

YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY NEWS MAGAZINE • EST 1976 • 508 • JULY/AUGUST 2025

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WILDLIFE ON THE WATER OF LEITH



CRAIG GORDON TESTIMONIAL

C&B NEWS

CURRIE • BALERNO • JUNIPER GREEN • BABERTON MAINS • COLINTON

It's Our Bumper Summer Issue!



Exploring the delights of the Water of Leith valley

SUMMER DAYS

INSIDE: NEWS • LOCAL HISTORY • FEATURES • VIEWS • WHAT'S ON

COVER ILLUSTRATION: GIULIA ROSSI



Above: Received just too late for inclusion in our June issue, here are the proud winners of the Balerno Gala Football Competition P4/5 age group, "Inter Dean Park": Arlo Couch, Reggie Winton, Alex Acton, Zara Kumar, Albert Krawczyk and Alex Sime. Photo: Alison Neil Couch.

Below: The good work continues at Dr Mackay's Wood, with a path-defining new "dead hedge" (aka "insect hotel") now in situ by the entrance on Lanark Road West. If you'd like to help with the ongoing work, further volunteer sessions are scheduled between 10am and noon on Wednesdays 2 July, 23 July, and 6 August. For more details, email: michael.muirhead1@gmail.com



Above: The Octagon Club, the local group for adults with learning disabilities based in the Gibson Craig Halls, would like to thank the managers and patrons of the Woodhall Arms Pub in Currie for their generous donation of £500.

Balerno Fairtrade Village Group were once again spreading their message at the Balerno Children's Gala Day, with (below left) Ollie testing out the hoops! Meanwhile, a branded planter has appeared (below right) on Balerno's Main Street!



BRIEFLY NEWS

- **SUMMER BREAK:** As regular readers know, this "Bumper Summer Issue" of *C&B News* covers both July and August—giving our invaluable team of noble volunteers some well-deserved time off during July. (It's a tradition going back to 1977, folks!) We'll be back in the shops with our brand new September issue from Friday 29 August. Here's hoping we can all enjoy some great summer weather in the meantime!
- **BUMPER:** We've heard that founding editor Graham Priestley believed that 24 pages was the biggest *C&B News* should ever get, so we're not entirely sure how he'd have reacted to this genuinely "bumper" 56 page edition, the biggest-ever in the publication's history—and by quite a margin! In any case, the hired help would love to thank everyone on the *C&B News* team – including our contributors, our advertisers and you, our readers – for enabling us to prove that print is far from "dead"! Thank you all!
- **PRETTY AS A PICTURE:** The Hired Help would also like to thank all the members of the Pentland Art Club who submitted their work in response to our request for a front cover image which shouted out "summer" and *C&B News*.
- **UNIFORMS:** The City of Edinburgh Council's Education, Children and Families Committee agreed in June that branded schoolwear will no longer be a compulsory part of any CEC schools' uniform policy.
- **GRANTS:** Edinburgh Communities Climate Action Network (ECCAN) is open to applications for their "Greenlight" seed-grant fund for climate action projects delivered by local community groups within the City of Edinburgh. This year they have £115,000 to distribute across the city. Applications close Friday 1 August. <https://www.eccan.scot/greenlight-funding>
- **MORE GRANTS:** Applications are also open to Edinburgh Community Solar Co-operative's Community Benefit Fund. Charities and community organisations (with a bank account) can apply for between £500 and £3,000 before the deadline on 11 August. For more details visit: <https://www.edinburghsolar.org>.

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: 12 AUGUST
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ISSUE DISTRIBUTED: 29 AUGUST



Above: Pupils at Currie Community High School celebrated confirmation of its 10th Green Flag, and were also presented with a certificate by environmental charity Keep Scotland Beautiful to mark the occasion. (See page 7 for more details.) Below and right: Also in June, Currie Primary School held their annual P7 "Quali", as part of their celebrations to mark P7 moving on to high school, writes Head Teacher Sally Hourston. P7 had a great time dancing and singing the night away—even when their parents joined everyone for the last part of the evening!



