

FREE!



MORE WORK ON DR MACKAY'S WOOD, p3



100 PENTLAND SPORTING MEMORIES, p13

C&B NEWS

CURRIE • BALMORRECH • UNIPER GREEN • BABERTON MAINS • COLINTON



**Bumper
Spring
Issue!**

PLANNING AHEAD

**Bonaly P4s Plant New
Trees in Campbell
Park Orchard, p24**

www.candbnews.co.uk

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 (July/August and December/January) marking our summer and winter breaks.

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

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DEADLINES FOR NEXT ISSUE

ADVERTISING & LISTINGS: 15 APRIL
 EDITORIAL: 20 APRIL
 ISSUE DISTRIBUTED: 2 MAY



Above: Early on the morning of 27 February, a fire gutted Brooklea, on the East Mills site adjacent to the Water of Leith Walkway and Muttons Bridge in eastern Currie. This dramatic photo was taken by local mother Alexis Leal, who was up feeding her baby when she smelt smoke, investigated and called the fire brigade, who managed to eventually get the blaze under control. The house was thankfully unoccupied, boarded up and is now (see below) a burnt-out shell. Photos: Alexis Leal, Paul Fisher Cockburn.



Right: We were very proud of our team that took part in March's Primary Schools Burns Festival, run by Edinburgh and District Burns Club Association, writes Currie Primary School Head Teacher Sally Hourston. We had a team of five pupils entered from P1 – P7: Amelia, Murray, Eve, Amber and Emma. They all did an amazing job reciting their Burns poems in front of a live audience and a judging panel.

Middle: Currie Primary School P7 pupils once again enjoyed a week-long residential trip to Benmore Outdoor Centre, near Dunoon in Argyle – full of activities such as caving, canoeing, climbing, abseiling, mountain biking, orienteering, woodland adventures, night line, and lots more.



Below: Work continues on the "regeneration" of Dr Mackay's Wood, with a team of volunteers – with some canine assistance! – making considerable progress towards a more inviting, diverse and open woodland. Congratulations to everyone involved. Photos: Emily Ronaldson.



BRIEFLY NEWS

• **BROKEN WALL:** Currie Community Council has finally been able to confirm that the damaged low wall separating Pentland View car park (owned by the City of Edinburgh Council) from the adjacent pedestrian footpath (adopted by CEC) is not owned by the Council. Responsibility for its repair therefore lies with the owners of the nearby shops.

• **BOY RACER:** Police Scotland have charged a 14-year-old boy with "vandalism, threatening behaviour and road traffic offences" after a football pitch was damaged by an off-road motorbike, according to *The Edinburgh Reporter*.

• **NEW ST MUNGO'S:** Preparatory work continues regarding a proposed new permanent home for St Mungo's Scottish Episcopal Church, Balerno: following congregation workshops, a client brief has been produced and the appointment of a professional design team is nearly complete. Local opposition remains, however, regarding any new construction on the Green Belt around Balerno.

• **DOG POO:** Complaints have risen significantly in recent months about large amounts of dog poo – sometimes, admittedly, in black bags – left around Dean Park Primary School in Balerno. Owners are asked to dispose of their dogs' mess responsibly.

• **OBLIGATORY BUS STORY:** Council officers have been instructed to examine and report on potential options to introduce direct bus links between Ratho, the Edinburgh International Climbing Centre, Lost Shore Surf Resort, and the city centre within the existing contract period for subsidised bus services in the area.

• **RARE CANCER BILL:** Edinburgh South West MP Scott Arthur's Rare Cancers Bill to encourage life-saving rare cancers research has won government backing. The Bill, which proposes creating a database to improve access to clinical trials, among other issues, >p5

Advice Surgeries:

I hold surgeries on the **first Saturday of every month** at the following places:

- Fountainbridge Library • Wester Hailes Library
- Colinton Mains Tesco • Oxgangs Library

No issue is too big or too small for me to take up, so if you think I can help you, please get in touch!

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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

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Currie PS Looks at Air Pollution

MS JULIE MACKAY
TEACHER, P5B, CURRIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Currie Primary School have been working in partnership with Parents4FutureScotland on an air pollution topic.

The whole school took part in a range of activities to learn about air pollution and gather information about the causes of air pollution in the community.

P7 came up with some very creative solutions on how to tackle this in Currie by planting more hedges and plants, encouraging cars not to idle outside the school, plus a walk-to-school campaign, "March to School in March".

Staff and children then held a successful sharing session with parents in school and pupils took part in a competition to design a future playground. The competition winners, along with some of the Eco Committee, went on to attend an Air Pollution event at the City Chambers on 17 March, where they showcased their work alongside some other schools.

• <https://currieprimary.com>, <https://www.parentsforfuturescotland.org.uk/>



Ripples of excitement went round Primary 4 and Primary 7 pupils at Dean Park Primary School when yellow-clad Gala committee members arrived one morning to explain the Gala Court selection process, writes Sam Stewart. Just over a week later, all the nominations and permissions were in and the committee chose names from a lucky dip. Congratulations letters were hand delivered and the committee is pleased to announce the 2025 Gala Court: Charlotte Hill (Queen), Jamie Gettinby (King), Callie Brown (Queen's escort), Andrew Gough (King's escort), Libby Harman and Brodie Allan (Heralds), Chole Lee and Maja Gosney (Flower girls). The court will lead the Gala parade on Saturday 24 May, kick-starting eight days of local events which culminates in the Gala Day itself on Saturday 31 May, on the rugby pitches below Currie Rugby Club.

New Community Councils Elected

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
C&B NEWS

All four community councils within the C&B News distribution area attracted sufficient numbers of nominations for elected councillors to ensure their continuation until March 2029.

The community councils covering Balerno (BCC), Colinton (ColCC) and Juniper Green & Baberton Mains (JGBMCC) were required to attract between six and 12 nominations for elected members, while Currie (CCC) needed between five and 10—any more than these maximums and The City of Edinburgh Council would have been required to hold public elections on Thursday 27 March.

CEC received 10 nominations for elected members to BCC: Anthony John Allen, Brian Conway, Nigel Duncan, Mark Galloway, Richard Henderson, Ian Hynd, Jack Kerr, James Polasik, Kenneth Mitchell Shade, and Phillip Thomas. (There were also five nominations for representatives from "valid local interest groups", which will hopefully mitigate an otherwise all-male community council.)

ColCC was "closer to the edge", attracting seven nominees: David Bewsey, Ian Cowie, David Houston, Alistair Macleod, Sonia Rutherford, Amal Al Sayegh, and Gillian Thatcher. Surprisingly, CEC did not receive any nominations from valid local interest groups, although some may be appointed later.

CCC inspired eight nominations for elected members: Nikodem Goszcynski, Kevin Kealy, Roderick

MacKenzie, Colin Macleod, Moira Peterson, Samuel Pollard, Hugh Ross, and Keith Symington. There were no nominations from valid local interest groups.

Finally, JGBMCC attracted eight nominations for elected members: Lynn Elliott, Linda Johnston, Michael Muirhead, Emma Murdoch, Russell Salton, Victor Stewart, Alison Walker, and John Walker. Again, there were no nominations from valid local interest groups.

The full memberships of the new councils will be confirmed by the relevant returning officers at the community councils' inaugural meetings in April, at which the new community councils will elect office bearers for the coming four years.

• BCC usually meets at 7pm on the first Thursday of the month in Balerno Community Centre, Main Street. CCC meets at 7.30pm on the second Wednesday of the month in the rear hall at Gibson Craig Halls, Currie. ColCC usually has its meetings at 7.30pm on the second Tuesday of the month, either via Zoom or face-to-face in Colinton Bowling Club. JGBMCC meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month from 7.30pm at the Hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green.

• Insufficient nominations were received to establish eight new community councils across the city: Craigmillar; Davidson's Mains and Silverknowes; Firrhill; Hutchison/Chesser; Muirhouse/Salvesen; Old Town; Portobello; and West Pilton/West Granton. A second call for nominations in these areas closes on 21 April.

BRIEFLY...

p3>>>

passed its second reading in parliament.

• **PARKS CONSULTATION:** CEC's public consultation on a revised set of management rules for the city's parks, beaches and green spaces – including the Pentland Hills Regional Park – ends on Friday 11 April. To contribute, visit: <https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/management-rules-parks/>

• **RECYCLING:** Edinburgh Libraries have teamed up with Edinburgh Remakery to install Tech Donation Boxes in (eventually) 15 libraries across the city—enabling residents to easily recycle old laptops, tablets, smart phones, DSLR cameras and cables. The nearest host libraries to C&B News readers will be (by March) Oxgangs and (by June) Wester Hailes.

• **CAMPBELL PARK "MUGA":** On 27 February, the Friends of Campbell Park petitioned The City of Edinburgh Council's Culture and Communities Committee for the installation of a new Multi-User Games Area (MUGA) suitable for older children and teenagers. Their initial petition (for just a basketball hoop) gathered 204 signatures. The committee was generally supportive of the idea, but wanted further details and wider discussions about the Park before progressing any further. See page 25 for more.

• **EVICCTIONS:** Campaigners say 47 families are facing eviction from houses now deemed "surplus" by the Ministry of Defence in the Dreghorn estate: a petition calls on CEC to keep people in their homes when they buy up military housing stock: www.livingrent.org/NoDreghornEvictions

• **NEW FUND:** A pioneering £15 million Regenerative Futures Fund has been launched in Edinburgh which will offer "meaningful, long term and unrestricted funding" to local community organisations. Providing grants of up to £100,000 a year over ten years, the aim is to break the cycle of short-term funding and place trust in grassroots organisations to tackle the root causes of poverty, racism and >p7

www.facebook.com/candbnews

Sue Webber MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Lothian Region



Monthly Advice Surgeries

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

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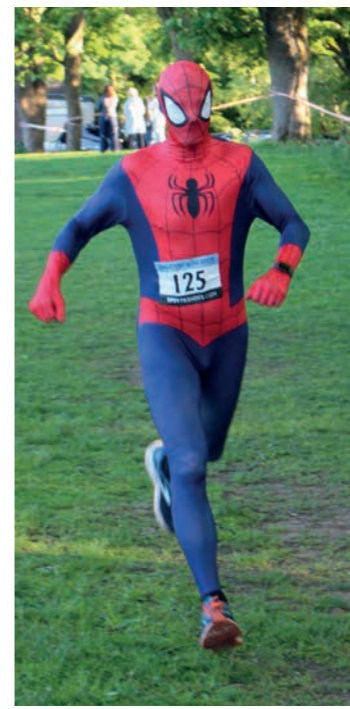
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Balerno Rigg Race Returns

STEVE BROWN
 RACE DIRECTOR, BALERNO RIGG RACE

The Balerno Rigg Race, a cherished tradition during the Balerno Children's Gala week, will this year take place on Monday 19 May, starting at 7.30pm. The approximately six mile (9.7 km) course starts and finishes at Mallyen Park, leading runners on the tough climb up to the Scottish SPCA, and along the picturesque Rigg Road, offering breathtaking views.

Established as a walking event for Balerno Mill workers, the race evolved into a competitive run in 1963 and has since become a highlight for both locals and visitors. Runners of all abilities are encouraged to participate, with medals for all finishers and category prizes up for grabs. Fancy Dress is welcomed!

• Online registration will open on Tuesday 1 April at 9pm, closing on Saturday 17 May 2025 at 5pm.

• Secure your spot by visiting: <https://harmenyac.org/races/rigg-race/>



Red Moss of Balerno Praised

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
 C&B NEWS

Red Moss of Balerno Nature Reserve was recently listed in *The Times* as one of the best sites in the UK to visit before the end of winter, especially for birdwatchers. "We're delighted that Red Moss has been recognised as such a special place for wildlife," Julian Warman, the Scottish Wildlife Trust's Reserves Manager for South East Scotland, told C&B News. "The reserve is an

excellent example of a lowland raised peat bog, both in terms of its structure but also as a home for rare mosses, lichens and insects. "As well as being a home for wildlife, the peat, which has been created by the accumulation of sphagnum mosses over 6,000 years, captures and stores vast quantities of carbon, reducing the amount of greenhouse gasses entering the atmosphere."

• <https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/reserve/red-moss-of-balerno/>



Edinburgh Pentlands constituency MSP Gordon Macdonald is not standing for re-election at the next Scottish Parliament election in May 2026, which will coincide with him reaching retirement age. "It has been an honour and a privilege to represent the Edinburgh Pentlands constituency over the last 14 years. As I prepare to leave this role, I commit to using my remaining time to continue addressing the issues that matter to us all."

31st Pentland (Juniper Green) Scout Group is Growing!

MARY DICK
 LEAD VOLUNTEER, 31ST PENTLAND SCOUT GROUP

We already have two hugely successful sections at each of Squirrel, Beaver and Cub ages and a brilliant Scout Troop that provides opportunities for a huge range of activities. We now need to open an additional Troop as the Friday Scouts simply can't accommodate all the young people coming through. We have a leader ready to go after the summer holiday, but we need a team. I'd love to hear from anyone keen to help young people develop skills for life, and ideally with some interest in outdoor activities, whether hillwalking, canoeing, cycling, camping or

something similar. Don't worry about the scout-specific things, we have access to training to fill any gaps in your knowledge. We'd also love to have more volunteers to help with younger ages. We have teams in place, but changing circumstances inevitably mean that volunteers sometimes move on, and so we need to bring in some new volunteers and new ideas. Please remember that all the leaders are volunteers, we were all new to it at some point. For the sections to thrive and continue to engage the young people we need people to continue to volunteer with us. To find out more about us please, email: 31stLeadVolunteer@gmail.com

BRIEFLY...

climate change. More: <https://regenerativefuturesfund.org.uk>

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

You can view plans, forms and other documents connected with individual planning applications on The City of Edinburgh Council's Planning and Building Standards Online Services website: <https://tinyurl.com/dz8atrcd>. Under statutory legislation, comments on recently registered planning applications should relate to "material considerations" connected with the use of land and buildings—such as adherence to City Plan 2030, appearance, residential amenity (eg, noise/overshadowing) or traffic/parking/access issues.

• **BABERTON MAINS:** Demolition of existing explosion-damaged residential terrace and construction of new residential terrace (six properties); 23-33 Baberton Mains Avenue. (25/00908/FUL) Comments by 2 April.

• **CURRIE:** Removal of existing garage and construction of single storey flat-roofed extension to side, alter roof to re-tile and remove existing chimney, together with fitting of revised velux roof lights, and install cladding to rear wall of existing house; 44 Lanark Road West. (25/01262/FUL) Comments by 2 April.

• **CURRIE:** Single-storey flat roof extension to side of existing detached house, comprising bedroom/family room to front and en-suite to rear, finish to front to be facing brick matching existing house and rendered to side/rear; 14 Nether Currie Road. (25/01089/FUL) Comments by 2 April.

• **COLINTON:** Proposal to extend existing dwelling to create family kitchen/dining/sitting area and new carport/garden storage to replace garage; 399 Lanark Road, Kingsknowe. (25/01131/FUL) Comments by 4 April.

• **BALERNO:** Partial demolition, alteration

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Local Tree Surgeon Prepares for Fundraising Cycle

NICO OGILVIE-HAYES
FUNDRAISER

Local resident Nico Ogilvie-Hayes is preparing for an eight-day cycle-ride this June along a chain of outer Hebridean islands to raise money for Parkinson's UK.

Nico plans to start the 186 mile (299 km) journey on Thursday 5 June; the route, from his starting point on Vatersay to the Butt of Lewis lighthouse, will take him across 10 islands and involve crossing six causeways and taking two ferries.

The tree surgeon and local business owner – Ogilvie Hayes Tree and Garden Services – Nico is no stranger to the outdoors and is very much looking forward to the challenge. After a family member was diagnosed with Parkinson's, Nico decided to raise money for Parkinson's UK after seeing the amazing community of support they provided, locally and nationally.

His aim is to raise "999 squid" – aka, £999.

