curtailed some of the activities P7 had planned, but the wet sponges were thrown in the rain before we dried off dancing at a disco!

Top left: Playground sponge-throwing in the rain. Top right: Some "elementary" deductions in class. Far left: Fashionable head-gear. Middle: Colourful class-mates. Left: Grinch meets Panda with a smile. Photos: Currie Primary School.

Sports Hall Athletics Competition

MARLA AND ISLA
P7B, CURRIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Currie primary pupils from P6 and P7 had the opportunity to take part in the Sports Hall Athletics Competition on 27 November 2023.

We all made our way to Meadowbank Sports Centre. There were many different events, such as four-by-one relay, one-plus-one relay, an obstacle course, and an "under and over".

In most of our races we came in first place! We also did really well in our field events which were long jump, triple jump, javelin, chest push and speed bounce.

At the end the organisers

revealed our scores and we had won first place! We were excited and proud of our achievements. This meant that we had made it into the second round which was held in February. We competed in all the same events and, although we didn't win, we had a really good time.

**'Suntrap' Art Project**

CLAIRE POPE
NURTURE TEACHER, CURRIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

As part of our ongoing commitment to support our care experienced and social work-supported pupils at Currie Primary School, a group of pupils have recently been getting arty!

Pupils worked with local artist Robert Gillan to create portraits and self portraits using different mediums. They drew, printed and painted pictures of themselves, each other and their pets and favourite animals.

We are hoping to share the work in a gallery at school and showcase the artwork to parents, carers and our community.

Robert was kind enough to invite us into his studio in the grounds of his wonderful home in Suntrap Garden, near Gogarburn.

The pupils loved meeting his animals and exploring the garden. We are very lucky to have made these local connections, which allow our pupils to have some wonderful experiences.



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LETTERS etc!



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We reserve the right to edit or reject submissions.

Illustration: Marjorie Beaumont



There was a certain symbolism in one of 2024's early storms blowing down the sign outside the long-publicly-closed Balerno Police Station, but the more recent (and rapidly filled) skip is an even clearer indicator that Police Scotland don't intend to hold onto the building. Let's just hope those filing cabinets were empty!

Safety Measures

The killing of an 11 year old on their way to Cramond primary became even more appalling when, days later, transport convener Cllr Scott Arthur voted to rip out road safety measures in a quiet south Edinburgh neighbourhood. Fewer than 6% of local ward residents even responded to the consultation that councillors hid behind to make the decision, which their own officers said posed "risk to pedestrians [...] and additional pollution [for] everyone who uses affected streets, but disproportionately [...] young people and lower income households".

Lurching from an Edinburgh Leisure budget crisis, a school budget crisis and now a care home budget crisis, then voting to spend nearly half a million pounds to reopen a rat run to speeding drivers? That money could have brought safety measures to our schools instead.

Scott Arthur will stand against Joanna Cherry at the next election. Choose wisely!

Dave McCraw
Currie

INVISIBLE DISABILITIES

consultation noun the formal system for ignoring public views while patronising them at the same time

The consultation process is just a tick-box exercise - we don't actually have to change any of the plans

We heard their views but decided they were irrelevant

We know what is best for everyone

Disabled people shouldn't expect special treatment

So what does it matter that the plans disregard local people or those who are disabled?

7: CONSULTATION

WORDS BY M
ILLUSTRATION BY KMCL

I've been trying to understand what proposed street closures in Edinburgh will mean for those in wheelchairs or with limited mobility.

How will we get to places we want to visit when this happens?

The reams of reports are vague, and often impenetrable, but "Our Future Streets (Circulation Plan) - Technical Summary Report" clearly states: "The appointment of an Edinburgh Accessibility Commission in 2024 is to make sure Edinburgh's public spaces are as inclusive as possible for disabled people."

Established in January, the Commission collects the "usual suspects" - bus, tram and officialdom, who liaise already - plus some disabled charities to represent us. Cllr. Scott Arthur, who champions street closure plans, is vice chair.

Try to discover more and you hit a brick wall. All meetings will be in private with minutes passed to committees.

The Commission is chaired by Xara Todd, who had a similar role in London. It was launched with all the fanfare the City PR Dept could muster.

Sounds good?

But look at the London experience: their "Equal Pavements Pledge" says: we must "Engage with and listen to the perspectives of disabled people, across the impairment groups, who have been significantly erased from the conversation."

The next bit negates all the good intentions: "Do not remove parking spaces for Blue Badge holders except where supported by robust data and in consultation with disabled residents."

I hope Edinburgh's Commission will be more positive and open.

We must be allowed to make representation and contribute, but there lingers the feeling it will be sold as a valid "consultation" supporting the City's Future Street plans. Time will tell.

For more information, visit CEC's website: https://tinyurl.com/synhzveadisabilities



PLANNING BY ARCHIE CLARK

Local Council Houses?

Last December, Cllr Stephen Jenkinson wrote that he was encouraging CEC to buy homes from the open market. That makes much sense as it would allow affordable homes to be provided where there is a deficiency. Last month, Sue Webber's column reinforced the need for such accommodation within our communities. They recently produced "Plandemonium"—an analysis of the planning system, partly described below.

The shortfall has been evident for years.

In 2016, in response to a South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan (SESplan) consultation, the South West Community Forum noted that in 2011, the identified affordable/market housing need for Edinburgh was 26/74%. There followed several confusing

recalculations culminating in the Edinburgh need being pitched at 50/50%. Three years later following a public inquiry, the Scottish Government decided not to proceed with the revised Plan, which inevitably impacted on Local Development Plans respecting the percentage of affordable housing in new developments. So the "affordable" provision in the current 2016 Local Plan was set at 25% (for developments over 12 units).

The yet-to-be-confirmed 2030 Plan would raise the level of affordable housing in new developments to 35%. But what about existing housing stock? As Stephen mentioned, it is often cheaper to buy a home than to build one. There are an awful lot of homes that need insulating, general repairs and better heating and with one in eight homeowners unable to properly heat and maintain their properties [see *C&B News*, February 2020]. Bringing them into public ownership might solve problems for homeowners, local authorities and the improvement of stock.

In 1980, the Lothian Region

Structure Plan estimated that the "vacancy rate" for housing stock had risen to 7%. I wonder what that figure, including Short Term Lets (STLs) now is. The selling of Council and SSHA stock was not accompanied, as I recall, by monies for replacement housing. But the simultaneous addition of low-density developer-funded housing resulted in large edge-of-town estates with a much expanded infrastructure, heavily dependent on private transport. The resulting traffic and seemingly endless road works is part of the consequence.