BRIEFLY...

p3>>>

coop/community-fund/
 • **EVEN MORE GRANTS:** Small Edinburgh charities struggling with rising costs and loss of income are being encouraged to apply to the second phase of CEC's Third Sector Resilience Fund. Grants of up to £10,000 will be made between September 2025 and March 2026. The deadline for applications is 1pm, Friday 4 July.

• **REWARD:** Shirley Jamieson, the recently retired school crossing patrol person on Lanark Road, Juniper Green, was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) in the King's latest Birthday Honours.

• **FILM:** *Miss Pirie and Miss Woods*, a German feature film based on the true story of a sexual scandal in a 19th century Edinburgh girls' school, was recently filmed at National Trust for Scotland properties "in Balerno and Charlotte Square, as well as in the City Chambers", according to The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) Film Office. So we're guessing that's why Mallery Garden was closed before Easter!

• **POWER SHIFT:** *The Scottish Beacon* – the collaborative of independent, community-based media outlets of which *C&B News* is a founding member – is investigating the impact of the renewables industry on communities across Scotland. They're interested in how communities are being effected by this issue—good and bad. To get involved, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/42xjeud4>

• **EVICIONS AVOIDED:** Residents of the Dreghorn Estate, owned by the Ministry of Defence, have avoided eviction after CEC agreed to buy properties with sitting tenants.

• **NEW SCHOOL:** The new Currie Community High School has requested an "exceptional closure" in August to help staff prepare the new building for pupils, so it will likely open its doors to students on Thursday 14 August, rather than the official start of term on Wednesday 13 August. One Currie Community Councillor, who had seen round the school, agreed that there had been some inflation-related "compromises" in terms of the fixtures and fittings, but that – overall – it's a "magnificent building".

• **NO EDINBURGH** >p7

www.facebook.com/candbnews



Above: Balerno Fairtrade Village Group have been running competitions and supporting learning across Dean Park Primary School for many years—and their work is a highlight of the school's calendar, which is why the Group recently received a special award from the School. Head to page 15 for more.

Below left: Thanks to repeated chasing up by Currie Community Council and Cllr Fiona Glasgow, CEC contractors have not only repaired the partially-demolished-by-a-van low wall at the Pentland View shops, but also accepted local suggestions to include a gap to enable easier pedestrian access to the cash machine. Photo: Moira Peterson.



Above: Some people apparently believe that the annual Balerno Rigg Race – usually held on the Monday of Gala Week – just isn't challenging enough! Our belated congratulations go to Mark Coull, who dressed "for the occasion" as an American Footballer (complete with ball); they may not have set any new time records (other than personal), but did win an award for best fancy dress. Photo: Nigel Duncan Media.

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!

Contact Scott:

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Gordon Macdonald MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Edinburgh Pentlands Constituency



Monthly Advice Surgeries

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

NB: NO SURGERIES DURING PUBLIC AND BANK HOLIDAYS

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Published by Gordon Macdonald MSP, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP. Cost of publication has been met by parliamentary allowances. Parliament is not responsible for the content of other internet sites.

Back in 2002, Currie Balerno Rotary marked Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee by initiating the development of the site in front of what was then Currie Post Office – now *The Gift Shop* – including purchasing barrel planters, wall planters and a commemorative bench, writes *Mike Rowe of Currie Balerno Rotary*. This was the start of the Currie flowers, which we have maintained during the past 23 years. Sadly the wooden tubs had started to show their age, but this year we have new tubs, thanks to The City of Edinburgh Council and we now have the flowers too, thanks once again to members of Currie Balerno Rotary. • To learn more, contact Mike Rowe at PR@cbrotary.org or visit cbrotary.org or facebook.com/rotary1020



BRIEFLY...

ps>>>

LEISURE STAFF YET: EL, which will supervise community access to the new CCHS's facilities, has yet to start recruiting staff, so public access is still "up in the air" at time of going to press.