"We are massively grateful to Nico for taking on such an incredible challenge to raise funds for Parkinson's UK," said Bruce



Port, Community Fundraiser for Parkinson's UK.

"We're here to make every day better, for everybody living with Parkinson's. We campaign for better health and care, fund research into groundbreaking new treatments, and run life-changing support services.

"We couldn't do any of this without inspiring fundraisers like Nico who support our mission to be there for every Parkinson's journey."

Parkinson's is the fastest

growing neurological condition in the world, with almost 13,000 people living with the condition in Scotland and some 153,000 across the UK.

To support Nico on his challenge, visit his JustGiving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/nicohayeshewbay>

For information and support, visit parkinsons.org.uk or call the free confidential helpline on 0800 0303.

BRIEFLY...

p7>>>

and extension to existing detached dwelling; Pirnie Ha', Cockburnhill Road, Cockburnhill. (25/01338/FUL) Comments by 4 April.

CURRIE: Erect single-storey front extension, two-storey side extension, single/two-storey rear extension and install dormer windows; 38 Thomson Drive. (25/01065/FUL) Comments by 7 April.

CURRIE: Complete demolition in a conservation area; 158A Lanark Road West. (25/01257/CON) Comments by 11 April.

COLINTON: Change of use of existing class 1 (non-food) unit to class 3 (food/drink on premises), including installation of new shop frontage and paint finishes to front elevation of unit; 4A Bridge Road, Colinton. (25/01171/FUL) Comments by 11 April.

PLANNING DECISIONS

BALERNO: Removal and pruning of Leylandii and Larch; 509B Lanark Road West. (25/00850/TCO) Not make a tree preservation order, 7 March.

COLINTON: Removal of "too large" Chamaecyparis lawsoniana "Wisselii" in rear garden; 19 Dreghorn Loan, Redford. (25/01182/TCO) Not make a tree preservation order, 7 March.

JUNIPER GREEN: Reduce north side of American red oak overhanging road, reduce height of crowns on five horse chestnuts, as amended; Lorimer House Nursing Home, 491 Lanark Road. (25/00609/TCO) Not make a tree preservation order, 10 March.

CURRIE: Proposed single-storey rear extension including internal alterations and new window to side elevation; 15 Rowantree Avenue. (25/00329/FUL) Granted, 11 March.

COLINTON: Remove unstable crown break of multi-stemmed Leylandii by rear boundary wall overhanging Scottish Power Building; 438 Lanark Road, Kingsknowe. (25/01280/TCO) Not make a tree

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m: 07523678185

Balerno Village Trust Update

VAL REID
BALERNO VILLAGE TRUST

Thank you to everyone who made it along to this year's Tattie Day Market on Saturday 8 March. The weather was kind to us, which resulted in approximately 976 folk making it along! We still have eight varieties of seed potatoes and five varieties of onion sets left to buy—these will be available to purchase at our Easter-themed Market on Saturday 12 April. If you can't make it, please drop us a message on the Balerno Farmers' Market Facebook page, or email: val@balernovt.org.uk, and we can arrange to get a delivery to you.

The Easter Farmers' Market will also have our yearly Easter Treasure Trail, with a wee chocolate reward at the end so please come and join us!

We are delighted to announce that Police Scotland have agreed to a Community Asset Transfer of Balerno Police Station to Balerno Village Trust. There has been a lot of hard work put into this over the last year from the Board members, so watch this space and we hope to have more to tell you in the very near future!

Call for Publicly-Owned Bike Hire Scheme

CRAIG PHILIP
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER, HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY

Five students studying civil engineering at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh have called for the creation of a publicly-owned bike hire scheme and are developing a computer simulation to help design it.

The students have launched an online public petition to gauge support for their proposal, before presenting the details to City of Edinburgh Council.

The scheme proposed by the Heriot-Watt students has multiple, strategically-placed docking stations across the city.

The students say their proposed bike hire scheme aims to be more affordable and accessible for cyclists than networks run by private operators.

To sign the petition, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/2aaz88pv>



'Revised' Timetables for Lothian Buses

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
C&B NEWS

Lothian Buses are introducing various service changes from Sunday 6 April "to improve reliability and enhance capacity" across their network.

Most of the routes affecting C&B News readers – Services 10, 16, 30, 32, 44, and 45 – are described as merely having "revised" timetables—although, as an example, the current hourly schedule for subsidised Service 32 will see some buses running either 50 or 70 minutes apart.

Many early morning Service 44 journeys from Balerno will also officially leave a minute or two earlier than at present.

Skyline Service 400 – Edinburgh Airport to Fort Kinnaird via the Gyle, Colinton and Royal Infirmary Edinburgh – will be rebranded as Service 18, with its "city" fares applicable to and from the Airport.

Sadly, any hopes for the reinstatement of a morning rush hour limited stop Service X44 along Lanark Road West continue to be dashed. Not only do Lothian Buses continue to insist there is insufficient demand for such a service, the current X44 buses running between Wallyford and Haymarket will be withdrawn and partially replaced by new East Coast Buses Service X4.

Lothian Buses will also raise fares by 10% from Sunday 6 April—the first increase in two years. A single Adult fare will rise from £2 to £2.20, and a single child fare from £1 to £1.10. The all-day City DAY ticket will rise from £5 to £5.50—although Lothian's TapTapCap Pay-As-You-Go option will continue to offer discounted fares, such as all-day travel capped at £5. There will be no changes to single and return fares on the Airlink Service 100.

<https://www.lothianbuses.com/>

City Council Agrees to 'Extensive' Consultation on Firework Control Zone

City of Edinburgh Councillors have agreed to move forward with an extensive consultation process on Firework Control Zones for autumn 2025.

Since 3 March, local communities had been invited to apply for their area to be a Firework Control Zone (FCZ). Following a four-week application period, an eight-week consultation will now take place.

The consultation process will include discussions on areas that saw significant disorder in 2024 – Niddrie, Sighthill/Broomhouse, and Gracemount/Moredun, and will also consider any new local FCZ applications submitted before 31 March.

The consultation will run

until May, with the final outcome presented to the Culture and Communities Committee in August.

In 2024, four FCZs were established across Edinburgh, based on assessments from Police Scotland, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, and – in the case of southern Balerno – the Scottish SPCA.

This zone operated from 1 - 10 November, although its design and implementation were criticised, not least by Balerno Community Council.

Feedback and results from these zones will also help inform the planning for 2025.

<https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/>

BRIEFLY...

p9>>>

preservation order, 12 March.

• COLINTON: Proposed new dwelling to be erected (as amended); 2 Allermuir Road. (25/00308/FUL) Granted, 13 March.

PLANNED ROADWORKS & ROAD CLOSURES

Note: Start dates indicate earliest anticipated beginning of work; finish dates represent conclusion of formal notice periods—actual work may finish earlier or be extended due to circumstances.

• COLINTON: Redford Road between Colinton Road and Redford Drive, road closed for City of Edinburgh Council bus stop resurfacing; 31 March - 4 April

• COLINTON: Gillespie Crossroads, 4-way temporary traffic lights for BT Morrison cabling; 31 March - 4 April—dates and details to be confirmed.

• CURRIE: Curriehill Road at Riccarton Avenue, three-way temporary traffic lights for BT Morrison clearing blocked cable ducts; 7 - 12 April.

• JUNIPER GREEN: Belmont Road, east side of junction with Belmont Grove, road closed for Clancy Docwra for Scottish Water sewer repair; 8 - 16 April

• CURRIE: Riccarton Mains Road between Corslet Road and Easter Currie Crescent, four-way temporary traffic lights for BT Morrison cabling (night works, times TBC); 14 - 18 April.

• OXGANGS: Colinton Mains Drive at Oxgangs Road North, 4-way temporary traffic lights for Scottish Water work; 19 April.

• BLINKBONNY: Blinkbonny Road at Kirkgate, road closed for sewer repairs (Clancy Docwra for Scottish Water); 1 - 2 May.

• OXGANGS: Colinton Mains Drive between Colinton Mains Crescent and Colinton Mains Terrace; road closed 7pm - 7am for Scottish Water manhole repair; 2 - 3 May.

LOCAL UPDATES • LOCAL UPDATES

Building Bridges at Balerno High School

EMILY HAZLEY
BALERNO HIGH SCHOOL

Balerno High School will be hosting a "Building Bridges" Breakfast event this June, inviting local professionals who are interested in learning more about how they can support our young people in their preparations for the world of work.

The event will provide an opportunity to meet other attendees, speak with pupils and hear about the various ways of getting involved.

We are looking for a range of professions and sectors to be represented—all welcome!

Initially, we are gathering interest in the event via an interest form which can be accessed via the accompanying QR code. Alternatively, visit: <https://forms.office.com/e/XL20B9E4xe>



If you would like to find out more, even if you are unable to attend the event, please complete the form and we will be in touch. If you know of anyone who may be interested, please spread the word!

The "Building Bridges" event will be between 8.45am and 10.30am, Friday 13 June 2025.



Crafting Volunteers at Hub@531

ANNETTE WILSON
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, HUB@531

One of our most successful and popular activities in the Hub@531 during the past two years has been a wide range of arts and crafts.

Since the Hub's official opening in January 2023, the intimate, warm and friendly space has provided a perfect location for a number of different activities including glass painting, macrame, felting, jewellery making, cake decorating, wreath making and more.

Our sessions are run by enthusiastic craft leaders and supported by volunteers. We usually offer two sessions each month during term time: on Wednesday evenings, we have sociable, adult-only crafting that offers a chance for a relaxed, child free evening; on Friday afternoons we host multi-generational crafting, welcoming accompanied and supervised children, teens and adults of any age to come together.

Up to this point, we have relied on time and energy from a small group of volunteers who plan and organise each session, as well as set things up, welcome attendees and support the craft leader. However, to keep providing these valued sessions, we'd really like to have a larger pool of volunteers so that individual commitment is reduced and the enjoyable workload spread a little wider. There are

Another Successful School Quiz

MIKE ROWE
CURRIE BALERNO ROTARY



no specialist skills required—just a friendly enthusiasm for community activities.

We'd love to hear from you if you would be interested to get involved, especially if you are available on a Friday afternoon. Alternatively, book to attend one of our future events and find out more from our current volunteers.

Also, if you have specialist skills in a craft and would like to offer it through the Hub, we'd love to hear from you too. We can cover the cost of materials (within budget) if you can provide your time and expertise to work with a small group—a maximum of 16 people.

To volunteer or find out more, email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

Currie Balerno Rotary's annual Primary Schools Quiz was held on 12 March, hosted by Balerno's Dean Park Primary School.

Four other schools participated – Clovenstone, Dean Park, Nether Currie and last year's winners, Ratho – with 56 young quizzers in 14 teams.

The quiz was again hotly



Far Left: Acting Depute Head Teacher Laura Jackson welcomed everyone to Dean Park Primary School and opened the event. Left: The winning team from Ratho Primary School with Rotary President Ian Campbell. Photos: Dean Park Primary School.

Forthcoming Craft Activities:
• Easter Bunny Flower Pots (family craft age 3+) on Friday 4 April, 2.30pm.

• Delicate Crochet with Penelope from Crowchez (4 weeks), from Friday 9 May, 10am.

• Sea Glass Wire Wrap jewellery with Louise Vittery on Wednesday 21 May, 7.30pm.

• Macrame plant pot holders with Isobel Johnstone on Wednesday 18 June, 7.30pm.

Details and online booking are available via our booking site: <https://hub531.appointedd.com>, through our Facebook page and on Instagram: @hubat531

contested. There were six questions in each of eight rounds, which included language and literacy, maths, and geography, and finished with questions about Scotland and its history.

Ratho were the winners for the second year running, taking first and second places, with Dean Park coming third.

LOCAL UPDATES • LOCAL UPDATES

Balerno Young at Heart Group for 60+ Returns

MARGARET ADDO
BALERNO YOUNG AT HEART

After a long absence, the Balerno Young At Heart Group for people 60+ will hold a meeting and AGM on Tuesday 22 April in the Ogston Hall, Balerno Parish Church, between 11am and noon.

BYAH is a support group providing social opportunities for local people aged 60+, and meets weekly during term time. The group welcomes new members from people living in the local communities of Balerno, Currie, Juniper Green, and Colinton.

This will be an opportunity for interested people to meet together in a friendly group, suggest future activities of interest and decide how the group should proceed.

As it has been a long time since the group met, any previous group members, volunteers and anybody interested to learn more about the group or wanting to get involved are particularly welcome.

Please contact Margaret Addo on 01501 785249 for more information.

Balerno SWI: March Report

ISOBEL JOHNSTONE
BALERNO SWI

Unfortunately, at very short notice, our March speaker was unable to attend. The talk, on Bletchley Park, will now be rescheduled for a later date.

Thanks to some very quick thinking by our President we still had a very enjoyable evening. Who knew that there were so many nursery rhymes? We split up into groups and had to recite/sing a rhyme. There was much hilarity as we all tried to find one that hadn't already been used; 30 rhymes later we called a halt and agreed that it was time for tea.

Our Bletchley Park Logic Puzzle winner was Moira Stewart. Flower of the Month was won by Brigid Moncur.

Our April meeting is intriguingly called "All About Puppets", so come along to Balerno Community Centre at 7.30pm, on 1 April.



Pentlands Sporting Memories Celebrates 100th Meeting

BOB DOUGLAS
FRIENDS OF THE PENTLANDS

Pentlands Sporting Memories group held its 100th meeting on 19 February, and marked the occasion with special guest Scott Hastings.

The Scottish and British Lion rugby legend provided a very informative and amusing overview of his life in rugby and kindly brought along a few precious souvenirs that highlighted important landmarks in his career.

Our local Sporting Memories club is a welcoming place for older adults to come together socially to reminisce and talk about sport and many other non-sporting topics—such as National Service



and long-gone dancehalls. We aim to support anyone in our local community who perhaps feels a bit isolated and would benefit from our company, a good conversation and (above all) a good laugh—usually at each other's expense! Locally based trained volunteers help to run the show, ie make the tea and coffee.

We meet at the very cosy Hub@531 Lanark Road in Juniper Green (bus stops nearby in both directions) every Wednesday afternoon from 1.30pm to 3.30pm. "Extra time" is often required, but we never go to penalties!

We have also enjoyed a few trips together, such as to the football museum at Hampden Park, a play on the Fringe about the famous Spurs and Scotland footballer John White (whom one of our regulars grew up with in Musselburgh), and to some of our neighbouring Sporting Memories clubs for various sporting talks. On our first anniversary last March, we were joined by Hearts' legend Gary Mackay.

If you think you or a family member would be interested in any sport, to any degree, then why don't you come along one Wednesday afternoon and put us through our paces?

Contact the Partnership Manager Donna Mackey via email: donna.mackey@sportingmemories.uk or call 07340 560306.

Sporting Memories is a charity supporting older people to reminisce and reconnect. Visit www.sportingmemories.uk to find out more.



Currie Balerno Rotary's March meeting was all about Jack Brown Eyecare, writes Mike Rowe. As reported in last month's C&B News, Juniper Green's Jack Brown Eyecare had joined CBR as a Rotary Community Member. On 5 March we welcomed their representative, Lesley Ainslie, as a member of Currie Balerno Rotary and of Rotary International. Andy Connell and Barry Duncan from the Juniper Green practice also gave a talk on the complex structure of the eye and advances being made in treating eye conditions. (Left to right): Jack Brown Eyecare's Barry and Andy, Rotary President-elect Ken McCunn, and Lesley.

LOCAL UPDATES • LOCAL UPDATES

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Fairtrade Spring

LESLEY HENDERSON
BALERNO FAIRTRADE VILLAGE GROUP

Far from being snowed off, Balerno had a really cheery Fairtrade (FT) Morning on Saturday 15 March, in Balerno Parish Church halls. Prizewinning young FT poster artists and their families enjoyed the Lord Provost's presentation of certificates and of generously-sponsored Scotmid Maltesers, and the display of their posters truly inspired us to put FT principles into practice and "Be the Change!"