However "brownfield first" policies accompanied by 20-minute neighbourhoods and a diminishing workforce may help reshape our towns so that buying a lightbulb or a waterproof doesn't require a time-wasting trip into town, but a walk to a local shop. And refurbished houses and shops, using developers' "commuted sums" for affordable houses, run from local Council offices, might also help climate change objectives.

More Parking Restrictions?

A couple of months ago I read that parking restrictions in the city centre and surrounding areas are to be extended into the evenings and weekends. Apparently, motorists might have to pay for parking up till 10pm and face an overnight parking charge in eight central and peripheral parking zones, covering a large area of Edinburgh.

Whatever the reasons given for "encouraging" people to use public transport, has anyone in their ivory tower worked out the consequences for businesses that rely on night-time customers—restaurants, theatres, places of entertainment... and churches? If there are parking problems for people living in the centre of town, will this resolve it or just force people to decant from the centre along with the businesses that trade in these zones?

With CEC's LEZ restrictions due to kick in shortly (and note, the Castle Terrace car park is inside an LEZ) these proposals seem to put council income ahead of service to the community.

Time CEC provided parking places where they are needed—for all vehicles.

10 Currivale Park

In February last year I commented on application 22/06111/FUL for six dwellings on marshy land east of 10 Currivale Park. The houses proposed were small with no garages but with driveway space for cars. On 7 March 2024, the application was approved with a Section 75 agreement that appears to require the developer to pay nearly £300,000 (indexed) towards education and healthcare infrastructure—ie, £50,000 per house. If these figures apply to other housing developments, it is hardly surprising there are so few "affordable" houses being built.

Social Housing Need

I recently received this note from Shelter: "Social housing ends homelessness. It's a simple truth that cannot be ignored. Yet, the Scottish Government has taken a step backwards by cutting the housing budget by a staggering 26%, putting the dream of a safe home further out of reach for many."

What does government expect us to do? Should Churches use their vacant manses to provide some accommodation?

Clovenstone Housing Application

In May 2023 I reported a proposal by Prospect Community Housing for a three-storey block of eight flats on a car park in Clovenstone that would be reduced from 95 to 80 vehicles. There would be 20 bike spaces in shelters against one of the other three blocks around the central landscaped space. This was withdrawn.

A new application (24/00994/FUL) has been submitted for a similar scheme. Three objections appeared almost immediately, which is unusual given the item had just been advertised!

Lanark Road Nursery

Back in April 2022, I recorded that planning permission had been granted, unusually quickly, to reinstate the burnt out nursery at 305 Lanark Road.

Things have moved on. Application 24/00663/FUL has been lodged to demolish the former dwelling house and erect 14 flatted dwellings in its place.

The Supporting Statement on the Planning portal

describes how the nursery and almost all of its contents were destroyed. During the following month, a design team explored options to reinstate the nursery. The conclusion was that the building could not be reconstructed so a replacement nursery would have to be created.

At the time, building costs were rising rapidly and, on top of a limited budget, allowance had to be made to comply with building regulations and care inspectorate standards.

Constructing a new nursery proved unviable and, after two difficult years in temporary accommodation and after twenty-eight years, the owners reluctantly decided to close the nursery.

Given that the nursery had inhabited a former residence, it was concluded that the site should revert to housing. This application proposes to build a block of high-quality homes with a "commuted sum" being paid to the Council for affordable houses elsewhere.

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ROBOTS & RWANDA

Recently I sponsored an event at Westminster with the National Robotarium at Heriot-Watt. The Robotarium launched its “future of UK robotics” manifesto which sets out a five-point plan for establishing the UK as a world-leader in robotics, including creating a Robotics UK agency to develop a national strategy, and investing in a UK-wide network of robotics centres like our National Robotarium.

The event brought together people from science, industry and policy and an impressive roster of robotics start-ups based at the Robotarium. The centre was created through funding by the UK and Scottish Governments and plays an important role in providing a place where academic research meets industry to find practical robotic applications to the world's biggest challenges.

Last month I led a delegation of the Joint Committee on Human Rights to Rwanda. The committee will report on our visit in due course but in my personal opinion the UK government's insistence that Rwanda is now a safe country for asylum seekers is a legal fiction.

My perspective chimes with the Supreme Court ruling, which judged the original agreement unlawful. One area of particular concern for asylum seekers sent from the UK is the protection of the rights of same-sex attracted and transgender people; indeed Foreign Office travel advice warns about this. On LGBT+ rights I think Rwanda is where Britain was 50 years ago. Unlike many other African countries, homosexuality is not criminalised, but there are no statutory rights for same-sex attracted people or trans people and no specific anti-discrimination laws. According to NGOs we met, LGBT+ people face stigmatisation and discrimination in what is quite a conservative society.

Based on the evidence and information I gathered on my trip to Rwanda I remain of the view that it is still not a safe country for asylum seekers.



NEW PATHWAYS

Many readers will be familiar with – and I'm sure have accessed – the unofficial path that cuts through the Muir Wood Field linking Currie, Juniper Green and Baberton Mains. I know that the local Community Councils have been working hard over the years to ensure this stretch is kept as a natural corridor for wildlife. I was more than happy to provide a letter of support endorsing their funding application following the generous offer from Taylor Wimpey to gift the strip of land which would allow a fit for purpose path to be built. I know discussions with the council, councillors, Heriot Watt University, and representatives from the community councils working group have been positive and hope that the funding will be granted, and the council adopt this stretch which will be of enormous benefit to residents across the local area.

We have all been anticipating the outcome of the consultation on the future of Balerno Police Station and I know many local people will be disappointed that Police Scotland have announced they will indeed dispose of the local station. I had made enquiries after representations from members of the local community to NHS Lothian and the Pentland Medical Centre to ascertain whether the station could be utilised as an additional medical centre for the area; sadly, this was deemed not viable.

It is clear there is support for the building to be retained by the local community and I have no doubt that this option will be thoroughly explored, particularly by those on the Community Council and members of the Balerno Village Trust.

As for policing the local area, Balerno and the locality will remain to be served by officers deployed from Wester Hailes Police Station as has been the case for several years.



POTHOLES!