Stallholders brought us the chance to do just that; to back FT producers and traders from around the world by topping up our FT foods and crafts, while the Edinburgh Bike Cooperative's kind volunteers hup-hup-hopped along lots of FT banana smoothie pedallers, and Pentlands Eco seeds were swapped. Lucky winners scooped up a FT hamper and lovely "Mill" cake and, in the Ogston Hall, everyone was a winner with the Guild's Big Brew drinks and famous baking, alongside a children's FT activity table.

Profits, not yet finalised at the time of writing, will go to



"Transform Trade" (formerly Traidcraft Exchange), aiming to support producers as they fight for fairer trade, now needed more than ever.

Lots of people made the event work: local families; school and church staff way beyond "work" time; groups, businesses, politicians and local press; Council staff processed our licence; volunteers looked after premises, refreshments, First Aid and much more. As for the super-patient relatives of the FT Group itself, they make all the difference.

So, a Saturday far from our normal, but gloriously normal too: what a heartening, well-timed reminder, largely thanks to our younger generations, that the whole world hasn't gone to the dogs after all.

Scotland has just been pronounced a Fair Trade Nation again, and locally, Balerno's FT activity is a good 20 years old. Can we – should we – keep it up? What a question!

• Please message us, and help it stay real and growing:
balernofairtrade@gmail.com

Round Table: Local Heroes

HAZEL LUMSDAINE
CURRIE, BALERNO & DISTRICT ROUND TABLE

CBDRT meet every month to plan our various events during the year and how we are going to redistribute all the donations and funds raised.

We have tried many different venues down the years, from the old Kestrel and The Grey Horse in Balerno, the Riccarton Inn (Currie), and Tanners Pub in Juniper Green—the latter is where we decided to set down anchor.

The team at Tanners very kindly give us free use of their lounge space and have done so for the last 15 years. If not for the generosity of the team at Tanners, we would likely have needed to pay for a long-term home and reduce the amount of funds that we return to local good causes.

We would really like to say a massive thank you to Tanners for being so accommodating. You are our Local Heroes.

BLOOD BIKES SCOTLAND

Recently, we were able to host three more local heroes from the incredible Blood Bikes Scotland charity.

Phil Dodsworth and John Donaldson came to talk to us about the Blood Bikes service, who they are and the range of services that they provide to the NHS.

As with many of you, most of us present at the meeting had heard a



bit about Blood Bikes but we didn't really know about them, so their presentation was both informative and eye opening. We were all quite in awe of the extent of the work that this group does, the amount of money they save the NHS every year, and the fact that it is staffed by volunteers.

These men and women, some of whom live right here in our community, dedicate a huge amount of their own time to make sure crucial NHS services can be provided.

One of their bikes, Amy, is actually based in Balerno and – thanks to your donations and support – CBDRT are very proud to be sponsoring it for the next year.

The network of volunteers involved with Blood Bikes spans the length and breadth of the country and have links into equivalent services across England and Wales, making the reach of the work they do quite incredible. They are definitely True Heroes.

• To find out more about Blood Bikes, or to donate to support their work, please visit their website
https://bloodbikesscotland.co.uk/

Edinburgh Tool Library South West Update

PAUL BULLEN
EDINBURGH TOOL LIBRARY

Edinburgh Tool Library South West – a joint venture between SW20, Edinburgh Tool Library and Colinton Village Enterprise SCIO – is going from strength to strength.

Since May 2023, we've now loaned hundreds of tools out to local members. With our full range of common tools (wallpaper steamers, drills, sanders) and less common items (car ramps, pipe benders, etc), and the ability to access the wider ETL inventory, you probably never need to buy another tool again!

Our team of friendly volunteers provide advice and guidance about the right tool for your DIY as well as using the SW20 cargo bike (<http://bit.ly/sw20-ebike>) to transfer items between our other branches.

Tool pickups are on Fridays with returns on Monday nights unless you need the tool for longer and there are no other bookings for the tool—in which case we can lend tools for longer.

New members and volunteers (even with little/no DIY experience) are welcome to join.

• More information here <https://bit.ly/etl-sw>



SW20 (South West Edinburgh 20 minute neighbourhoods) have provided free access to our electric bikes for more than two years, with spring bookings already starting to come in, writes Edinburgh Tool Library's Paul Bullen. Our inventory comprises of a "normal" easy-to-ride e-bike, an electric cargo bike, an electric rickshaw and several bike trailers. If you are new to electric bikes, our "normal e-bike" provides a great introduction to using an e-bike in a familiar, lightweight format—hills become "flat" and carrying shopping is easy. If you borrow our electric cargo bike at the same time, a total of two adults and three children can be carried. For more information, please see <http://bit.ly/sw20-ebike>



Snapshots of the Past

The Origins of the Currie & District Local History Society

DOUGLAS LOWE
CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

I am the present Secretary of the Currie & District Local History Society, and have been for the past 12 years. Through the pages of *C&B News* I have had the privilege of both entertaining you (hopefully) and engaging you with the historical “doings” – some big, some small – in our area over many years, covering such diverse topics as mills (we had a lot of those), personalities (we had a fair number of those), the “Kenleith Poet” Jamie Thomson, General Thomas Scott of Malleny, and Currie schoolmaster Robert Palmer (of curling and sundials fame)—and many more.

As a society we have 12 meetings each year, roughly every two weeks between early October and late March. We meet on Monday evenings in the back hall of the Gibson-Craig Memorial Halls, on Lanark Road West.

At our meetings we generally have an interesting speaker and an interesting topic. I am currently working on the syllabus for our 2025-26 session. You will find information on the topics on the What’s On column in *C&B News* and on the CDLHS website, both in due course. But to whet your appetite, I can advise that some of the topics already confirmed for next session: “Blood and Guts – the Development of Medicine in the Lothians”; “The Union Canal”; “The Edinburgh International Exhibition of 1886”; “Malleny”; “Scotland Beneath the surface”; and “The History of New Lanark”, plus five other equally eclectic and interesting topics.

So how did our history society start? There had been a regular evening class on local history at Currie High School for two years

during the late 1960s, run by Jack Howdle with assistance from local historian John Tweedie. Members of the class decided to hold a meeting to form a Currie History Society, which was held in John Tweedie’s house on Palmer Road on 16 June 1970.

The first President was Lyndsay G. Langwill OBE, grandson of Rev James Langwill (Currie minister, 1859 -1898). John Tweedie became Chairman. The first open meeting was an illustrated talk on Currie by John, which included a photo slide dating from 1874—the year that the Balerno Branch Railway started to run.

John Tweedie and the other early members researched, collected old photos and gave talks. Over the years the Society grew, the researches grew, the photographic collection then numbered around 2,000 items. Modernising over the years led to much of John Tweedie’s and other research papers being put into an archive at Heriot-Watt University, Riccarton.

Our photo collection has since been digitised and is also now held at H-W, but can be accessed through our website (curriehistory.org) together with many other research items: the survey of Currie graveyard, research on the war dead from the three villages and much more. Many people have used this website to start their family researches.

During the summer more research will be done, historical slide-shows will be worked on and perhaps some historical days out organised. But, come 6 October, we will again be at the Gibson Craig, ready to start our new session—some 54 years after it all began! New members always welcome.

• <https://www.curriehistory.org/contact/>



PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
C&B NEWS

In these days of emails, texting and social media, many of us think little of our “legacy” postal service or the bright red street furniture which still plays an important role in how it functions. But have you considered your local post box as a *historic* artefact?

Almost from their initial introduction in the 1850s, post boxes erected in the British Isles have featured the Royal cypher of the then-reigning monarch. It is the *Royal Mail*, after all.

If you check out the numerous boxes located across our five communities, there are several examples of boxes featuring the royal cyphers of George VI (reigned 1936-1952), George V (reigned 1910-1936) and Edward VII (reigned 1901-1910). There is even one (wall-encased) example which had survived (until fairly recently) from the reign of Queen Victoria (reigned 1837-1901), though it has now been sealed and painted black. (It’s on Belmont Road, Juniper Green.) Each of these boxes is an indicator of when either the nearby houses were built or their residents demanded a conveniently nearby post box.

However, there are three British royal cyphers you *won’t* find anywhere in south west Edinburgh.

First is *ER VIII*: Edward VIII only reigned for 326 days in 1936 before abdicating—frankly, few boxes sporting his Royal cypher were erected anywhere in Britain. There just wasn’t the time.

That can’t be said of his niece Queen Elizabeth II, given that she reigned for 70 years. However, “sensitivities” around the late Queen’s regnal number – she may have been the second Queen Regnant named Elizabeth in England, but she was certainly the first in Scotland – led to the first *ERII* post box erected north of the border in 1953 (on the junction of Gilmerton Road and Walter Scott Avenue,



Edinburgh) being (a) repeatedly vandalised and (b) successfully blown up—on the *third* attempt!

In order to prevent further mischief, damage and potential injury, the Royal Mail quietly decided that all new Scottish post boxes – and indeed Royal Mail vehicles and premises north of the border – would henceforth feature the symbol of the Scottish Crown (aka the “St Andrew Crown”).

Given how much of the housing in and around the Pentland Hills was built during her reign (including the entirety of Baberton Mains, for example), it’s only to be expected that a majority of our local post boxes are – strange as it may sound – “Elizabethan”. Admittedly, this author was slightly surprised that these post-1955 post boxes include those in the heart of historic Colinton village—did they, perhaps, replace earlier models?

Thirdly, and finally, there’s *CR III*. Despite there being no obvious controversy around the current monarch’s regnal number (both of Charles III’s namesakes reigned after the Union of the Crowns in 1603), the Royal Mail has decided to maintain usage of the Scottish Crown north of the border, rather than go with the new cypher already found on at least one post box in Cambridgeshire.

The Hired Help can’t help but wonder if, during the seven decade reign of “Elizabeth, Queen of Scots” (as she was latterly referred to by the Scottish Government), the Royal Mail ended up ordering such a large supply of those “crowned” pillar boxes that – with so few now being installed on our WiFi-ed streets – there’s a big stockpile to get through!



THIS MONTH IN... 1987 LOCAL HISTORY AS REPORTED BY C&B NEWS.



PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
C&B NEWS

The lead story below this 20-page issue’s blue-green coloured logo was a “radical” proposal for local government to truly “go local”.

“Edinburgh District Council is intending to decentralise its offices to provide services from local offices which will be much more accessible to the public,” the paper explained. “The idea behind this is that staff working from central offices are often out of touch with local needs. There is also a tendency for central offices to be bureaucratic simply because of their size. Smaller local offices should be able to provide better services which are more relevant to local needs.” To which, doubtless, some of our regular readers may have quietly thought to themselves: “You don’t say, Sherlock!”

The District Council had already published draft documents on the proposals for these new “one stop shops” for all council services: the first stage would involve “setting up 29 Local Forums and 30 local offices. [...] A local Forum would be initially set up in each area to determine how and where the local office should operate. From these Forums the Area Committee would emerge.”

It all sounded unnecessarily bureaucratic but, of course, it didn’t actually happen. Nevertheless, a potent symbol of the problems inherent in allegedly out-of-touch local government was the other front cover story—the omission of Juniper Green from the road signs on the Sighthill section of the new Edinburgh Bypass. Local Councillor Hugh Fraser reported he had been told that it “would be [an] unjustifiable expense to arrange for the addition of Juniper Green to the existing signs [...] and such an addition would be more than three place names on each sign



Above: Glasgow-born, Bo’ness resident Ian Walker was due to return to Balerno Folk Club this month. “He has sung here twice before but this is his first formal booking,” the Club informed C&B News readers.

unless Currie or Balerno were omitted”.

On the plus side, Archie Clark was able to report that, by the time this issue was published, a new pedestrian crossing in the centre of Juniper Green (on Lanark Road, presumably) “should be operational”. Given how, up to the end of the first week in March, police announced “that 72 vehicles had been reported this year for speeding [...] between Inglis Green Road and Gillespie Road”, this was probably a good thing.

It’s often in the smaller stories that the truth of life in our communities is most clearly found: in the letters page report on the return of a “kamikaze crow” repeatedly attacking its reflection in the windows of numerous houses on Greenfield/Cockburn Crescent; in the District Council Environmental Health Committee’s assertion that “it could be a considerable number of years before Balerno reaches the top of the priority list” for new public toilets (we’re still waiting); of the jumble sale which raised £300 (£850 in today’s money) for the Currie Community Playgroup. Or how about more than 140 Juniper Green pensioners did their bit to help reduce the so-called European “Butter Mountain” in early March, with even more receiving free butter, cheese and milk the following week?

Perhaps most gratifying of all was the report on how “a most amicable and successful meeting” brought agreement on future pedestrian access to Malleny Millgate, between Harlaw Road and Mansfield Road—a prime example of community cooperation being very much the name of the game!

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Malleny Garden: Busy Spring Ahead

JAMES BELL
HEAD GARDENER, MALLENY GARDEN

As we race into spring, everything starts getting busy. Our plants, dormant over winter, start their years' work and grow quickly in the warmer temperatures. The grass starts to grow and will soon need its first cut of the year. Our seedlings in the greenhouse are well on their way to providing colour and fragrance later in the summer (sweet peas!). Alongside the plants we want, the unwanted weeds are also quickly growing. The quarrel has begun to keep the weeds at bay!

In our woodland the children of Jigsaw Nursery have also been busy, building a dead hedge of sticks. This involves the children collecting all the loose sticks around the woodland and building them into a fence (or hedge) like structure. In time it will become home to an array of wildlife. They have done a fantastic job so far, with more and longer hedging yet to build. Thank you to Jigsaw for helping to tidy the woodland.

Our snowdrops have faded for another year but have been replaced with an array of colourful bulbs. The vibrant blue of "Glory of the Snow" (Scilla section Chionodoxa), Crocus, and early daffodils all bring spring into the garden. Looking to May, we will also see our woodland turn blue with native bluebells.

Work in the garden this spring has been challenging with large parts of the garden

and estate closed for a private event. Some of our gardening will need to be delayed until mid-April. This event unfortunately means the garden will be closed Monday to Friday to visitors—we are still open on Saturday and Sundays. We apologise for the inconvenience this unavoidable short closure may cause, but there is a longer-term benefit to the garden. We will be fully open again by mid-April. By when hopefully you will be able to join us for the Malleny Easter Egg Trail. (See box out!)

• *Volunteers make a huge difference to the National Trust for Scotland and there are many benefits to volunteering with the Trust. If you, or someone you know, would like to volunteer with us, please get in touch at mallenygarden@nts.org.uk.*

• <https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/mallenygarden>

Easter Egg Trails and Gardening in Spring

We've hatched a plan for an "egg-stra" special Easter! Hop down to Malleny Garden on the weekend of 19 - 20 April, between 10am and 3pm, to take part in our Easter Egg Trails! Follow the clues, solve the puzzle, and earn yourself a delicious treat—Maltesers or Moo Free eggs! The trail will take little adventurers around the garden and estate. Eggs are limited, so don't put all your eggs in one basket—book now by heading to <https://www.nts.org.uk/stories/easter-egg-trails-2025>



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Balerno Ramblers: Spring Walks Ahead

GAIL COUSINS
BALERNO RAMBLERS

With the Spring Equinox on 20th March, daylight hours are rapidly increasing, and we are feeling more strength from the Sun. Wind direction at this time of year is influential to our weather. Hopefully no longer any ice or snow. Snowdrops have given way to golden daffodils that brighten up our days, and primroses are blooming in sheltered sunny spots.

Midweek 30th Anniversary

Plans for our Midweek Ramblers 30th anniversary celebrations on Wednesday 7 May are proceeding. Past midweek ramblers, please ensure your contact details are up to date—contact Moira Timmins.

Upcoming Walks

Midweek walks: 2 April, Water of Leith Walk; 9 April, Musselburgh/Inveresk; 16 April, Calderwood; 23 April, Portmore Loch; 30 April, Four Pentland Reservoirs Walk (8.7 miles/14 km); 7 May, Midweek 30th Anniversary walk and lunch. Up-to-date details can be found on Balerno Ramblers website.

The Weekend ramblers have two confirmed walks for April.

Saturday 5 April 2025: Pentland Three Reservoirs Circular (8 miles/12.9 km): Join us for a circular walk in the northwest of the Pentlands Hills Regional Park, offering magnificent views over Edinburgh and the Firth of Forth. This walk starts in Currie, heads into the Pentlands via local paths through Poet's Glen and Whiteside Plantation. We walk through Maiden Cleugh to Harbour Hill where panoramic views to the north and west can be enjoyed. Our return is made via Bonaly, Torduff and Clubbidean Reservoirs and finally Poet's Glen, to return to the start.

Saturday 19 April 2025: Pentlands East Ridge Circular (11 miles/17.7 km, ascent 2,592 feet/790 metres): A strenuous walk along the eastern ridge of the Pentlands, including the highest peak of Scald Law. Start at Harlaw car park, walk through Green Cleugh, climb Scald Law, Carnethy Hill, and Turnhouse Hill before returning to the car park via Maidens Cleugh.



A magic day in the Pentlands. Photo: Hamish Clark.

Car sharing will be arranged from Pentland View car park.

With all walks please register with the relevant walk leader to attend and advise if you have a medical condition relevant to your walking.

We regret no dogs are allowed on our walks. Please do not come on the walk if you are feeling unwell.

• *For more details of our upcoming walks please click the link to access the Balerno Ramblers page on Ramblers Scotland website.*

Cooking the Books

with Balerno Resident STEF LYONS



Don't be alarmed but I had an accident out in Edinburgh the other day. It was the end of January. I was flying high, having paid my self-assessment income tax. It all happened so fast. There I was, on the corner of Leith Walk and London Road and then BAM! I fell into Topping & Company Bookshop. In a further flight of madness I was propelled upstairs and into their cookbook section where at least four books fell into my arms. At once I was transported to the till and before I knew it I was walking out with a lovely tote bag, filled to bursting with recipes and joy.

For one of these books it was kismet. I knew it as I stood staring at its lurid pink cover. I had been hankering for a book on Malaysian cooking and lo, there one was, on the shelf at eye-height. At once I recognised the author's name. Ping Coombes won Masterchef back in 2014 in what was probably the last time I watched the show. I was pregnant with Child The First then, and craving everything I could see. I had desperately wanted to be able to join Ping at her dinner table so I could eat her cooking till my heart and belly were full. Luckily, *Malaysia: Recipes From My Family Kitchen* means that, 11 years later, I can finally achieve it.

For a book such as this, making the food does require some specialist ingredients. Happily, in Edinburgh we have access to two branches of Matthew's Foods, an asian supermarket like no other I have encountered. Here you can get galangal and lemongrass, different curry powders, spices, fungi, sauces, freeze dried shrimp and many varieties of noodles needed to complete these recipes. I frequent the one in Longstone as it is closest. I often go in and have similar accidents to the one I had in Topping whereby I come out with many things I didn't intend to. You will go in for two things but come out with seven. Trust me.



The first thing I made from the book is an absolute favourite of mine, a Nyonya Curry Laksa. Nonya refers to the Chinese influence in the Malay cooking methods. Malaysian cuisine is a wonderful fusion of Malay, Chinese and Indian influences, and even within that there are variations based on regions and ethnicities. You could never be bored with Malaysian for dinner. The Curry Laksa was delicious. Fragrant broth with noodles, chicken, shrimp, tofu and a boiled egg. So warming, so moreish. It takes a little while to get everything together but we had four empty bowls at the end of dinner. Learn from my mistake though and wrap your children in a napkin or something because Child The First stained his clothes with all the turmeric thanks to the flamboyant fashion in which he eats noodles.

On another evening I made Chicken Curry and Potatoes, with stir fried lettuce as a side (a way I will regularly eat lettuce from now on), and roti canai (left): a flaky bread to scoop it all up into. I admit the roti were so good I finished them all by using them to mop up any leftover sauce in the pan. For dessert we ate a Malaysian Mess (above, Eton Mess but with coconut meringues, coconut cream and spiced pineapple). Once again, no leftovers. I cannot get enough of this book. I'm so grateful it fell into my arms that day. A perfectly happy accident all things considered.

• Matthew's Foods, 36 Inglis Green Road, Edinburgh. EH14 2ER and 22 Earl Grey Street, Edinburgh. EH3 9BN

Senior Snippets

with ANDREW SENEW

Welcome to our latest Senior Snippet - an advisory column with the older members of our communities in mind. Please send any ideas for future topics to: andrew.senew@homeinstead.co.uk



Easter and Older People: A Time for Connection and Reflection

Easter is a season of renewal, hope, and togetherness—values that hold special meaning for older adults. It's a time when families gather, traditions are passed down, and the joys of spring bring a sense of optimism. For many older people, Easter offers an opportunity to reconnect with loved ones, whether through church services, shared meals, or simple moments of reflection.

However, Easter can also be a lonely time for seniors who are isolated or missing loved ones. Adult children and caregivers can make a difference by including older relatives in celebrations, whether by visiting in person, making a phone call, or arranging a virtual gathering. Small gestures – such as bringing a favourite Easter treat, sharing family stories, or attending a service together – can lift spirits and reinforce a sense of belonging.

For older adults, Easter is also a time to reflect on faith, life experiences, and the renewal that comes with spring. Engaging in traditions like dyeing eggs, baking special treats, or enjoying a walk outdoors can evoke cherished memories and create new ones.

This Easter, let's remember the older people in our lives. Whether they are family members, friends, or neighbours, reaching out with kindness and inclusion can make the holiday more meaningful for everyone. After all, Easter is not just about celebration—it's about love, connection, and the joy of being together.

Andrew Senew is owner and Director of Home Instead Edinburgh, a provider of bespoke home care services: <https://www.homeinstead.co.uk/edinburgh-west>

Veterinary Tails

with Dr RACHEL ROPER MRCVS



With the first crocuses starting to bloom, it feels like nature's subtle nudge to swap out our "big" dog-walking jackets for something lighter—though, let's be honest, still with a waterproof layer on top because this is Scotland! Many of you, I'm sure, are as excited as I am to see the first signs of spring popping up all over Currie and Balerno.

Professionally, though, spring brings its own set of challenges. While we're all celebrating the days beginning to lengthen, it's important to remember that some of the things we associate with Easter and spring can pose real risks to our furry friends. Chocolate, hot cross buns, and certain flower bulbs are just some of the items that can be harmful if accidentally ingested.

So, what should you do if you're worried your pet may have eaten something they shouldn't? First things first: call your vet right away. There's often a small window where they can intervene, so it's crucial not to delay. If you have the packaging, hang onto it—it could be really helpful for your vet. And don't forget, your vet will provide an emergency contact number for those holiday or out-of-hours moments. It's always a good idea to save that number in your phone, just in case!

I remember one Easter Sunday, I had the pleasure (or misfortune!) of manning the emergency line. A panicked pet owner called to tell us her Labrador had enjoyed an extensive Easter egg hunt, gobbling up all the children's chocolate treats. We rushed him in and gave him an injection to make him sick. Left untreated, theobromine (the toxic compound in chocolate) can cause serious issues like breathing problems, heart trouble, and even seizures. Our chocolate-loving Lab certainly didn't hold back—he vomited up an impressive amount of chocolate! Thankfully, he was soon back to his usual cheeky self, though I can no longer look at a packet of mini eggs without feeling a little queasy myself!

Dr Rachel Roper MRCVS is a Veterinary Surgeon and the Branch Manager at ICR vets in Currie & Balerno: <https://www.icrvets.com/branches/balerno-clinic>

Well-being

with ANNETTE WILSON



Easter Eggs, Chocolate, and Wellbeing!

It's that time of year when the shops are full of Easter treats and families enjoy many traditions that relate to springtime, as well as the traditional Christian celebration of Easter.

The use of eggs at this time of year may relate to ancient pagan rituals connected with spring and fertility but, since the mid 19th century and the invention of methods to pour and mould chocolate, people have enjoyed gifting chocolate Easter eggs. And now the shops are full of them!

I thought it might be fun to find out what health benefits are connected to eating chocolate, and it turns out there are many! Here are only a few potential positives about your Easter treats:

- Cocoa contains flavonoids, naturally occurring chemical compounds that can help boost blood flow to the brain, helping cognitive function and memory.
- The same compounds in cocoa can also support lower blood pressure, "bad" cholesterol - supporting heart health.
- Antioxidants support skin health too.
- Chocolate is linked with the release of "happy" hormones.
- Cocoa contains key minerals and can be a source of fibre in the diet. So the higher the cocoa content in your Easter chocolate, the more healthy it is!

There are many manufacturers who use 30-40% cocoa in their milk chocolate, but our most readily available, favourite brand is mainly sugar and milk—only 20% cocoa!

And don't forget about actual eggs! Another symbol of the season, decorating eggs and rolling them down a hill can be good fun—but don't forget to pick them up afterwards and, if you haven't been too enthusiastic and it's still in one piece, you can enjoy eating your boiled egg afterwards for a nutrition packed, low calorie, protein rich snack.

Whichever choices you make for yourself and your family, I hope that Easter, the school holidays and the arrival of spring feel like opportunities for celebration and community, both of which can have wonderfully positive impacts on your health and happiness.

Annette Wilson is a health coach, teacher of mindfulness, complementary therapist and walk leader at Pond Wellness: www.pondwellness.co.uk

Craft Corner:

Tips for upcycling, art and craft projects

by Lucie Novoveska

Kind-hearted Kelpie



My husband and I participated in the Supernova Kelpie run on 14 March. It is a fun, 5 km charity run around the landmark Kelpies. I highly recommend it if that is your cup of tea. As it is at night, runners are encouraged to wear lights, torches and anything that glows. There are always a few runners with butterfly wings, some medusas and a variety of glowing outfits. This year, I decided to go big (and topical) and made a Kelpie head.

True to my upcycling nature, every component of my Kelpie head (with the working title "Kevin") was upcycled. I shaped chicken wire mesh into a horse head and secured several strings of fairy lights around the eyes, ears and nostrils. You say you can see the wires and I say: don't look a gift horse in the mouth! I borrowed rechargeable batteries from my husband and sewed on fabric from my old running leggings. Finally, I decorated the head with leftover ribbons to add a splash of colour—the downside being that spectators thought it was a unicorn.

I used some ribbons to secure the head under my arms, sort of like a backpack and I was ready for the run. When the race started, the first thought running through my head was a regret. Kevin wasn't as comfortable as I had hoped: the chicken wire was squeaking under pressure and I was afraid to turn my head in case Kevin slapped one of my fellow runners. But... the cheers and encouragement from other runners, spectators and even puzzled dogs were absolutely fantastic. Kevin was a big hit, making people smile and even posing for a few photographs. Thank you for all the support!



Meadow-making for Pollinators

BOB DOUGLAS
FRIENDS OF THE PENTLANDS

Above: Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary butterflies can be found at Harperrig and beside Bavelaw/Red Moss.

Visitors to Harlaw might start to notice a bit of a change in the grass area opposite the Visitor Centre as it is developed into a wildflower meadow. Following lengthy deliberations, the Regional Park Authority agreed that Friends of the Pentlands could take over the grass management of the original “meadow” area—and extend it, doubling its size.

Some initial replanting has been undertaken and a mix of native wildflower seed sown, supported by a grant from the Pentland Community Chest. We are now entering “Year Two”.

This is one of a number of wildflower meadows and wildflower patches that Friends of the Pentlands are creating across the hills as part of a long-term programme to provide habitats for a number of target butterfly species. At some sites we are lifting the thick layer of thatch (by hand!) to expose bare ground for planting and seed-sowing. At other sites we are

sowing directly after giving the grass a hard cut. During the summer we let the meadow areas grow and flower, then give them a hard cut in the autumn with the cut material raked off.

The butterfly species we are specifically targeting are Common Blue, Orange Tip, Small Copper, Dark Green Fritillary, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary (pictured, seen at Harperrig) and Northern Brown Argus, but a wide range of bees, moths and butterflies will also benefit.

We know that some, or all, of the target species can be found near the areas we are working in, and we are beginning to see the arrival of pollinators at the first sites we started work on two years ago. We also know each site will have its own unique challenges and it will take several years to establish a balanced ecosystem at each one.

• <https://pentlandfriends.org.uk/>

Balerno Tennis Club Prepares for New Season

RORY DONALDSON
BALERNO TENNIS CLUB

At the time of writing, the forecast for next week includes temperatures between -2°C and 15°C, but it is predominantly sunny—so it’s time to think about tennis!

We’re pleased to share Balerno Tennis Club’s plans for 2025/26 and we hope many of you reading this will join us again or come and play at a community club in the heart of Balerno.

- Members social tennis: Tuesday evenings (7pm - 8.30pm) and Saturday afternoons (4pm - 6pm) for adults, Friday evenings (6.30pm - 8.00pm) for juniors. These sessions start from 1 and 4 April respectively—a fun and social way for members to get together and play. No booking required.

- Cardio tennis: very popular last year, Wendy McKenzie will run these fun fitness workouts for adult players again on Sunday mornings (10am - 11am).

- Adult coaching with Eoin Swan: Wednesdays (6.30pm - 7.45pm) from 2 April to mid-June. There will also be Saturday sessions, times to be confirmed.

- Junior coaching: all junior coaching sessions are continuing as last year, with Wendy McKenzie running Fridays and Eoin Swan running Saturdays and Mondays.

- Balerno Tennis Club Open Day on Saturday 10 May (coinciding with the Farmers’ Market) is aimed at juniors to try mini sessions, chat with coaches and enjoy home baked cakes. No booking required.

- Gala Tournament on Friday 30 May is open to children attending school, or living, in Balerno.

Other Events throughout the year will include adult and junior competitions and a Christmas doubles tournament—dates will be confirmed in due course. We’ll also have Easter and Summer holiday camps, so keep an eye on the website for further details.

• For more details, including prices: <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/BalernoTennisClub>

KEN BROWN
CHAIR, CURRIE AND BALERNO GREEN SPACES

A group of local residents living adjacent to the Currie and Balerno boundary have formed a group, Currie and Balerno Green Spaces.

The boundary is a grassed area that stretches from the A70 Lanark Road, north to Currievale and Curriehill Castle Drive.

During the summer of 2024 areas of the grass were left to grow all year without being cut, reaching three feet high. Several residents were scared to walk home in the evening, as visibility sight lines were reduced to the point where only the heads of people could be seen. Children who attempted to play in the area were bitten. Dogs were taken to the vet with grass seed ingestion causing an abscess, rashes, and ticks were removed. The whole area looked abandoned and just a mess.

The City of Edinburgh Council’s initial response was to say there was an agreement in place with residents not to cut the grass but, when asked for a copy of this agreement and the risk assessments carried out, there was no response.

Local residents started an online petition, news of which was spread by word of mouth. This was presented to Currie Community Council.

At the CCC meeting local Cllr Neil Gardner agreed to find this said agreement and whether a risk assessment had been carried out, or not. He discovered that no such agreement existed, and that the Parks Department had deemed a risk assessment unnecessary—even though CEC policy states otherwise.

The following month CEC Parks and Green Spaces Technical Officer Stephen McGregor attended the CCC meeting to explain the parks vision, of wild flowers in lieu of cutting. However this was nowhere near the reality on the ground, as he



Introducing Currie and Balerno Green Spaces

discovered.

In late August the grass and weeds were so high they could not be cut by a mower and required to be flailed with a mechanically adapted BobCat. The cut material was left to decompose, and could not be collected for silage due to the presence of poisonous weeds which included ragwort. The whole area was cut in just under two days, by one man on the machine.

Stephen McGregor returned to the next CCC meeting with a lay out drawing of their current proposals. As this issue was taking up a lot of the CCC meeting time a sub committee was formed and they met with residents over the next three months at drop-in sessions held at Currie Library.