A recent study found that Edinburgh is second only to Glasgow among UK cities for the most potholes per head of population, and bottom of the league when it comes to fixing them. The survey found that of the 5,538 potholes reported in Edinburgh since 2007, only 22.25% had been marked as fixed.

This will not come as a surprise to anyone living in our part of the city. Our winter may not have been as brutal as previous years but the impact the weather has had on our roads and pavements has been significant and they are in a sorry state of repair with crumbling surfaces and deepened potholes.

Damage to cars, bikes and cyclists themselves continue to be reported widely across our various social media groups, with specific hotspots or areas to watch out for being highlighted. Colinton Community Council had a monthly meeting dedicated to the issue of “Potholes and Road Maintenance” which was very well attended—this is clearly an issue we all care about.

When I visited a local primary school recently the P7s were asked to raise their hands if they wanted potholes fixed—every hand shot up!

Until recently I have been receiving radio silence from the council when I raised specific issues including Dalmahoy Road to Riccarton Mains Road, the A71, and Gillespie Road. We have seen a patchwork repair to the roads along Blinkbonny and, while this is welcome, these temporary repairs will not fix the decline in our roads and pavements.

It seems relentless but we must keep reporting the issues and I implore the local authority to focus its efforts on dealing with them and stop spending our money on headline grabbing projects. After months of relentless emails, a clunking drain cover on a road has finally been fixed and a plant was handed into my office as a thank you! It is the small things that matter most.



WALKING & WHEELING

Investing in walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport in Edinburgh is key to cutting congestion, accommodating growth and meeting our climate obligations. I know some people have concerns about this transition but, right now, there is no real alternative on the table.

Research published in March shows that people in Edinburgh want to see walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport improve. Walking and wheeling represents the action of moving as a pedestrian, whether or not someone is walking or wheeling unaided or using any kind of wheeled mobility aid.

The biannual Walking and Cycling Index draws on independent survey feedback from a cross-section of more than 1,200 residents interviewed in 2023.

Amongst its findings is that regular walking and wheeling remains as high as in 2021, with two-thirds of people travelling by foot or wheel five days a week. The annual number of cycling trips has increased to 30.7 million from 24.4 million in 2021.

Almost half of residents want to walk/wheel (45%) and cycle (49%) more, along with a quarter who want to use public transport more. Improved infrastructure is key to this. Half would like to see more spent on cycling, while 57% want investment in walking and wheeling and 68% support an increase in spend on public transport.

Edinburgh is a compact, walkable city, as demonstrated by the many people who already regularly walk, wheel and cycle here. However, there's still much to be done to encourage those that can shift to travel on foot, wheel, bike or public transport.

Thankfully, we're on the right track, with an ambitious programme of development underway which will transform the way people travel around the city—and the results of the Index reassure us that we have the backing of Edinburgh's residents.

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CLLR GRAEME BRUCE
PENTLAND HILLS

BUSES, ROADS, SEATS

At the most recent Transport & Environment Committee there was a business bulletin report on Supported Bus Services across the city. Tender documents are being developed and the proposed new bus service which is of interest to the Pentland Hills ward is a route that replaces “Balerno to South Queensferry” with a “Balerno to Cramond” service. This new service will still go via the Gyle—and let’s hope that bus operators put a bid in for this route when it goes out to tender because it’s important to maintain that connection to the Gyle via Hermiston Park and Ride. There are two services proposed, one a half hourly service and the other an hourly service. If you have any thoughts about this then please do get in touch with me.

Although it’s good to see LRW resurfaced from the traffic lights to the twisty bends, I noticed degradation at the entrance to Ashley Grange. I made the council aware and I’m led to believe the contractors will be back to make good this surface. On the subject of resurfacing, Long Dalmahoy Road was meant to be done in this financial year but has been pushed back due to financial constraints. There are many roads across our ward that need resurfaced and the most recent one I have been made aware of is Muir Wood Drive in Currie. I’ve asked for the roads team to inspect this road and report back to me with their findings.

There are many issues that come into my mail box but one in particular that was raised to me at the last Currie Community Council was the dilapidated benches on the other side of the railings on LRW at the junction of Riccarton Mains Road. I have asked the council to see if they can be refurbished and I await a response.



CLLR NEIL GARDINER
PENTLAND HILLS

PATHS AHEAD

Spring is definitely in the air and with that there is some good news about investment in paths.

Heriot-Watt University estates service have been in touch about their proposed active travel link between their campus and Curriehill Station. They are developing detailed drawings for a route including a wide path through the station, a controlled crossing and path along the north side of Curriehill Road, with provision for walking and cycling and a tarmac-surfaced link finishing at the main road through the campus. They are applying for planning and road consents, and aim for a start in a year’s time.

Separately, I understand that the local group leading on the path between Bloomiehall Park and Nether Currie have received a very welcome grant from “Paths for All” towards design costs. Discussions continue regarding council specified lighting requirements. High level lighting requires deeper foundations to support a maintenance vehicle, which adds cost.

A meeting is being arranged between Balerno Pathways, Council officials and Councillors to discuss the Bavelaw Green Bridge in Balerno.

Balerno Village Trust has expressed an interest in a Community Asset Transfer for the former police station, prior to the building being marketed, following Police Scotland’s decision in March. Their plans are to work with the community, Community Council and local groups to make this happen as a resource. If you have any ideas or wish to get involved here is your chance.

Get out and about and enjoy the longer days!



CLLR FIONA GLASGOW
PENTLAND HILLS

GRANTS & LIBRARIES

It’s almost Easter! Where has the time gone? I attended the Annual Balerno Fairtrade event, with Lord Provost Robert Aldridge presenting the prizes. It was a great event with lots of local people, great stalls and a wonderful atmosphere—well done to all involved!

The Pentlands Community Fund met to look at funding applications and made several awards to some great projects. The committee is made up of local community council members and elected members. Community council members are volunteers who give their time to represent their areas and discuss issues affecting their local area. Anyone interested in joining their local community council would be welcomed.

In last month’s *C&B News*, there were several mentions of Local Place Plans (LPP); these involve communities having a say in the priorities for their area, and your local community councils will work to ensure that all voices are heard but they need to hear from local residents, community groups and businesses.

Recently, a networking event took place for South West Edinburgh at Tynecastle Stadium, bringing together partners to discuss current work, opportunities for collaboration, with the hope for ongoing connections: these included services for older people, youth groups, addiction, community hubs and the police. The event was an opportunity to share and explore ideas for development and creativity.