Comments were recorded, noting where planting of wild flowers could be and where the grass should be cut to keep the area

safer and useable, and more in keeping with the area—as 1,100 houses are situated 450 metres either side of the grass boundary. (That’s £2,500,000 in council tax!)

The intention is to present the residents’ responses of the drawing back to Stephen McGregor, to balance the need for safety, residents’ mental wellbeing and ability to use the areas, including locations that can be used for planting wild flowers, with the proposal of cutting the areas once a month during the growing period of six months, therefore six cutting days.

Sue Webber MSP attended one of the drop-in sessions and gave her support for a further campaign and agreed to print 1,100 leaflets.



In the months following the grass being cut, several children have been seen playing ball, or playing with a Frisbee. There is unrestricted space to walk dogs without incident. During the period of snow more than 50 children and their parents enjoyed sledging on the slopes.

Residents today talk positively of how nice the green space areas look now.



Last month, Currie, Balerno & District Round Table had the pleasure of presenting the Currie High School Dance and Cheer Team with a cheque for £500 to be used to purchase uniforms and costumes for the team, writes Hazel Lumsdaine. A relatively new initiative for the school, this team has been attracting lots of attention and requests to join after competing well in a recent High Level Competition.

“The Dance and Cheer team at Currie Community High School are delighted to receive a generous donation from the Round Table,” Ms Toni Moore explained. “The team was

formed at the beginning of the school year and the group has been working hard to develop their skills across a range of different Dance and Cheer Genres.

“This has led to the team entering and competing in their first High level competition. Without the support of the Round Table the group would not have been able to acquire the appropriate uniforms and costumes to compete at the Scottish Championships. These uniforms will become a part of the school identity, and will be used for many years to come. Thank you!”

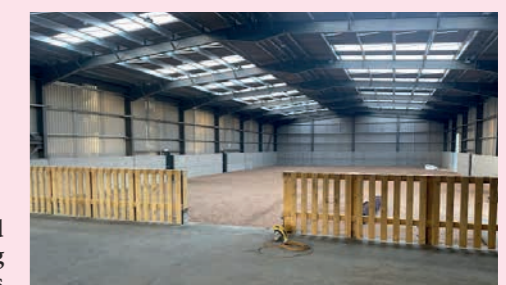
Ravelrig RDA—Indoor Arena’s Almost There!

ELAINE JEFFERIES
CHAIR, RAVELRIG RDA

The construction of our indoor arena and new outdoor arena at Ravelrig Riding for the Disabled are in their final stages of completion. By the time this article goes to print our new facilities will be completed and the “building site” will be returned to RDA.

During the last few months our coaches and volunteers have been working on improving the fitness level of our horses who have over-enjoyed a nine-month break from RDA lessons and activities. A strict fitness plan was drawn up and we are well through getting our horses back to full fitness, but we need the arenas to be completed to allow us to conclude our fitness regime. This includes a lot of in-hand work prior to schooling with a rider.

Before Ravelrig RDA can start using either the new indoor arena or newly located outdoor arena, our horses will have to get used to their new environment, especially working in an indoor arena which our horses have never



done before. Our Ravelrig coaches will also need to be reassessed as they will be effectively working within a new environment. Before our riding sessions can recommence, everyone involved – including our amazing volunteers – will need time to train and become familiar with our wonderful new facilities.

We do not have an exact date for when our riders will be able to get back in the saddle but the team at Ravelrig will be in contact with our participants in the very near future.

Finally, a huge thank you to the local community, our coaches, our volunteers and participants for your unending support during the construction of our new development. It has long been a dream of Ravelrig RDA to have such a facility, and now that dream is slowly becoming a reality!

Campbell Park Goes from Strength to Strength

Shona Harrower shares the ways in which the Friends of Campbell Park continue to make a difference to a previously-overlooked public amenity...



Above: Ewan McAdam (left) with Colinton & Fairmilehead ward Cllr Conor Savage (middle) and Friends of Campbell Park's Sports Officer Michael Bailey (right) in the City Chambers

Ewan and the MUGA

Firrhill High School pupil Ewan McAdam, 12, is on a mission to bring public basketball to Colinton—and, so far, his campaign is going well.

Ewan first wrote to the Friends of Campbell Park (FCP) in September 2024, and by the following month he'd joined the FCP Sports and Leisure subcommittee. They were already considering whether permanent football goals could be made available for general members of the public. They identified an unused area in the northwest corner of the sports pitch that could be suitable for a range of different sports requiring a hard surface between two goals. Netball, basketball, football, and pétanque are just some of the ideas being considered at this early stage and the FCP remain open to new suggestions—see below for details of the planned community consultations.

In the meantime Ewan had created a petition to the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) and sent it to his former basketball club at Bonaly Primary School. In what seemed like no time at all, Ewan had more than 200 signatures. An official "petition hearing date" was granted with the CEC Culture and Communities Committee on 27 February 2025.

By the time the hearing date arrived it was clear that the FCP members were keen to have much more than a basketball hoop and fully supported Ewan's initiative. A formal FCP deputation – comprising of Shona Harrower, Michael Bailey and Ewan – presented their ideas at the City Chambers and succeeded in gaining permission, "in principle", for a larger, more inclusive multi use games area (MUGA).

It helped that the FCP Committee will have had their first AGM on 22 March 2025, to become a formally-constituted body. Following that there are plans to open a bank account, and to launch a MUGA fundraising campaign at their 2025 Big Lunch, with a fundraising target of £50,000!

• Comments and suggestions can be emailed to: focampbellpark@gmail.com.

Campbell Park 'Big Lunch' Goes BIG!

Yes, the clue's in the name—the Friends of Campbell Park aim for their 2025 Big Lunch to be their biggest yet!

New for this year's big community picnic will be a Big Arena. We hope that visitors will bring picnic blankets and chairs to spread all around the outside of the arena so that everyone can enjoy a good view as the programme of events unfolds.

Visitors will also have the chance to print their own bunting to help decorate the community orchard and perhaps enjoy a drink at the Big Bar. We'll be selling a range of bottled beers and soft drinks, with profits going towards our Big basketball/MUGA fundraiser which will be launched at the event.

A Big BBQ will once again be provided by the Edinburgh Cricket Club with a range of Asian food and snacks for sale, whilst FCP volunteers will serve hot drinks for sale in the Pavilion Kitchen.

We have two big bands to start and finish the show: Ian Boyter's musical mates will help get the party started at noon with their usual mix of big jazz classics. Then, to help us relax and watch the sun go down, Dave and Rob Ashton of father-and-son-duo The Fat Possums will entertain us with songs by Townes Van Zandt, Steve Earle, Blaze Foley and even Taylor Swift.

In the Big Arena, local PT coach Connor McGourt – the Mr Motivator of Revolution Fitness – will help get the crowd warmed up with a communal "Big Stretch". Then the most frequent visitors to Campbell Park, our canine community, will be invited to compete in the Big Woof. Prizes will be awarded for the speediest dog to correctly complete an agility obstacle course, as well as for the waggiest tail, funniest face, cutest face, and "face most like its owner".

Edinburgh United Football Club will encourage the audience to participate in a "Big Game", to be followed by a gentler gardening-themed activity with members of Colinton Garden Club—called, you guessed it, the Big Plant.

We just love funny man and "Big Mouth" Sandy Brechin who will MC the entire programme and broadcast his regular Sandy on Sundays show live on Facebook. If our Big Bar has succeeded in oiling enough vocal cords, Sandy will lead the crowd in a communal "Big Sing".

No picnic would be complete without a Big Cake, so the home bakers of Colinton will be invited to bring forward their home-made cakes to a judging table in the central arena for official tastings by the FCP Committee—and, after judging, the audience!

We hope to see you all at the Campbell Park 2025 Big Lunch for plenty of Big Family-friendly Fun.

• Save the dates: Sunday 25 May OR 1 June, depending on the weather.

• Check www.facebook.com/FOCPK for latest news.

Bonaly P4 Tree Planting

Tuesday 25 February was a wonderful day for our Campbell Park community orchard.

Bonaly Primary school teacher Aibaida Bashir brought a group of 58 children and 5 adult helpers to plant 80 new trees in the outer orchard hedgerow. They were supported by 6 assistant gardeners from The Friends of Campbell Park.

Half of the trees planted were Autumn Olives (*elaagnus umbellata*), bought from the Agroforestry Research Trust in Devon, using a grant from the Edinburgh Community Solar Coop. The other half were a mix of crab apple, hazel, hawthorn, grey willow and bird cherry, donated by Joe Williams on behalf of The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) through their

NatWest "I Dig Trees" program.

Joe arrived like a knight in shining armour, except that he was driving a white van, wearing his TCV HiVis vest and carrying a box of trees instead of a sword. He really did save the day for us though, because with just a few days to go before the event, we were expecting 58 Bonaly P4 pupils and had managed to buy 45 trees for them to plant. As it was Joe brought us another four dozen trees in 6 different varieties. So we had enough to plant 80 trees in total that day and 15 more on 10 March with our regular Monday afternoon Duke of Edinburgh volunteers from Kaimies High School.

Andy Aitken from the City of Edinburgh Southwest Parks Department was an absolute star, coming in on his day off to help. He and Mike Harrower shovelled an entire bulk bag of Caledonian Horticulture compost into 40 standard sized garden bags, and transported

them around the park to where they were needed.

In the orchard the children learned how to plant using the 'no dig method'. The adults used spades to make a deep cut, just wide enough to drop in a bare root tree. The children heeled in their trees to seal the soil around the base, then surrounded the tree base with cardboard to kill off the grass. After covering the cardboard in compost to weigh it down and feed their tree from above, they added a colourful name label to help find their tree when they come to visit (bringing water we hope).

CURRIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Our P7 pupils are just back from a week-long residential trip to Benmore Outdoor Centre, near Dunoon in Argyll, writes Head Teacher Ms Sally Hourston. It was a very adventurous week full of activities such as caving, canoeing, climbing, abseiling, mountain biking, orienteering, woodland adventures, night line, and lots more. Everyone did really well, trying activities for the first time and moving out of our respective comfort zones, providing a real sense of achievement for everyone involved.



Currie Primary Pupils Shine in Edinburgh Music Festival Competition

SALLY HOURSTON
HEAD TEACHER, CURRIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

We recently had three pupils from Currie Primary School participating in the Edinburgh Music Festival Competition at Greyfriars Kirk.

Zuzanna (above) competed in the Level 3 category (for ages up to 17) which corresponds to the ABRSM Grade 5-6 level. She was one of 38 participants and earned a "Highly Commended" certificate, equivalent to a second place in her category. Her performance was marked as "Excellent". Zuzanna played Schumann (Kinderszenen, Op 15, No 1, "Scenes from Childhood") and Chopin (Waltz in A-minor, B. 150, Op Posth).

Eric and Alan (below) competed in the Level 2 category (for ages up to 17), ABRSM Grade 3-4 level. Eric also gained an "Excellent" grade and Alan achieved "Outstanding", which is the top category and rarely given in the competition. Alan played Beethoven's Sonata in F major from memory and Eric played Greig's Elfentanz, also from memory.



We love celebrating World Book Day at Currie Primary School, on the first Thursday of March each year, writes Head Teacher Ms Sally Hourston. We had a fun day organised by our Book group celebrating books and reading. Everyone could dress up if they wanted to, either as a word or punctuation mark or as a character from a book. We had some fantastic words—"sweety", "sleepy", "cloud", "flower power", "boarded", "banana" and so on. Staff love to take part too and enjoy the excuse to dress up—we had Paddington, lots of sleepy teachers and even a Book Worm! We cannot wait until next year!



Saroj Lal Award Ceremony 2025

SONNY, AYRA, CAMPBELL, ALINA, ABIGAIL, TARIQ
P7 CURRIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

At school the P7s have been learning about Saroj Lal and her achievements through our "Diversity and Equalities" topic. While we were learning about Saroj Lal we entered our work into the Saroj Lal Award, which included weaving, poems, and a big quilt for the "Proud to be Me" section. In addition to this we entered posters into the "Artivism" section.

We then received news that we had been invited to the Saroj Lal Award ceremony at the Edinburgh City Chambers. We were told that we had to get the bus straight after school and we all felt nervous but also very excited to have been offered this opportunity to experience such an exciting event.

When we first saw the City Chambers we were overwhelmed with emotions. When we walked in we were greeted and led up the red-carpeted stairs. As we were early, we went into the display room and we were amazed to see



our beautiful quilt on display. After a couple minutes of waiting we entered the award ceremony. They started off with a few speeches and we got the chance to hear a few words from Saroj Lal's son, Vineet, and others. Then they started handing out the certificates. Our school was nominated for a lot of our artwork and we were over the moon! Then they called out the winners from "Proud To Be Me" and we couldn't believe it—we had won for our quilt! We were so proud of the efforts of all the children in P7 at Currie Primary and it was great to be recognised for this hard work. Overall it was an amazing experience which were all extremely grateful to be a part of.

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LETTERS etc!

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Oops!

Apologies to our many prize crossword fans; last issue, the hired help accidentally failed to include the clue for 24 Across. While we attempted to share the clue through our Facebook page, we are nevertheless impressed by the number of regular entrants who still sent in their solutions. We're proud of you!

Parking

In one of his recent columns Councillor Bruce mentioned that Juniper Green is a bit of a bottleneck when it comes to parking. This could easily be alleviated with the introduction of some single yellow lines—after all, as soon as you cross what was the old city boundary, there is a single yellow line on both sides of Lanark Road West at least as far as Currie and possibly as far as Balerno. Apart from some stretches of double yellow lines in Juniper Green, there are few parking restrictions. A single yellow on the north side, opposite the double yellow and a stretch on the south side from Porteous's premises to the old city boundary would certainly make life easier for the bus drivers who often have trouble passing a bus coming from the opposite direction.

I also think there should be double yellow lines the entire length of the east side of Juniper Avenue having witnessed a bin lorry having difficulty getting past cars parked opposite each other.

Rosemary McMurtrie
Currie

Horse Dung

Like many of your readers I am appalled at the amount of horse dung that accumulates on the Water of Leith path. When the W of L volunteers are in the area they do their best to scrape the mess off the path although it is not their responsibility. The British Horse Society website www.bhs.org.uk states:

"... horse dung can be unpleasant if it cannot be avoided by passing feet or wheels, particularly for a wheelchair, pushchair or bike. The BHS strongly encourages riders to be aware of their horses dunging on paths and the potential impact on other users. If any equestrian establishment takes or has clients frequently riding through a residential area or along routes which are used with pushchairs, wheelchairs or mobility scooters it is recommended that someone regularly follows to remove any dung."

So, horse riders, please show some respect and responsibility for other users of the path and clean up after your horse. Thank you.

J Jack
Currie



What the...?

The Hired Help has noted that the public toilets near the heart of Colinton Village have now been closed for around a month, because of an apparent "electrical fault".

No more details are given on the hastily taped-on-the-door notices; certainly not any indication of when they might be reopened.

Potentially more worrying is that a new lock has been fitted to the accessible toilet in the middle of the block. While there had been an issue with the existing RADAR lock last year, which left the facilities open to all, elderly and disabled people with RADAR keys will not now be able to access the toilet—which is tantamount to closing them.

After all the struggles to keep these toilets open, is this "electrical fault" just the excuse CEC needs to close them permanently?

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'SLOW TIME'

Drop out of society for a stretch and you might rediscover the feeling of measuring time in older ways. The way light from the window slides across the wall next to your bed through a day, or the changing arc it marks there through the longer span of seasons. Years of watching such patterns matures into the deliciousness of anticipating favourites, for example knowing just the right moment to head out to catch the late sun's long shadows on my favourite bench. Or the freedom of the longer views from my bedroom window that reveal themselves only when winter shores the trees opposite of their leaves, trees which for a short time each year blaze with gold as the sun sets behind them. And of course I'm sure

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY Katie

we all eagerly keep watch for the year's first bright yellow daffodil!