Edinburgh Libraries are currently looking to develop their service to meet the diverse needs of local people and are seeking the views of residents to create a new Future Libraries Strategy. You can give feedback by completing an online questionnaire (www.edinburgh.gov.uk/futurelibraries) or by using printed copies in your local library. Your views are important!



RICHARD M HENDERSON
BALERNO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

QUARRYING, PLANS

Tarmac Ltd are preparing to seek permission to extend their current operations at Ravelrig Quarry, and are conducting a limited consultation through two public exhibitions—the second of which will be on Tuesday 2 April at Balerno Bowling Club.

Tarmac hope to extend the life of Ravelrig Quarry by up to 25 years. Quarrying has been a feature of Balerno for well over 150 years, with several small-scale quarries operating during the 19th and early 20th centuries at locations such as Hannahfield and even Quarryhowe, right in the village centre. Ravelrig is obviously a different kettle of fish; it is big, and, operated by Tarmac Ltd since inception in 1984, is now a major source of high quality aggregate for Central Scotland.

Ravelrig Quarry is not typical of Balerno’s economy. The village’s profile is now a predominantly residential area set in an agricultural context. The Quarry apart, major industrial activity in the village disappeared with the closure of the Balerno Mills during the early 1970s.

We don’t really know the scale of business activity within Balerno: 2017 statistics suggest possibly 230 businesses. Availability of business premises is limited but, equally, we don’t know the level of demand. We don’t know what infrastructural improvements are necessary to provide support. Possibly the 2022 census results, when they eventually emerge, will help answer those questions—and, of equal importance, suggest what level of business activity is right for the village.

Local communities are empowered to draw up their own Local Place Plan, which gives them a say in determining what goes where, and what infrastructure is needed. Part of that will involve a more holistic view of our community, including considering what is needed to stimulate and maintain our local economy.



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TOM McDONALD
COLINTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

ROADS & CCS

As part of our Community Council's efforts to increase local engagement, our latest meeting was preceded by a presentation on potholes by City of Edinburgh Council officers—available on our website. Of concern locally and across the capital, this attracted a considerably larger attendance than normal.

Officials said budgetary limitations imposed on them mean the fairest approach is to log, inspect and rate all reported potholes, which are then assessed to establish an appropriate level of treatment, with priority given to those considered the most serious risks to life or limb. Consequently, less serious potholes in an area may be ignored while others are filled.

A lively Q&A followed, with several of the public particularly concerned about the condition of Dreghorn Loan. City officials will investigate why it seems – unaccountably – to have been omitted from the priority lists.

We were also pleased to have the attendance of a community police officer for the first time since the previous arrangements were discontinued. The new system means fewer officers cover a wider area from a central position, but telephones are always manned: “999” should still be used for emergencies or crimes in progress and “101” for other contacts.

The ongoing consultation on the Scheme for Community Councils addresses procedural matters, such as restricting tenure of office bearers, encouraging new membership and inclusivity, improving communication between CEC and CCs. Scepticism was expressed on many of these, given the limited funding and manpower available.

Proposals for a boundary change transferring properties on Lanark Road from Colinton CC to Juniper Green & Baberton Mains CC were questioned. We hope to establish the views of all affected residents.



KEVIN KEALY
CURRIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

A VILLAGE TRUST?

Currie is a fantastic place to live, but there's always room for improvement. Imagine a Currie with enhanced parks, more vibrant community events, or even new benches along the walking paths. A Village Trust can help make these dreams a reality!

What is a Village Trust? It's a community-run organisation that will be a focal point for the generation and distribution of funds for local projects. Think of it as a piggy bank for Currie, filled by residents and used to support initiatives that benefit everyone.

Why do we need one? Many small projects, while impactful, struggle to secure funding. A Village Trust could help streamline this process. Local ideas wouldn't have to compete with larger initiatives, and residents would have a direct say in how funds are allocated.

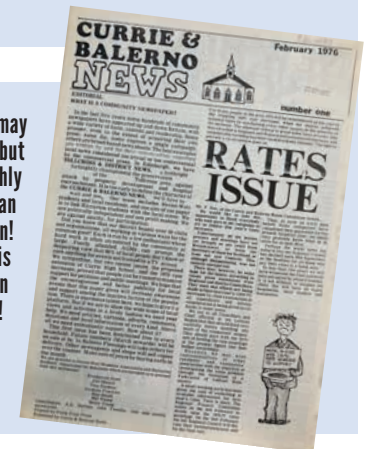
Imagine the possibilities: enhanced green spaces, community events, local improvements.

A Village Trust is ours to build; this is a chance for Currie residents to shape the future of our community. With your contributions and ideas, we can create a vibrant, connected Currie for everyone.

Join the conversation! Let's discuss how a Village Trust can benefit Currie. Share your thoughts at upcoming Currie Community Council meetings or reach out to our local representatives. Together, we can build a brighter future for our community.



Have a story – about you or someone you know – that C&B News readers might like to read? Get in touch with Paul Fisher Cockburn: editor@candbnews.com



Eagle-eyed readers of our masthead may have noticed that C&B News is slowly but surely creeping towards its 500th monthly issue this October—which is quite an achievement for a volunteer-led publication! We're definitely planning to mark this landmark issue in some way, but we're open to ideas from you, our loyal readers!

Get in touch with the 'Hired Help', Paul Fisher Cockburn: editor@candbnews.com

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Balerno Actress Performs at Glasgow Comedy Festival

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
C&B NEWS

Balerno resident Lubna Kerr is taking one of her own shows to this year's Glasgow Comedy Festival in April.

Lubna will perform an updated version of her debut show, *Tickbox 2*—a critically-acclaimed exploration of her own family's history and growing up as a person of colour in Scotland.

"I play all the characters, from Brown Owl to an acting agent," says Lubna, about the show which highlights her talents as a writer, actor and comedian. "The project also allowed me to explore my own identity as a Scottish, Pakistani woman as an actor and within the white, male-dominated comedy circuit."

The actress and writer played Mina in the Hydro production of *Still Game* in 2014 and has appeared in episodes of television sitcoms *Two Doors Down* and *Scot Squad*, as well as in recent Amazon Prime series *Wheel of Time*. She also recently co-hosted a stand-up



show in Glasgow recorded for the BBC Radio Asian Network.

• *Lubna Kerr: Tickbox 2: Eastwood Park Theatre, Rouken Glen Road, Giffnock, G46 6UG; 7pm. Tickets (£8.80 - £13.20): <https://tinyurl.com/mpa3km58>*

• *More information: <https://www.lubnakerr.co.uk>*

• *Lubna will perform a new show on this year's Edinburgh Festival Fringe. More details soon!*



Paper-making Returns to Juniper Green

PROF CLIFF BEAVERS
PENTLAND COMMUNITY SPACE

For many years the Water of Leith was famous for its mills making paper and board. Sadly, these are all long gone so, it was a great thrill to bring paper-making back to Juniper Green, even if it was only for one day.

On Sunday 18 February 11 attendees joined tutor Lucy Baxandall at the Hub@531 for a three-hour workshop. Lucy operates from a paper-making shop and gallery in Berwick-upon-Tweed, and had brought all the equipment needed and introduced the participants to the vocabulary of "deckle", "mould", "make" and "stack".

She gave each attendee some pulp and showed them how to mix, pull and drain, then couch their stacks and put them through the press. She explained the chemistry while one of the participants shared their knowledge of the history of Balerno Bank Mill.

The afternoon was a very sociable and enjoyable event—and a productive one too. Each attendee went home with sheets of home-made paper: white, green, blue, pink, some sparkly and some with pressed flowers incorporated.

Some will be later painted on, others written on. And the sparkly ones? The place-markers at a wedding!



"During March, learners at Dean Park Primary School took part in a week-long celebration of books and stories in honour of World Book Day, 7 March," writes Matt Grieve, Acting Principal Teacher at Dean Park Primary School. "Pupils took part in a wide range of activities in class to promote the joy of reading. These included older pupils reading to younger year groups, creating dioramas of scenes from favourite stories, and taking part in a book-themed quiz. We also held an exciting 'Extreme Reading Competition' for homework in which pupils shared photos of themselves reading in unusual places—even (see above) on a building site!"

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MARGARET KIERAN
COLINTON & MERCHISTON COMMUNITY CHOIR

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This is a new venture for our choir and all are welcome to join us, whether or not you can read music. We will learn to sing two pieces of music each week with our inspiring conductor Tim Coleman and our Accompanist, the well known Morley Whitehead. There will be a concert on 10 June for family and friends but the concert won't be the focus of our sessions.

• *The sessions are on Mondays from 22 April to 10 June, between 7.20pm and 9pm, at St Cuthbert's Episcopal Church, Westgarth Avenue, Colinton—and include a break for tea and coffee.*

• *Cost for the eight sessions: £47.00, including all music hire. To book, please contact: secretary@colintonchoir.org*

• *Further information: www.colintonchoir.org or our Facebook page.*



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To enter, please scan or photograph the completed puzzle and email it to: editor@candbnews.com before noon, Friday 19 April 2024.

The winner is picked at random from all correct entries received.

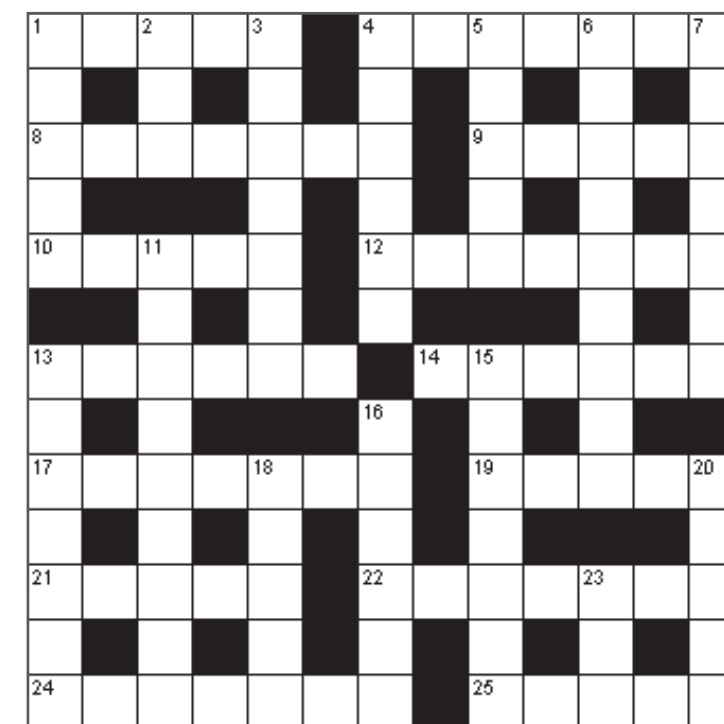
Good luck everyone!

ACROSS

1. Prank. (5)
4. Small community. (7)
8. Everlasting. (7)
9. Accolade. (5)
10. Wear away. (5)
12. Voter. (7)
13. Alter or regulate. (6)
14. Refuge. (6)
17. Repossess. (7)
19. Travel Lodge. (5)
21. Mound of stones used as a marker. (5)
22. Sincere. (7)
24. Latticework. (7)
25. Herd or flock of animals. (5)

DOWN

1. Subject. (5)
2. Frozen water. (3)
3. Dog houses. (7)
4. Smooth fabric. (6)
5. Letting contract. (5)
6. Flat. (9)
7. Senior. (7)
11. Target. (9)
13. Fruit. (7)
15. Stuck. (7)
16. Hot fragments from a fire. (6)
18. Declare invalid. (5)
20. Supple. (5)
23. Self. (3)
21. Circumvent. (5)



NAME

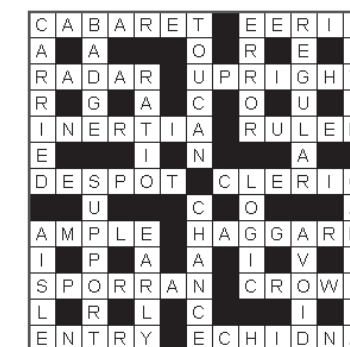
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☐ Please tick here if - on being selected as the winner - you would be happy to be contacted to arrange a bank transfer instead of receiving a cheque.

**MARCH 2024
WINNER!**

Our congratulations go to
F Pigott from Currie,
randomly selected from all
correct entries to receive last
issue's "roll-over" £50 prize.



EASY

	6	8	1			2	
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9			2			1	
7						9	
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MEDIUM

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3		8		6		7	

HARD

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	7				1		6
		2		4	5		
3			6				
			8				1
1	2			3			
		6			7	8	
						3	2

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Community and not-for-profit listings are free of charge. Email whatson@candbnews.com, including: Day/Date, Event Title, Venue, Time, brief details, and contact phone/email details as appropriate.