In the pressure and rush of today's world it can be easy to forget that we are very much in and of these natural rhythms too, our minds and bodies not designed to live in defiance of them to the extent we daily push them to.

But not everyone is able to rush. Some of us have to live in more patience and slowness with time. What helps though is seeing others honour gentler and more humane rhythms of their own days and life seasons. Spring often brings a joyous pace I can't keep up with, and I find it helps me to remember the Lao Tzu saying: "Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished". So go on, allow yourself to luxuriate in some slow time.

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PLANNING BY ARCHIE CLARK

'Brooklea's Burning, Brooklea's...'

In February, I wrote about a proposal by Dawn Developments Ltd to build three houses at the historically significant East Mills site where Brooklea stands, adjacent to the Water of Leith Walkway in east Currie. ("Brooklea House Proposal") The application is currently awaiting assessment.

Things have changed. Before dawn broke on 27 February, the fire brigade had four engines including a turntable ladder parked on Blinkbonny Road at Mutters Bridge and were fighting a raging fire at Brooklea. Some hours later, with the fire subdued, heras fencing was erected to enclose the shell. Weeks later, the air still smelled of smoke. It was a blessing that the building was isolated and that there was little wind to carry the fire along the valley.

Not mentioned in my article was that, by 1975, the site was home to several static caravans, one at least occupied by an elderly couple. Later owners of Brooklea cleared the site, extended the ground floor to the east and added accommodation in the roof space.

Sites like these are sometimes repurposed as museums. The East Mills site, sandwiched between the former Balerno Line and the Water of Leith, with the remnants of a mill lade, and adjacent to what was one of the largest paper mills in Scotland, has seen a lot of history.



Planning and Climate Change-2: Relax Planning Rules, But Where's the Money Coming From?

Amid all the talk about adjusting to the "Climate Emergency", we seldom hear how our planning system has contributed to the problem.

Modern Planning controls stem from the 1947 Town and Country Planning Acts for England, Wales and Scotland. They unified town planning by replacing the large number of planning controls exercised by authorities across Britain. But, as is the nature of centralised legislation, regulations, guidance and codes of practice, rationalisation was followed by numerous bolt-ons. Despite government encouragement to communities to become involved, rigid controls exercised by large remote authorities, whose interpretation may be questionable, are difficult to challenge. Thus, while City of Edinburgh has a Scheme for 47 individual Community Councils, insufficient enthusiastic volunteers have come forward for eight of these. The shoestring policies that Community Councils work under mean that they lack offices, a salaried executive and volunteers with planning experience.

Four decades ago, the future looked less onerous, and that we would have more leisure time. This was reflected in the City of Edinburgh District Council's aspiration to develop land at Muir Wood Road for Public Open Space. (CBN issue 61, June 1981.)

Meantime, the planning

system has exploded. The "strategic" 1985 Lothian Region Structure Plan covering Edinburgh and the Lothians (69-pages) prepared by Lothian Regional Council, and a raft of Local Plans (including the 28-page Currie Balerno Local Plan by Edinburgh District Council), have been superseded by the inflexible all-embracing Edinburgh City 2030 "Local" Plan and appendages.

In 2017, a Planning (Scotland) Bill was tabled "to strengthen and simplify the planning system, and to ensure planning better serves Scotland's communities and economy". However without Beeching's axe, things worsened. More law results in slower administration and increased costs. Comparing urban outlines over the years show how planning decisions created urban sprawl.

The 2011 "SESplan Housing Need and Demand Study" (The Tribal Report) highlighted difficulties obtaining finance for mortgages, mentioning inflation, rising fuel costs, job security, wage cuts and reducing savings. Add delays and the excessive paperwork for any construction - including affordable housing - and it seems clear we need to radically simplify planning rules, with properly resourced community councils in local authorities empowered to respond quickly to community needs under a City Strategic Plan. But money is always short.

More housing on former Green Belt land at Gogar?

In the February issue, I noted that planning applications had been lodged for "enabling works" to access a site near the Royal Bank of Scotland offices at Gogar.

Since then, an "Application for Masterplan in accordance with condition #1 of planning permission in principle 15/04318/PPP at Land 1,000 metres NW, SW, & West of Hermiston Junction M8, Gogar Station Road" (Ref. 25/00781/AMC) has been lodged.

The applicant is named as "Places For People Dev. Ltd. & Amber Real Estate Inv. Ltd." The land, stated as intended for 1,350 units, is shown divided up into nine parcels of varying size including spaces for commercial/retail and a primary school. There would be a "Town Park" at the north end with a single link road under the motorway to Lochside Avenue and two access roads to Gogar Station Road. There are 56 documents on line.

There would be five phases of development with the primary school and the local centre identified for phase four. No population projection or traffic analysis appears to have been included and the affordable homes provision is described as being "in excess of 25% of the overall homes delivered on site".

[The Edinburgh City Plan 2030 states that it expects a "minimum 35% affordable housing contribution from new developments in Edinburgh".]

The drawings confirm that there would be a single lane carriageway under the Bypass, which would only cope with single decker buses, with a loop road within the site making two connections on to Gogar Station Road. At this stage, it is not clear what modifications might be needed to Gogar Station Road to cope with the additional traffic, or who would pay for it.



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SCOTT ARTHUR MP
EDINBURGH SOUTH WEST

UKRAINE

In the month, I have experienced a roller-coaster of emotions. It started in Ukraine. I visited Lviv's Field of Mars just two days before the third anniversary of Putin's brutal invasion. In this park, where people once sunbathed in the summer, I saw the graves of over a thousand men and women who died defending democracy from tyranny. Many of these people were young, and one woman's grave was marked with children's toys. This was not an empty or quiet graveyard, but one filled with the bereaved.

My visit culminated in laying a candle on behalf of everyone in Edinburgh South West at the informal war memorial in Kyiv's Independence Square, as part of a national ceremony led by President Zelenskyy. During that trip, I met veterans with unimaginable injuries, medics, politicians, faith leaders, and ordinary Ukrainians. All were defiant, but also worried about their future. I can't imagine how they felt as they watched President Zelenskyy's press conference with President Trump a few days later.

Although Ukraine has remained in my thoughts, the month ended on a far more positive note. For some months, I have been working on a Private Members' Bill aimed at improving treatment for rare cancers—it has won support from around 40 charities.

Rare cancers have been overlooked for too long, and this Bill aims to change that. While each condition may be considered statistically rare individually, collectively they are anything but. Rare and less common cancers tend to be less survivable and account for 47% of all UK cancer diagnoses, a staggering 180,000 people per year.

I was proud that the bill managed to win cross-party support following over three hours of debate in Parliament. The debate was wholly uplifting, and Madam Deputy Speaker concluded by saying: "That was most definitely Parliament at its best."



GORDON MACDONALD MSP
EDINBURGH PENTLANDS

REAL BENEFITS

It was great to once again support the incredible work being done in Balerno for Fairtrade and, although Fairtrade Fortnight has moved to later in the year, Balerno was out in force once again raising much needed funds for Transform Trade. Balerno Fairtrade have now celebrated their 20th year, and it is down to the efforts of the members of Balerno Fairtrade Village, local retailers, the schools and residents who have enthusiastically supported Fairtrade. As has become a bit of a tradition over recent years, I had a go on the smoothie bike!

With so much uncertainty across the world and here at home, the cost of living crisis is set to continue with household bills increasing again, putting additional strain on already stretched finances. However, there is help available which could go some way in alleviating the very real pressures faced by families—the Scottish Child Payment. This policy has benefitted over 21,000 children right across the city since it launched in 2021. It has lifted local children out of poverty and provided support to those who need it the most. The payment will also be increasing for those families in the local area to £27.15 with the announcement that all Scottish Social Security benefits will increase from April in line with inflation to ensure its impact is maintained. I would urge readers to go to <https://www.mygov.scot/scottish-child-payment>.

In addition, the new Pension Age Disability payment, which is replacing Attendance Allowance, is now being transferred from the Department for Work and Pensions to Social Security Scotland and we have been assured there will be no gaps in payments while the transfer takes place.

Many readers will be aware of my announcement to retire at the next Scottish Parliament election but, with well over a year until then, I will continue working hard to represent the constituency and providing assistance and support.



SUE WEBBER MSP
LOTHIAN REGION

SPRING AHEAD

Spring is in the air and with that comes a busy calendar of events across the area. Balerno Farmers' Market is well supported all year round and popping up on a Saturday for a spot of shopping, to catch up with residents, is always a pleasure. In March there was the Balerno Fair Trade morning, with the city's Lord Provost handing out prizes to our local primary school kids and a sleuth of politicians trying their hand at making smoothies.

I was pleased to pop along to Juniper Green Tennis Club to see how their new surface installation is progressing. This should be completed in time for springtime tennis and the various events that take place in the Easter holidays.

I have also formally supported Balerno Village Trust's efforts to take on the vacant Police Station through a community asset transfer, a project to see a new active travel route across the field at Muir Wood Road, and Colinton Village Enterprise's plans to develop the old coach house at Spylaw Park. It is all go when it comes to residents getting their sleeves rolled up to enhance our community!

It was a huge sense of relief, some 15 months after tragedy struck on Baberton Mains Avenue, that works will hopefully soon start to demolish the damaged homes. I hope that rebuilding can be completed quickly as residents and neighbours have already waited long enough.



CLLR GRAEME BRUCE
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

MORE DISRUPTION

At the recent Currie Community Council meeting one of the items on the agenda had the topic of keeping dogs under control. While there are limits as to what the City of Edinburgh Council can do in terms of the control of dogs, they can assist in informing owners of the duties and responsibility of owning a dog. However, going forward, this is one particular topic where the legislation around dog control may require further investigation by the Scottish Government and, if you have strong views on this subject, then please contact your local MSP.

I hope by the time you read this article that Wester Hailes Road is fully reopen to all traffic. It was deemed necessary to strengthen the bus stop areas and resurface the whole area at the same time. I was told that the reason CEC could not just close one side was due to the bus stops being diagonally relatively close to each other and the different depths of planing. Along with safety aspects for workers and the width of machinery were other contributory reasons for closing this road. I did ask them to make their best efforts to have this finished within the time period. I hope they did!

Again, I made contact with Lothian buses to see if we are any closer to the reintroduction of the X44 but I was told that passenger numbers have still not climbed back to pre-Covid levels. I did ask if they could possibly do a survey of passengers to seek their opinions on this subject. However, for surveys they asked me to direct anyone to their website to make their concerns heard: <https://support.lothianbuses.com/hc/en-gb/requests/new>

Lastly, it was a pleasure to attend the Balerno Fairtrade morning event at Balerno Parish Church recently which has now been going for over 20 years—and yes, I peddled as hard as I could to create that super fruit smoothie!

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CLLR NEIL GARDINER
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

A BUSY MONTH

A highlight this month was a sneak preview of the new environmentally-friendly Currie Community High School, alongside head teacher Jenny and Deputy Alan, plus Cllrs Glasgow and Bruce. Features include an impressive timber-lined swimming pool, cafe, two gyms and assembly hall. Works are progressing with “practical completion” anticipated in early May.

I also attended a meeting with Councillor Jenkinson and council officers to be informed about proposals to create a safer environment for children crossing roads near to Currie Primary School. Proposals will go out for local feedback.

I then attended a meeting with Councillor Bruce, council officers, consultants and funders regarding feasibility for a partially off-road cycle route and path between Balerno and Kirknewton. Passing community council contact details on, subject to the Chair and agenda-time permitting, this might feature at the next meeting. All local feedback will be helpful in developing the proposals which are funded through to the design stage.

After eight years on the City of Edinburgh Council’s Planning Committee, helping protect the Green Belt through the adoption of City Plan and numerous decisions on developments, I decided a change is as good as a rest and will now be on the CEC’s Transport and Environment Committee.

At the end of March the Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee will be asked to make a decision regarding car park charges, the money being ring-fenced to pay for the now enhanced ranger service and further improvements to paths and park infrastructure.

I visited the recent Balerno Fairtrade exhibition in the Mill Café in March; such well-organised events enable our community to reflect on its place in the wider world. In a world of apparently changing values, it is good to see the Water of Leith villages remain generous places!



CLLR FIONA GLASGOW
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

LOCALS BEST PLACED

It has been a busy month. Nominations were made to our community councils and I am proud to say that each of the community councils in the Pentlands Ward managed to get enough nominations to go ahead. Anyone interested in becoming involved can still attend and nominate themselves at the inaugural meetings if there are vacancies. Local interest groups can also nominate representatives. Details can be found on the relevant website/Facebook page.

Community councils have an important role to play in addressing local issues. Recently the Currie Community Council held a meeting attended by a very large group of local residents concerned about dog attacks in the area. The meeting was attended by both enforcement and police officers who explained what actions are being taken and encouraged residents to report incidents and provide evidence if possible. It was an opportunity for local people to express their concerns and look at ways to prevent further incidents. Local people are best placed to identify and raise issues in their neighbourhood.

The Balerno Fairtrade event was a great success and was very well attended by the community and elected representatives. It was wonderful to see the great artwork by school pupils and for them to receive recognition from the Lord Provost.

I recently met some lovely Baberton Mains residents who are part of a walking group aimed at improving wellbeing. They meet weekly and have the opportunity to explore the great outdoors and enjoy each others’ company. I also got to see the great work by Schools Air Pollution Programme where school pupils were able to explain what they had learned about air pollution and their proposed solutions. Children are inspirational and show real commitment to their communities!



RICHARD M HENDERSON
BALERNO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY COUNCILS

Edinburgh’s community councils, having been in place for five and a half years, were dissolved on 27 March with the election of new councils, including Balerno’s.

Back in 2019 only two out of the then-46 community council areas did not gain sufficient support for new councils. In 2025, eight such areas were unable to muster the minimum numbers of candidates—and that amounts to about 17% of the now-47 community council areas across the city. A problem?

Community councils are the first rung of government in Scotland, with local authorities such as the City of Edinburgh Council as the next one up. Many CCs took over from town councils, which passed into history in 1975, even adopting old burgh coats of arms. But community councils didn’t inherit any powers, and funding is limited to an allowance for some administration costs. So why bother? CCs are statutorily required to represent the views of their community; while some also facilitate a range of activities promoting the well-being of their communities, their statutory role is almost more important now than it was 50 years ago.

Government is much more complicated and centralised now than it was in 1975. Government action may – perhaps inadvertently, or perhaps even as a matter of policy – marginalise and weaken democratic checks and balances. Take, for example, the drive to reduce the scope for objections to planning applications, which we see at present emerging in England and Wales. It suggests a much less consultative approach by central government, along with a more dismissive, even authoritarian stance.

The denial of a future voice to any statutory consultee, as currently proposed, would be a dangerous way forward. It will always be important that communities have the right, the means and position to ensure that their voices can be heard.



DR KEITH JAMES SYMINGTON
CURRIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

GOING TO THE DOGS?

This month’s Currie Community Council meeting was emotionally charged, drawing in 90 concerned residents to discuss the recent dog attacks in the community. To answer questions on the subject, Paul Baxter from Edinburgh City Council’s Street Enforcement Team was present, along with Sergeant Mark Coull of the Community Policing Team.

Paul addressed ongoing concerns about dangerous dogs in the area. Under the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010, enforcement is based on behaviour, not breed. CEC has issued a Dog Control Notice (DCN) to the owner, requiring the dog to be muzzled and kept on a short lead, and Sgt Coull confirmed the owner has been reported to the Procurator Fiscal.

Residents voiced frustration that the dog remains with its owner despite multiple reported attacks on other dogs. Parents also raised concerns about their children’s safety with one resident asking directly if her three children were safe going to school. Baxter and Sgt Coull explained that their hands are tied as legal procedures must be followed; however, action is taken based on witness statements and incidents took days, or were not reported to both agencies, which hampered response times. They were keen to emphasise that new information should be reported to both the Police via 101 and CEC: streetenforcement@edinburgh.org.uk.

Councillors Glasgow and Jenkinson acknowledged the community’s anger and frustration. They urged residents not only to continue reporting dog-related incidents, but pointed out that a path is set out in legislation from which neither Police nor CEC can deviate. Of course, legislation does evolve, so they encouraged concerned members of the community to write to their MP or MSP with the evidence needed to enact change.

Rebrand for Balerno Theatre Company



ANNE MACKIE
BTC PRODUCTIONS



In 1991, a new theatre company was founded under the name Balerno Community Songsters. They ran for 10 years before, in 2001, they rebranded as Balerno Theatre Company—a production company who are now in a steady rhythm, staging quality pantomimes and musicals annually.

Now, in their 25th year, they have a big announcement...

Balerno Theatre Company pride themselves on being an inclusive and forward thinking production company with high performance values. They are continually humbled by the immense talent of their casts and production teams, all of whom make it possible for them to continue their creative journey.

With 35 shows under their

belt and auditions looming for their 36th production – a 25th anniversary pantomime – the time was right to consider the company's image, branding and ethos.

"As we reflect on our past productions and think towards the future, it is imperative for us to consider what Balerno Theatre Company represents in a fiercely competitive am-dram market," explained Marketing Manager, Anne Mackie.

"We didn't feel our colourful branding reflected us as an innovative, enterprising and contemporary production

company. In our 25th year, it was time to shake things up and show we mean business!"

And "mean business", they do—unveiling their momentous rebrand as BTC Productions. A take on the former acronym which also represents their revised ethos: "Bringing Theatre to the Community".

"We will always be BTC and are exceptionally proud of the history associated with those three letters," added Chairman, George Mackie. "Now, with the addition of Productions into our branding, we truly mean business and look forward to the next 25+ years as BTC Productions."

BTC Productions would like to thank its supporters for all they have done over the years. Whether on or off stage, as a production company, a shared creative spirit is key in ensuring the future of BTC

Last year's successful production of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
Photo: Sarah Hendrie Creative.

and they look forward to seeing where their rebrand takes them.

"Theatre is an ever evolving art and it was important for us, as a production company, to move with the times, fronting branding that represents quality, inclusivity and innovation," Anne said. "We want to ensure we are giving our casts and audiences a professional and creative experience for the next 25 years and beyond."

• To audition for BTC Productions' first pantomime under the new branding, pop along to their Open Night on Thursday 3 April, 7.30pm at Balerno High School, and hear all there is to know about the iconic "Beauty and the Beast".

Community Choir's Summer Sessions Return

MARGARET KIERAN
SECRETARY, COLINTON & MERCHISTON COMMUNITY CHOIR



Colinton & Merchiston Community Choir's Summer Sessions last year were very popular and successful, so we are very pleased to invite you to join us

this year for a further series of eight fun singing sessions from early May, "Singing in the Summer".

We will be singing a mix of classical, popular, jazz and folk songs. We will learn and sing different songs each week – so it won't matter if

you miss some evenings – with our brilliant Director of Music, Tim Coleman and our excellent accompanist, Morley Whitehead. There will be a concert for family and friends on 23 June followed by a social gathering.

No previous choral experience is required.

• Singing in the Summer, with the Colinton & Merchiston Community Choir, consists of eight Monday evening sessions from 5 May until 23 June inclusive.

• Each session runs between 7.15pm and 9pm at St Cuthbert's Episcopal Church, Westgarth Avenue, Colinton, EH13 0BB

• Cost for the eight sessions is £47, including music hire and tea and coffee.

• To book please contact: secretary@colintonchoir.org

• For more information about our choir, please consult our website: www.colintonchoir.org or our Facebook page.

Pentlands Open Studios Needs You!

JOHN ELLIOTT
FOUNDER, POST

New body Pentlands Open Studios (POSt) is looking for local professional artists and makers to join their new collective.

The idea behind POSt is to include a wide diversity of art and craft practices from painting to textiles and printmakers.

Six highly respected and award-winning artists are already involved, with their work accessible through the POSt website. The group now warmly welcomes other artists in the Pentlands area to join them.

The collective is planning their first "open studios trail" for the weekend of 30 - 31 August 2025.

"We are expecting POSt to benefit both artists, who typically work alone, and the community – which rarely gets to meet the artists – by bringing them together in an art trail connected by the beautiful



Water of Leith Walkway," says POSt founder, John Elliott.

The trail will link individual studios along the upper Water of Leith valley, taking in Colinton, Juniper Green, Currie and Balerno.

"Offer of spaces in the community are sought where artists without studios could show as part of the 30 - 31 August art trail," he added.

• Further details, along with an application form, can be found online: <https://poststudios.org/> More details are also available via Instagram: @PentlandsOpenStudios

Book Review: Copper's End

GRAHAM DANE
CURRIE RESIDENT

It's part of the magic of a book festival that an author changes from being a mere photograph to a real person. So it was for me in meeting C&B's own food writer, Stef Lyons, at last year's Pentlands Book Festival. I've enjoyed her quirky and very personal monthly column for a while and was excited to hear she'd written a novel. Is it any good? Without doubt! Let me explain.

Copper's End starts in the 1970s and flips back and forth to the 1920s. Those of us who remember the era of Laura Ashley designs can therefore enjoy a bit of nostalgia, while younger readers can enjoy the story unburdened by preconceptions.

Historian, student and housewife Deborah takes on a near-derelict old house in a small village with a varied set of neighbours to add assistance and complications. She gets distracted from her thesis writing by discovering scraps of papers relating to her home's former



role as a village police house and eventually starts to investigate the cold case of a murder committed in the nearby Big House.

Overall verdict? Not only is this a great page-turner, but at one stage I decided not to continue reading until it was morning, for fear of being scared by the words. There are the required twists in the plot, genuinely unexpected. I hope there's a sequel, as Deborah's relationship with her husband Peter was left up in the air.

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Details correct at time of going to press. Inclusion should not be assumed
to be a recommendation by C&B News.

WEEKLY

MONDAYS

- **ST CUTHBERT'S CHURCH PLAYGROUP:** St. Cuthbert's Church Hall, Westgarth Avenue, Colinton; 10am - 11.30am. (Every Monday during School Term.) Play, craft, refreshments, singing. All Welcome. Contact: stcuthbertscomms@gmail.com for more information.
- **MONDAY MAHJONG:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 10am - noon. Join our regulars, any experience level is welcome, newcomers can watch and learn and join in when you feel ready- the tile game is like rummy with layers of complexity but easy to start!
- **MONDAY MORNING POP IN CAFÉ:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 10.30am - noon. Come for a cuppa every Monday morning, our volunteers will welcome you for a cuppa, a chat and perhaps a game of scrabble. Donations welcomed but not required.
- **COFFEE, CAKE & COMPANY:** Redeemer Church Edinburgh, 64 Bridge Road, Colinton; 10.30am - noon. Drop in for free coffee, tea, a cake and a chat every Monday morning. All welcome. For further information see: www.redeemeredinburgh.org/ccc/
- **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
- **LUNCHTIME RELAXATION:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 12.15pm - 1pm. Join Raymond at lunchtime to enjoy a guided relaxation to calm the mind and ease stress. No booking required, please drop in.
- **BALERNO BRIDGE CLUB:** Gibson Craig Hall, Currie; 1.20pm for 1.30pm start.
- **BOOKBUG AND BABY GROUP:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 1.30pm - 2.45pm. Stories and songs for babies and toddlers. Meet other parents/carers for friendship, peer support and share a cuppa. Lovely warm and welcoming space.

- **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. We have a waitlist in place for this popular group, and we'd love to start a new social book group to meet monthly, later in the week or at the weekend, but we need a small group of friends to perhaps kick this off. If this is of interest to you please get in touch: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

TUESDAYS

- **KNITTING GROUP:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 10.30am - noon. A very popular, welcoming group for novice and experienced knitters alike. Email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com
- **COMMUNITY YOGA CLASS:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 1pm - 2pm. Spaces are available for this popular lunchtime class with Monica from Karma Tree yoga. Cost £6. Please enquire by email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com
- **ITALIAN CONVERSATION GROUP:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 2.30pm - 3.30pm. Please drop in to practise your Italian language skills in an informal setting.
- **PENTLAND JUNIOR SINGERS:** Balerno Parish Church; 6pm - 7pm. Fun, friendship and singing for ages 8 - 14. New members welcome! More information, email: 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, email: pentland_singers@yahoo.co.uk

WEDNESDAYS

- **BALERNO RAMBLERS MIDWEEK GROUP:** Meet for walks in the Lothians, Fife, the Borders and further afield. For walk details contact M Timmins on 07917878955. Follow Balerno Ramblers on Facebook.

- **PENTLANDS SPORTING MEMORIES CLUB:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 1.30pm - 3pm. 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. Contact Donna Mackey on 07340 560306
- **THE OCTAGON CLUB for Adults with learning disabilities:** Gibson Craig Halls, Lanark Road West; 7pm - 9pm. Contact Claire Maloney: 07999 410721

THURSDAYS

- **SONG TIME:** Gibson Craig Halls, 158 Lanark Road West; 1.30pm - 2.15pm. Aimed at under fives "and their grown-ups". Join Rachel "to sing songs and have fun". Just turn up—no need to book. Pay what you can (suggested donation £5). Email: rachelpety1@gmail.com; mobile: 07814 198715; Instagram: [@rachelianamusic](https://www.instagram.com/rachelianamusic)
- **ACCESSIBLE YOGA COMMUNITY CLASS:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 2.45pm - 3.45pm. Accessible Yoga community class (free, donation welcome) Join experienced yoga teacher Bijam who offers a fully accessible class, suitable to anyone including wheelchair users or those with chronic health conditions who may find benefit from gentle exercise, breathwork and meditation. Please email to enquire about spaces: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com
- **65th EDINBURGH COMPANY, BOYS' BRIGADE Anchor Boys (P2 & P3) and Junior Section (P4-P6):** Gibson Craig Halls, 158 Lanark Rd West, Currie; 6pm - 7.30pm. For more details, contact Bill Brown: bill.brown53@yahoo.com
- **PENTLAND ART CLUB:** Balerno High School; 7pm - 9pm. Join us and allow your creative juices to flow. We practise a variety of skills in a range of media with occasional demos from guest artists. Plenty chat and a friendly atmosphere. New members welcome. Contact: ros.salton@outlook.com
- **PENTLAND BRIDGE CLUB:** St Margaret's Court, Juniper Green; 7pm. We play competitive bridge in a friendly atmosphere. Less experienced players welcome. For further information visit: www.bridgewebs.com/pentland/ or email: mthkjb@gmail.com

FRIDAYS

- **THE MEN'S SHED at the Scout**

Hall; 99 Forthview Crescent, Currie; from 9.30am. We offer various activities and a chat over a cuppa with new and old friends. Come on down! <https://pentlandsmensshed.org>

- **BABERTON BEAVERS AND CUBS:** Juniper Green Church Hall; Beaver Group, 6pm - 7pm; Cubs Group, 7:15pm - 8:45pm. Please email for more: information@babertonscouts.org

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

SUNDAYS

- **65th EDINBURGH COMPANY, BOYS' BRIGADE Company Section (P7 - 18 years old):** Gibson Craig Halls, 158 Lanark Road West, Currie; 6pm - 8.30pm. For more details, contact Bill Brown: bill.brown53@yahoo.com

FORTNIGHTLY

FIRST & THIRD MONDAYS

- **FORGET ME NOTES GROUP:** St. Cuthbert's Church Hall, Westgarth Avenue, Colinton, 2pm-4pm. Sing and socialise with old friends and new. Contact: stcuthbertscomms@gmail.com for more information.

ALTERNATE THURSDAYS

- **COLINTON SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE CLUB:** St Cuthbert's Episcopal Church Hall, Westgarth Avenue; 7.45pm - 9.15pm. Come and enjoy Scottish country dancing with us. We have an excellent, very patient teacher, live music and lots of fun. £5 per evening, pay on arrival. Come on your own or with a partner, you'll be made very welcome. Tel: 07751 186359 or 07483 814099.

ALTERNATE FRIDAYS (4 & 18 APRIL)

- **TABLETOP GAMING IN JUNIPER GREEN / BABERTON / CURRIE:** Juniper Green Parish Church; 6pm - 9pm. Play board-games, card games and wargames. Everyone welcome, adults, children and their families. **>p41**

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ALTERNATE SATURDAYS (5 & 19 APRIL)

• **FREE ART & CHAT:** Currie Library, 210 Lanark Road West; 10.30am - 11.30am. An opportunity to practice your art, and enjoy a free cuppa too! PS: Bring your own art materials. Questions? Call: (0131) 529 5609, email: currie.library@edinburgh.gov.uk, or just come along on the day.

DAY BY DAY

TUESDAY 1 APRIL

• **MAHJONG PRACTICE:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 4pm - 6pm. All welcome: newcomers can watch play and join in when they feel confident.

FRIDAY 4 APRIL

• **GARDENING GROUP:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 10.30am - noon. Gardening Group (1st Friday of each month) All Welcome - experienced or novice, pot planters or allotments. This friendly group welcomes enthusiasts to share common love of gardens and gardening. Friday 4th April details to be confirmed.

• **EASTER BUNNY FAMILY CRAFT:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 2.30pm - 4pm. Join us to make some adorable Easter Bunny plant pots. All materials and support will be provided. This is a perfect family craft session suitable for all ages. Please book the total number of places you require for children and adults, as we only have room for four tables (16 people maximum) in our small and friendly space. This activity is suitable for children ages 3+: all children must be accompanied and supervised for the session. All our craft sessions at the Hub are open and accessible to all, free but we welcome your donations on the day (cash or card). There will be juice/tea/coffee and biscuits available too. Online booking is available: <https://hub531.appointedd.com/> or by email hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

SATURDAY 12 APRIL

• **BALERNO FARMERS' MARKET:** Main Street, Balerno; 9am - 1pm. Easter-themed market attracting local crafts, produce and

groups. More information: <https://balernovt.org.uk/farmers-market/>

• **THE LOTHIAN MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION 2025:** The Student Union, Heriot-Watt University, Riccarton; 10am - 4.30pm. 15 working model railway layouts, model railway sales, refreshments and more. £6 Adults (Children 0-15) Free. More: www.lothianmodelrail.co.uk

SUNDAY 13 APRIL

• **THE LOTHIAN MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION 2025:** See Saturday 12 April.

• **CANCER CARD HEALTH & WELLBEING EVENT:** RBS Gogarburn Conference Suite; 11am - 2pm. Specially designed for cancer patients in active treatment and recovery, along with their carers, family and friends. Discover valuable resources to support your holistic wellbeing and connect with a supportive community. Free to attend.

TUESDAY 22 APRIL

• **BALERNO YOUNG AT HEART GROUP MEETING & AGM:** Ogston Hall, Balerno Parish Church; 11am. A friendly group providing social opportunities for local people aged 60+; free tea/coffee. For details, email Margaret: abenaaddo74@yahoo.co.uk

COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

• **Balerno:** Community Centre, Main Street; 7pm. First Thursday of the month. <https://www.facebook.com/balernocommunitycouncil>

• **Colinton:** Colinton Bowling Club/Zoom; 7.30pm. Second Tuesday of the month. <https://www.colintoncc.org.uk>

• **Currie:** Gibson Craig Halls (rear), Lanark Road West; 7.30pm. Second Wednesday of the month. Facebook: Currie Community Council.

• **Juniper Green & Baberton Mains:** the hub@531 Lanark Road; 7.30pm. Fourth Wednesday of the month. <https://jgbmcc.org>

COMMUNITY CAFES

• **COMMUNITY CAFE:** Currie Community Centre, 280 Lanark Road West; Saturdays, 9am - noon. Barista coffee and delicious home baking.

• **THE MILL CAFE:** 2 Main Street, Balerno; Tuesdays - Fridays, 9am - 2pm. (Also, second Saturday of the month when the Farmers' Market is on.) Balerno Parish Church Community Cafe provides a sociable warm space with home-made baking, Fairtrade barista-style coffee and a light breakfast and lunch menu.