WEEKLY APRIL

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

COME FOR A CUPPA, the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 10.30am - noon. Come for a Cuppa- 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. We usually have an optional activity going on that you are very welcome to join. No booking needed. **CLOSED OVER EASTER HOLIDAYS ON MONDAYS 1 AND 8 APRIL.**

MINDFULNESS SESSION: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; noon - 1pm. Mindfulness A chance to join us for a guided mindfulness session with Raymond, no experience necessary, just an open curiosity about what happens when we pay

attention to the inner workings of our mind. No booking needed. **CLOSED OVER EASTER HOLIDAYS ON MONDAYS 1 AND 8 APRIL.**

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

BABY GROUP: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 1.30pm - 2.45pm. Baby Group/ Bookbug—meet other parents/ carers for friendship and peer support, regular Book-bug sessions to learn and share nursery rhymes, songs and stories. **CLOSED ON MONDAY 8 APRIL.**

BABERTON SCOUTS GROUP: Juniper Green Church Hall; 7pm - 9pm. If you want some more information or would like to join, please email cubs@babertonscouts.org

MONTHLY BOOK GROUP: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 7pm - 9pm. Currently full, we'd love to start a new group, please email if you are interested!

TUESDAYS

KNITTING GROUP: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 10.30am - noon. A very popular, welcoming group for novice and experienced knitters alike.

YOGA CLASS: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 1pm - 2pm. There is space available for this popular lunchtime class with Monica.

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

uk, <https://stcuthbertscolinton.org.uk>, or contact Nicki: stcuthbertsrector@gmail.com, (0131) 441 7580.

FORTNIGHTLY APRIL

ALTERNATE MONDAYS (1 & 15 APRIL)

FORGET ME NOTES: St Cuthbert's Church Hall, Westgarth Avenue, Colinton; 2pm - 4pm. An hour of music and memories. Bring a friend or come and meet new ones. Followed by refreshments. More info: <https://www.forgetmenotes.org>.

ALTERNATE FRIDAYS

TABLETOP GAMING IN JUNIPER GREEN/BABERTON/ CURRIE: Juniper Green Parish Church; 6pm - 9pm. Play board-games, card games and wargames. For more information contact Eric Ducreux Juniper Green Board-Gamers @boardjg - www.boardjg.co.uk

at, Pentlandjuniors@gmail.com

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

PENTLANDS SPORTING MEMORIES CLUB: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 1.30pm - 3pm. Pentland Sporting Memories-sports blether with a group of enthusiasts who enjoy a great sports story both old and new, questions and laughs (usually at each others expense) in a very relaxed and friendly environment.

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 Twitter: @BalernoRamblers

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

THURSDAYS

SPANISH CONVERSATION GROUP: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green. A chance to get together to practise speaking in Spanish with others - all abilities welcome.

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.

PENTLAND ART CLUB: Balerno High School; 7pm - 9pm every Thursday during term time. Relax, share ideas, and learn in the convivial company of fellow artists of all abilities. New members welcome. Contact ros. salton@outlook.com

FRIDAYS

THE MEN'S SHED: 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>

BABERTON CUBS and BEAVERS GROUPS: Juniper Green Church Hall. Beavers meet 6pm - 7pm and Cubs meet 7.15pm - 8.45pm. For more information, please email: cubs@babertonscouts.org

SATURDAYS

COMMUNITY CAFE: Currie Community Centre; 9am - noon. 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 www.facebook.com/Balerno-Ramblers, email enquiries@balernoramblers.org.uk or follow on Twitter: @BalernoRamblers

DAY BY DAY APRIL

MONDAY 1 APRIL

COFFEE WITH A COP: Currie Community Centre, 280 Lanark Road West; 10am. Your local Community Police Officer invites you to meet and chat with them.

EASTER EGG HUNT & COMMUNITY SOUP EVENT:

Campbell Park, Colinton; noon - 3pm. Organised by the Friends of Campbell Park. Includes best decorated easter egg competition, bidding session for park improvements, and unveiling of "Container Mural". Check the Friends of Campbell Park on Facebook for more details.

COLINTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY: Dreghorn Loan Hall; 8pm. Annual General Meeting. For more information visit www.colintonhistory.org.uk

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C&B NEWS • APRIL 2024

WHAT'S ON 45

TUESDAY 2 APRIL

BALERNO SWI: Balerno Community Centre, Main Street; 7.30pm. Homeopathy with Kendra Flockhart.

WEDNESDAY 3 APRIL

PENTLAND PROBUS CLUB: Juniper Green Parish Church Hall; 10am. "Pirate Radio", an illustrated talk by James Gentles. New members welcome. Further enquiries from Club Secretary Leslie Hannaford on (0131) 453 3012 or email lesliehannaford@blueyonder.co.uk

THURSDAY 4 APRIL

BALERNO COMMUNITY COUNCIL: Community Centre, Main Street; 7pm - 9pm. www.balerno-communitycouncil.org.uk, email: balernocc@gmail.com or contact via Facebook or X/ Twitter.

FRIDAY 5 APRIL

"MESMERISING MECHANISMS": Water of Leith Visitor Centre, Lanark Road; 10am - 4pm. Free, hands-on exhibition of amazing wooden machines! To find more information, visit: www.colintonclocks.co.uk/mesmerising-mechanisms

GARDENING GROUP: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green, 10.30am - noon. A monthly group meeting on the first Friday of each month. For anyone with an interest in gardening, from pots to plots, all welcome to share ideas and experience with other gardening enthusiasts.

FRIDAY 5 APRIL - TUESDAY 9 APRIL

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL HARP FESTIVAL: George Watson's College; Various times. A programme of concerts showcasing world-renowned harpists, emerging talents, collaborations, and ensembles as well as a full selection of courses and workshops facilitating learning in a welcoming and inclusive environment. For more information see www.harpfestival.co.uk

TUESDAY 9 APRIL

COLINTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING: Held via Zoom; 7.30pm - 9pm. Sign-up details will be published online (<https://www.colintoncc.org.uk/>), via email (secretary@colintoncc.org.uk) or through public noticeboards in Colinton.

WEDNESDAY 10 APRIL

CURRIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING: Gibson Craig Halls (Rear Hall); 7.30pm - 9pm. <http://www.curriecommunitycouncil.org.uk>, email: curriecouncil@gmail.com

SATURDAY 13 APRIL

BALERNO FARMERS' MARKET: Main Street, Balerno; 9am - 1pm. "Spring Fling." A wonderful range of stallholders bringing fresh local and Scottish produce to the market. <https://balernovt.org.uk/farmers-market/>

CURRIE BOWLING CLUB: 283 Lanark Road West, Currie; from 1pm. The opening day of the 2024 season and a celebration of Currie Bowling Club's 150th anniversary. Anyone interested in bowling is very welcome to come and watch or participate.

SPRINGTIME TEA: St Cuthbert's Episcopal Church, Colinton; 2.30pm - 4.30pm. Enjoy a delicious afternoon tea—tickets £10 in aid of church funds. Contact any member of the Events & Fundraising Group or email: stcuthbertsevents@gmail.com

WEDNESDAY 17 APRIL

MONTHLY CRAFTING (adults): the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 7.30pm - 9.30pm. "Cross Stitch": join us for an evening to learn/develop or share your skills to create a Spring-inspired floral design. All materials will be provided as well as tea, coffee and nibbles. As we like to provide a chance to enjoy a child free evening, please feel free to bring your own tittle to enjoy! This crafting event is free of charge but we welcome your optional donation. Booking required at <https://hub531.appointedd.com/> or by email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

THURSDAY 18 APRIL

MONTHLY CRAFTING: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 1pm - 3pm. "Cross Stitch": come along to learn/develop or share your cross stitch skills to create a Spring-inspired floral design. Materials and guidance will be provided, as well as refreshments. This crafting event is free of charge but we welcome your optional donation. Please book. Booking required at <https://hub531.appointedd.com/> or by email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

MENOPAUSE CAFE: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 7pm - 9pm. Join us for an evening event especially for women who are experiencing or preparing for menopause. We will provide a welcoming space to allow women to share, learn, and create a supportive haven for each other. Our evening will be hosted by Steph Price (Managing Your Menopause). Refreshments will be provided, donations welcome. Booking required at <https://hub531.appointedd.com/> or by email hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

MONDAY 22 APRIL

COFFEE WITH A COP: Currie Community Centre, 280 Lanark Rd West; 10am. Your local Community Police Officer invites you to meet and chat with them.

COLINTON GARDEN CLUB: Dreghorn Loan Hall, Colinton; 8pm. AGM and Craft Show. Members are invited to submit entries. For more information visit <http://www.colintongardens.org.uk/>

WEDNESDAY 24 APRIL

JUNIPER GREEN & BABERTON MAINS COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING: theHub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green. 7pm. All welcome.

THURSDAY 25 APRIL

"AN APRIL EVENING": St Joseph's Hall, Balerno; 7.30pm. Another evening of musical entertainment by the church's musical ensembles – One Bar Rest, Quintingle, and the Church Choir – preceded by a convivial supper. Tickets £23 from the Church Office or email

Neil Johnstone: engenuity@virginmedia.com

SUNDAY 28 APRIL

CURRIE KIRK: Family Walk to Spylaw park, leaving from the bridge at Currie Kirk, 12 noon. Come and enjoy a treasure hunt on the walk to Spylaw Park, Colinton. Bring your own picnic.

TUESDAY 30 APRIL

BALERNO FOLK CLUB: Balerno Bowling Club, 5 Ladycroft, Balerno; doors open 7.30pm for an 8.15pm start. The Club are pleased to welcome back John Graham and Jim Jack accompanied by Cy Jack. A good selection of songs and tunes along with some amusing tales guarantee an excellent evening's entertainment." Members and Guests" welcome.

MAY

WEDNESDAY 1 MAY

PENTLAND PROBUS CLUB: Juniper Green Parish Church Hall, 10am. "The History of Glenkinchie Distillery" an illustrated talk by a distillery representative. New members welcome. Contact Club Secretary Leslie Hannaford on (0131) 453 3012 or email lesliehannaford@blueyonder.co.uk

COFFEE WITH A COP: Currie Community Centre, 280 Lanark Rd West; 10am. Your local Community Police Officer invites you to meet and chat with them.

THURSDAY 2 MAY

BALERNO COMMUNITY COUNCIL: Community Centre, Main Street; 7pm - 9pm. www.balerno-communitycouncil.org.uk, email: balernocc@gmail.com or contact via Facebook or X/ Twitter.

SATURDAY 5 - TUESDAY 7 MAY

POP UP BOOK FESTIVAL: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; various times. Our programme and full details will be available very soon, but please look out for lots of TEEN / YA authors offering workshops and talks, as well as a few events aimed at adult readers too.

www.facebook.com/candbnews



Currie Cross Country News

FILIP, AMELIA AND ANDREW
P7A CURRIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

On Monday 4 March, 40 Currie Primary senior pupils took part in a cross country running competition at the Meadows. Two of our P7s won a place in the top 10: Flip Adamczyk and Amelia Murray.

Cross country is a running competition where you must pace yourself and run a substantial distance. It is incredibly difficult to get in the top 10 and to not collapse of exhaustion. The thing that is unique about cross country races is that they are generally rather long, for example the one that we competed in was 1.3 km (0.8 mile) long.

The first race was with the B Schools at 10.30am. A "B" race is one with the smaller schools with only a couple hundred people in it; this was the P6 girls race. Then it moved on to the bigger schools. After that, the P6 boys ran and Finlay Miller came eighth. Then it was the P7's turn: again, the "B" schools and the girls went first. Then the bigger schools went and this was when the Currie pupils did our school proud. Amelia won fifth place, while in the P7 boys race, Filip placed ninth.

It was brilliant that three Currie Primary pupils were placed in the top 10 of our races. We were very proud and very grateful to Mr Donaldson, our PE teacher for encouraging us.

Fishing Update from Malleny

ALEX ROSE
SECRETARY, MALLENY ANGLING LTD

Harlaw and Threipmuir reservoirs are both situated in the Pentland Hills above Balerno and they offer superb trout fishing for the bank angler. Season permits are still available.

Harlaw has a maximum depth of around 66 feet (20 metres) and has 1.5 miles (2.4 km) bank fishing. It is well stocked with brown, rainbow and blue trout with an average weight of over 2.2 lbs (1 kg); specimen trout can reach over 11 lbs (5kg).

Threipmuir is the larger but shallower of the two waters and it has a maximum depth of around five feet. About 1.5 miles (2.4 km) of bank fishing is available and it is stocked with hard-fighting brown trout.