• **THE SWING CAFE:** Colinton Parish Church, Dell Road, Colinton; Tuesdays - Saturdays, 10am - 2pm. Nestling in a quiet corner by the Water of Leith is a lovely setting to enjoy hot drinks and home-baking with friends, or our breakfast and lunch menus. Last hot food orders: 1.40pm.



MONDAY 28 APRIL

• **COLINTON GARDEN CLUB:** Dreghorn Loan Hall, Colinton; 8pm. AGM and Craft Competition For more information visit <http://www.colintongardens.org.uk/>

TUESDAY 29 APRIL

• **PALM DEMENTIA CAFE:** St Joseph's Centre, Balerno; 3pm - 4.30pm. The cafe serves the communities of Currie, Balerno and Juniper Green providing a space for people with dementia and their carers to meet others for support and social contact. For more information please contact Clare Dow: palmcafebalerno@gmail.com

WEDNESDAY 30 APRIL

• **CYCLING AS PART OF EDINBURGH'S TRANSPORT POLICY:** Augustine United Church, 41 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh; 6.45pm for 7.30pm start. Organised by Spokes, an opportunity to hear Pentland Hills Ward Cllr Stephen Jenkinson (CEC Transport Convenor) and Deborah Paton (Head of Transport Strategy and Partnership at CEC) speak on the role of cycling as part of CEC's transport policy, followed by Q&A. Free.



APRIL 2025

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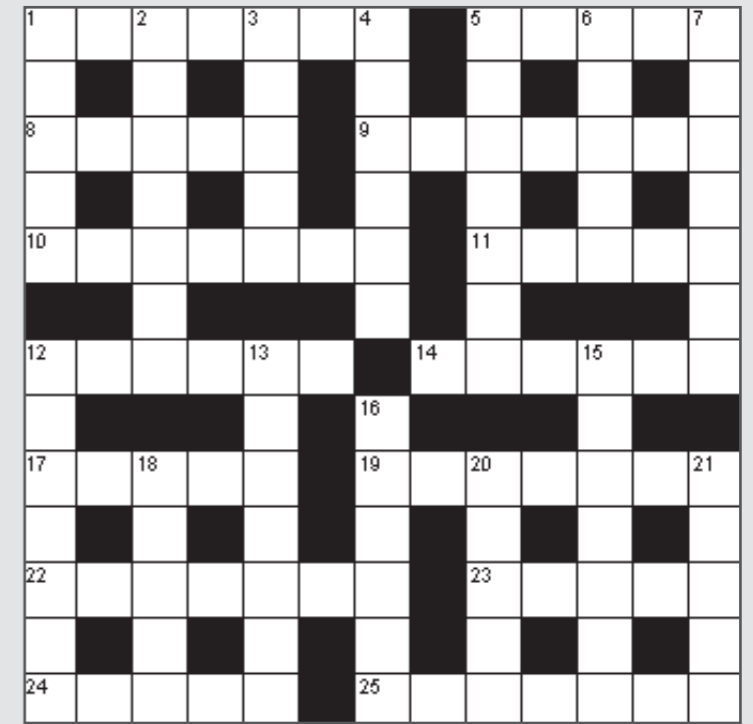
Good luck everyone!

ACROSS

- Freedom. (7)
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- Tendency. (5)
- Fruit. (6)
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- Banquet. (5)
- Gossip. (7)
- Embrocations. (7)
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- Arrows. (5)
- Mariners. (7)

DOWN

- Golf course. (5)
- Woodwind instrument. (7)
- Object surviving the past. (5)
- Annual. (6)
- Perfumed. (7)
- Earth's protective layer. (5)
- Feared. (7)
- Perplexed. (7)
- Countries. (7)
- Rice dish. (7)
- Dissertation. (6)
- Change. (5)
- Legal excuse. (5)
- Tall tales. (5)



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HARD

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5			4	7	
		9			
1	6			2	9
4	1				
3		8			
	3	2	1		
		4			2
	1			4	

LAST ISSUE'S SOLUTIONS

Our congratulations go to Leigh-Anne Smith from Currie who won last issue's Crossword prize.

I	N	V	I	T	E	D	L	A	R	G	E
D	E	E	R	I	A	L					
E	N	E	A	R	E	S	T	V	I	E	
A	T	C	A	E	E	V					
L	A	U	G	H	E	D	R	A	N	G	E
S											
B	E	G	A	N	A	L	E	R	T		
S		S		S		S	O	I			
C	H	E	A	P	U	N	I	C	O	R	N
A	R	I	M	M	S	F					
L	E	A	R	A	M	P	A	R	T	O	
E	S	E	I	G	E	R					
S	P	E	N	D	T	H	E	O	R	E	M

EASY

7	2	9	6	8	4	3	1	5
8	1	3	7	9	5	2	4	6
4	5	6	1	3	2	7	8	9
5	6	4	2	7	3	1	9	8
1	7	2	8	4	9	6	5	3
9	3	8	5	1	6	4	2	7
6	4	5	9	2	7	8	3	1
2	8	7	3	5	1	9	6	4
3	9	1	4	6	8	5	7	2

MEDIUM

9	3	4	2	7	8	6	5	1
7	1	5	9	3	6	8	4	2
8	6	2	4	1	5	3	7	9
3	9	1	7	5	2	4	8	6
2	5	8	1	6	4	7	9	3
6	4	7	3	8	9	1	2	5
1	2	9	6	4	7	5	3	8
4	8	6	5	9	3	2	1	7
5	7	3	8	2	1	9	6	4

HARD

2	6	7	8	1	9	3	4	5
4	1	3	2	7	5	6	8	9
5	8	9	3	6	4	7	2	1
3	4	2	9	5	1	8	6	7
6	5	1	4	8	7	9	3	2
7	9	8	6	2	3	1	5	4
8	7	5	1	4	6	2	9	3
9	2	4	7	3	8	5	1	6
1	3	6	5	9	2	4	7	8

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Athlete Campbell is a Parkrun Alphabeteer

LIZ POWER
LIVINGSTON ATHLETICS CLUB

Congratulations to Campbell Menzies from Balerno who has completed the parkrun Alphabeteer Challenge.

The aim of the challenge is to complete a parkrun beginning with every letter of the alphabet. Campbell started his parkrun adventure six years ago at Edinburgh parkrun when he was 11 years old, and he has now completed 164 parkruns in total.

There is no set list and no time limit—and no parkrun beginning with X! Campbell's challenge took in five different countries: the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands, Denmark

and, for the last one in his challenge, he completed the Zalew Wrzesinski parkrun, in Poland, in 24 minutes.

"When I finished the Z parkrun I felt very tired but proud of myself and can see how far I have come over the last six years," Campbell said.

The Balerno High School pupil is also a member of Livingston Athletics Club, and counts his home parkrun, Edinburgh, as his favourite because its flat and good for getting "personal best times".

He's now looking forward to another parkrun challenge, the Namely, where he aims to do a parkrun for every letter of his name. He's also looking to complete a novice triathlon.



'Balerno Boy' Guides Scotland to Fifth Place in Hockey Championship

NIGEL DUNCAN
C&B NEWS

Former Dean Park Primary school pupil Chris Duncan has coached Scotland to success in their debut at the FIH (International Hockey Federation) Nations Cup in Chile. A win over Japan – ranked number 12 in the world – ensured they claimed fifth spot overall. Chris said: "I could not be more proud of my team."

Battling 34°C temperatures, the Scottish team – nicknamed the Tartan Hearts – had jetted into the competition after training at the University of Edinburgh's Peffermill Playing Fields in temperatures which slipped below zero on occasions.

Balerno-raised Chris, a former director of hockey at The Edinburgh Academy is now head coach to Scotland's women team. "I can't express my pride and delight at the way the players have approached this tournament," he said.

"The results are wonderful but the performances are indicative of the growth that they have made, the changes in their belief and their desire to always want more.

"We have competed in every single game we have played here in this tournament and have beaten two sides (Japan and Korea) ranked above us. We have done it playing a very unique and very Scottish brand of hockey.

"This group has the capacity to keep getting bigger and they have so much pride about what they do. The way they have gone about their business this week makes the staff and Scottish Hockey and the country proud.

The staff have done a brilliant job, not just here in Santiago but in the months in the



build-up to this during a pretty cold and dark winter to get these players ready to perform in a tournament of this scale and magnitude.

"To deliver two wins against two teams is huge especially when we are under pressure against teams ranked above like Korea and Japan is huge and I am absolutely thrilled for them in terms of what they have achieved and I am excited about what comes next, not just for our group and our senior team but what this does for the sport in the country."

The Tartan Hearts did survive one real scare on a Japanese breakaway. Scotland goalkeeper Jessica Buchanan (Wimbledon HC, London) also got down low at her near post to smother, a wonderful reflex save in a tough situation.

During the tournament, Scotland rose to number 15 in the world. "We've played above our rankings and I am absolutely delighted and very happy," said Olympian Charlotte Watson, the Player of the Match. "Now we want to try and qualify for the World cup and hopefully we can make it."



Above: Chris Duncan. Photo: Scottish Hockey. Right: with goalkeeper Jessica Buchanan. Photo: Nigel Duncan.



New Sponsorship Deal for Oriam Walking Football

PAUL RENDALL
CHAIRMAN, ORIAM WALKING FOOTBALL

Oriam Walking Football and Bathing Mobility Advisory Service are delighted to announce a sponsorship deal which sees BMAS providing the club with training bibs bearing their logo, along with Oriam's new club badge.

This is an excellent partnership for both parties, given the clubs demographics and BMAS's professional expertise in bathing solutions.

"We are very grateful to BMAS for their generous support which has allowed us to kit out our players so professionally," said Oriam Walking Football chairman Paul Rendall.

Oliwia Szczotkowska from

BMAS added: "This sponsorship reflects BMAS's commitment to enhancing the quality of life for people facing mobility challenges, as well as those looking to future-proof their homes for themselves or their family. Meanwhile Oriam Walking Football continues to offer a welcoming and inclusive space for adults to stay active."

• Oriam Walking Football meets three times a week: Mondays (12.30pm - 1.30pm), Wednesdays (noon - 1pm), and Fridays (12.30pm - 1.30pm). Sessions are open to women 40+ and men 50+. For further information, contact Deric Oliver, Club Secretary, on 07803 508401 or email: oriam2015wf@gmail.com

• <https://bathingmobility.co.uk/>

Currie Chieftains Updates

SUSAN H LEE
CURRIE CHIEFTAINS

Currie Chieftains 2nd XV made history on 1 March, securing their first-ever National 2nd XV league title with a commanding 38-17 victory over closest rivals Ayr at Malleny Park. This remarkable achievement was sealed with a game to spare, as the team remained unbeaten throughout the entire season. The team's dominance is even more

impressive given that ex-Super 6 clubs saw a significant influx of players returning to their 1st XV's, meaning many 2nd XV squads featured Premiership and National 1 talent from last season.

Huge credit goes to all the players for their consistency and excellence, with special praise for captains Sam Leto and Jack Peters, whose leadership has driven the team's high standards. A massive thank you also to co-coach Tom Hutchinson and manager Bruce McNaughton for their invaluable contributions.

Meanwhile, in the Men's Premiership, Currie Chieftains' 1st XV continues to strengthen their playoff hopes with a string of hard-fought victories. With only a few rounds remaining, the battle for fourth place is intensifying and



Currie FC Ravens secured their second win in a week with a dominant performance against Gala Fairydean Rovers on Sunday 16 March, writes *Bernie Regan*. Braces from Dean King, Benjamin Shields, and Lewis Murray, plus a Danny Fortune penalty, sealed a convincing 7-2 victory against a Gala side which, despite briefly flickering into life midway through the first half, never looked likely to repeat their shock January win.



could go down to the wire.

Our mighty Shrees finished their season fourth in the table, and we look forward to seeing them back in action next season.

The youth section has also enjoyed a fantastic season. Our U14s made their league debut in the Caledonia (Midlands) league, finishing undefeated

and topping the table, a great achievement for the young squad and a sign of an exciting future ahead.

After a hugely successful Scottish Cup campaign, both our U16 and U18 boys' teams reached finals day at Murrayfield. Facing tough opposition in the National Youth Cup finals, our U16s battled against league winners Boroughmuir,

The programme of works of the LTA Park Tennis Project to completely transform the playing facilities at Juniper Green Tennis Club continue at pace with the new macadam all weather surface now laid, writes *Paul Murphy*. A macadam-based pathway between the courts and the pavilion has also been laid to replace the previous blaes pathway. New fencing and a smart gate will shortly follow and, once the new playing surface has settled, the contractors Sportex will return (subject to the requisite benign weather conditions) to add acrylic paint to the courts, marking lines and run-off area. Further good news to share is that our insurer recently confirmed that they would honour a claim to cover the necessary repairs to the roof and the gutters of the pavilion caused by Storm Eowyn. DF Roofing have since made great progress in rectifying all the damage by laying new felt roof covering and new gutters. • Project updates can be found on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/junipergreentennis> To get in touch, email: junipergreentennis@gmail.com

Hearts' Rising Star

NIGEL DUNCAN
C&B NEWS



Heart of Midlothian Football Club striker James Wilson has a major date in his mind—and it is not football related.

The rising teenage star is booked into a major school exam in May but, before that, he aims to continue pressing for a starting slot with Hearts and driving the Tynecastle side up the William Hill Premiership table.

The 18-year-old is a pupil at Balerno High School, the same educational establishment from which Hearts' veteran goalkeeper Craig Gordon emerged, and is currently studying for Advanced PE and maths.

The teenager's football commitments at Tynecastle means he can only attend school around once a week, but teachers send him worksheets and his parents stress the need to study, just in case.

Balancing study and playing takes, he admits, a conscious effort. "I work at home, but I am in here (The Oriam) most days and go to school once a week at the moment.

Teachers email quite a lot of what I need to do and the relationship is good, the school help me a lot. At home, I have to do the extra work to catch up. It is hard, but it is worth it when I get it done."

James has a major maths exam on 14 May. During the early part of his schooldays, his schedule was 75% academic and 25% football, but that changed once he signed his pro deal. "I want to do well in football, but you see people who get to the highest level and fall off or suffer an injury and you need something after football."

His parents are, he said, "both big into school", as are his brothers. "Balance" is the word his parents frequently use.

More figures: 30% of his Advanced PE is practical work. "I got my teacher a ticket to the Rangers game (at Tynecastle). That was my practical work. Hopefully, he enjoyed it."

Overall, James has always felt quite academic and he strongly believes it is important to have qualifications, but he doesn't know what he would do if he qualified for university. "I quite like business, but having a back-up plan to go to university is important to me and my parents."

Pictures of Hearts and Scotland goalkeeper Craig Gordon are positioned on the wall at Balerno High School, but the rising star dismisses any talk that he is a celebrity. However, many younger pupils see him as a footballer, not a pupil.

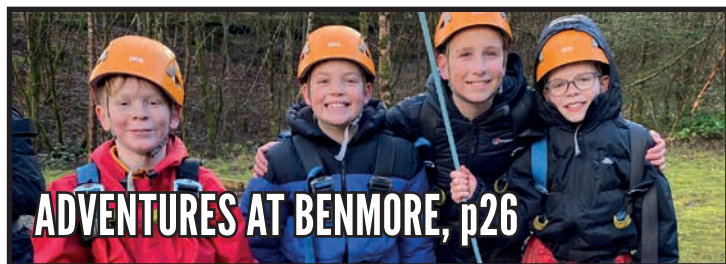
Adapting to the physical challenge of playing in the William Hill Premiership has been important. "When you come up against big teams, the big guys at the back are trying to throw their body weight about and hit you, and you have to be ready to brace up.

"Recently I have been playing a lot, and the fact that I am playing at this moment is really good," he adds. "I am really happy. You have to be confident and you have to back your ability to score goals, but I would not say I am surprised at the way my game has come on. I am excited. Elton (Kabangu) is scoring a lot, and we are doing well. We are working really well together."

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