Both waters are fly fishing only – no spinning or bait fishing is permitted and no boat or float fishing is allowed. Fishing is administered by non-profit

making Malleny Angling Ltd.

The season runs from 1 April to 30 October. Please note, brown trout fishing ends on 30 September.

Permits must be purchased in advance and are *only* available online at MallenyAngling.com. Permits are not available from The Duty Bailiff.

Furthermore, anglers should not start fishing without a valid permit and they must check in with the duty bailiff at The Bothy next to Harlaw House.

Free permits are available for those 17 years and under to encourage youngsters into the sport but young anglers must be accompanied by a member, season ticket holder or day ticket buyer.

Fishing times are 8am to 10pm or one hour after sunset.

• For a season permit, email: secretary.malleny@gmail.com

• Check our Facebook page (Malleny Angling) for weather and fishing reports (when available).



Balerno Tennis Club—Let the New Season Begin!

RORY DONALDSON
BALERNO LAWN TENNIS CLUB

It's time to pack away the waterproofs – but maybe keep them nearby! – and put the rugby balls in the garage (Oh, Scotland!) because the new tennis season is upon us again.

We've got all the usual favourite events and evenings, as well as our regular junior coaching sessions and Easter holiday camps. This year we are introducing a senior coaching evening, and a fantastic offer for new members of a free group coaching session our Level 4 LTA Coach, Eoin Swan.

Here's a taster of what we've got lined up:

Club nights: Tuesday evenings from 7pm until dusk, starting 2 April. A fun and social way for adult members to get together and play. No booking required.

Cardio tennis: Wendy McKenzie ran these sessions last year, and proved to be a fun fitness workout for adult players of all abilities.

Wendy will run these again on Sunday mornings from 10am - 11am. £8 per session.

Adult coaching with Eoin Swan on Wednesdays (6.30pm - 7.45pm, 17 April - 26 June) and junior coaching with Wendy (Fridays) and Eoin (Saturdays and Mondays). More information on our website.

We're also running a seniors (65+) tennis event on 13 April (10am - 1pm) raising awareness of how tennis can help maintain a healthy lifestyle and combat conditions such as dementia. Family and friends also welcome.

• We will be running our hugely popular open day (11 May) and Gala Tournament (24 May) this year.

• We have a fantastic choice of memberships for individuals or families which can be viewed and booked online.

• For full details, visit our website: <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/BalernoTennisClub>



Juniper Green Tennis Reopens for New Season

PAUL MURPHY
CHAIR, JUNIPER GREEN TENNIS CLUB

Now that Spring is firmly here it is time to launch into a new season at JGTC. A number of club members generously volunteered their free time in March to prepare the grounds and courts after the winter shutdown period. The tamping down of all the marking lines was the critical task after the worst of the windy weather did its best to uplift them all.

Tennis coaching begins again – no fooling – on Monday 1 April, provided by our long standing excellent club coach Kenny Petrie. This includes our Junior Easter Holiday Camps (10am - noon, Monday 1 to Friday 5 April and Monday 8 to Friday 12 April for ages 4 to 8 years; 12.30pm - 2.30pm, Monday 8 to Friday 12 April for 9 to 11+ years olds.

• Booking available at <https://bitly/492DuFE>.

Our Adult Spring/Summer

tennis program includes weekly Community Tennis for ages 50+ starting on Thursday 18 April, 3pm - 4pm, and Social Tennis beginning on Friday 19 April, 10am - noon. The latter is free for all adult members of JGTC. Additionally, the Spring/Summer Junior Tennis Program will provide coaching opportunities for various age groups.

We would love to welcome back all previous members of the club and also introduce new members. We are a friendly club, geared towards kids coaching and adult social tennis, run by volunteer members on behalf of the local community.

Without your support the club, which was formed in 1891, would cease to exist. Membership packages for the new season are available for juniors, adults and families; details are on our website.

• To discover more about JGTC please visit our website: <https://tinyurl.com/422zebcv> or our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/junipergreentennis



Currie Chieftains' Latest Updates

PHIL THOMAS
CURRIE CHIEFTAINS

The 2023-24 rugby season is progressing towards its closing stages and Currie Chieftains remain in the hunt for both the league Championship and the Scottish Cup.

Currie finished third in the league stages of the Premiership and, on 2 March, faced Marr RFC in the top-four play-off for the Championship. Marr, the favourites, had beaten the Chieftains twice in the league season. However, the Malleny men had apparently not read the script, and they produced an outstanding performance to win 12-27 points. In the other semi-final, Hawick comfortably overcame Kelso 25-9 points. Thus, the play-off final will be Hawick RFC v Currie Chieftains at Mansfield Park on the 4 May.

The Scottish Cup first-round on 9 March saw Currie Chieftains comfortably beat Ayr RFC 35-25 points and progress to the quarter-final. Then, on 16 March, they beat Musselburgh 14-83 to qualify for the semi-final. The semi-finalists will be Currie, Marr, Hawick and the winners of the Edinburgh Academicals v Heriots Blues (Men) tie on 13 April. The Cup Final will be played on 27 April.

Elsewhere in the Club, Chieftains A has finished second in the Intercity Reserve League and both the U18 and U16 teams have won their way through to the finals of their respective East Region Cups, which will take place at

Above: The visitors from Queen Margaret's School, British Columbia. Below: Some of the girls' team pre-play!

Murrayfield on 23 March—at time of writing almost a week away.

Personal congratulations go to Ben MacDonald, Jack McLay, Hamish Hunter, Blair Smith and Rory Tait, all of whom were selected for the Edinburgh U16 team which played against Caledonia on 18 March.

A March highlight was the three-and-a-half day visit of the girl's rugby squad from Queen Margaret's School, Duncan in British Columbia. Their tour schedule was intense; a 12.5-day trip overall, flying to London and then travelling to Rugby (the town) for their first match.

Then it was on a train to Edinburgh, where they played U16 (Thursday) and U18 (Saturday) matches against Currie Chieftains and enjoyed some sight-seeing before travelling back to Litchfield and then on to London for a brief visit before flying home.

Everyone involved thought the Scottish leg of their tour was a great success, and the participants certainly had a good time!



FREE!

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... AND TO JUNIPER GREEN, p47

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GIRL POWER!



Currie Chieftains Welcome Canadian Guests.



Currie Primary School P7s Camp in Benmore, p24

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Photos: Currie Chieftains, Currie Primary School, Balerno Tennis Club, Juniper Green Tennis Club