• ROLEY'S WOOD: At a recent Currie Community Council meeting, it was suggested that a "Friends of" group might better promote and look after Roley's Wood. While recent litter-picks organised by CCHS (on which land the wood stands) have improved matters slightly, it was also suggested that "kids need to take up more responsibility" for the state of the place.

• CONSTITUENCY MATTERS: In case you've missed the exciting news, the current Edinburgh Pentlands constituency for the Scottish Parliament will be replaced in 2026 by the slightly different boundaries of Edinburgh South Western, which frankly sounds like a very minor 19th century railway company to us. Note: the forthcoming Scottish Parliament election is currently scheduled for Thursday 7 May 2026, so don't get too excited just yet!

• MONEY: A recent CEC report confirmed nearly £45,000 is up for grabs this financial year (2025/26) from the Community Grants Fund (CGF)—£25,494.69 has been allocated to the Pentland Hills ward, £19,291.32 for Colinton/Fairmilehead. CGF aims to help local people get involved with their communities through supporting smaller local projects. Funding decisions are currently made by local funding panels made up of local ward councillors and representatives from community councils and other local groups and organisations. However, CEC is considering extending the kind of public "participatory budgeting" process currently carried out in Leith—ie, actually letting the public vote on who gets the money. More details: <https://tinyurl.com/3vznj5rp>

• USELESS FACT: During 2024, CEC spent a total of £11,283.61 on wooden single-use cutlery at the city's schools, more than half of which (£6,619.95) was spent on spoons.

• NUMBERS: CEC's latest *Edinburgh by Numbers* (18th edition; <https://tinyurl.com/yymf2wnh7>) is a "veritable" treasure trove of statistics **>p9**

Redhall Walled Garden Future at Risk

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
C&B NEWS

Redhall Walled Garden, in Colinton Dell, is at risk because of proposed funding cuts by the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (EIJB), jointly supported by the City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian.

Described as "a cherished green space and vital mental health service" by Edinburgh South West MP Dr Scott Arthur, the facility has been used by Scottish Action for Mental Health (SAMH) for 40 years.

"Redhall Walled Garden has been changing and saving people's lives for decades, through the support our skilled and compassionate

team provides on a daily basis," said Alex Cumming, Executive Director of Operations at SAMH. "We're gravely concerned for the future of this vital service and for the people with mental health problems we support."

Dr Arthur highlighted fears that, if SAMH is forced to leave, the Walled Garden could become a target for vandalism, as well as the move "depriving our community of a cherished, accessible space that supports wellbeing and inclusion".

Arthur has written to the Scottish Government, the City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian urging funding to be found to save Redhall Walled Garden and other community health services across the city.

"The proposals to cut most of Edinburgh's community mental health support will be catastrophic if voted through by the Integrated Joint Board," insists Alex Cumming. "The services at risk support thousands of people with mental health problems who will be forced to look for help elsewhere, resulting in significant pressure on an already over-stretched system and causing longer wait times for support. This is a short-sighted move which will cost more money in the long-term and harm Edinburgh's mental health."

• A petition with already more than 5,000 signatures, can be found here: <https://www.change.org/p/stop-mental-health-cuts-across-edinburgh>

Currie CHS Receives Eco Schools Certificate

SUZANNE ROBERTS
KEEP SCOTLAND BEAUTIFUL

Pupils and staff at Currie Community High School were recently presented with a certificate, celebrating their 10th Green Flag, by environmental charity Keep Scotland Beautiful.

The charity's Education and Learning Officer Nicola Davidson met members of the school's eco-committee (right).

Barry Fisher, CEO of Keep Scotland Beautiful SCIO, said: "It's great that we were able to visit Currie Community High School to present a

certificate of achievement and to hear from the children, young people and educators about their inspiring action and commitment to improving our environment.

"For the past 30 years we have loved hearing about the remarkable achievements of our young people and the development of learning for sustainability across the world, and we look forward to continuing to provide support through our Climate Action Schools framework."

Eco-Schools is the largest sustainable schools programme in the world, and was launched across the four UK home nations, plus Denmark and Germany, in 1994.

• www.keepsotland-beautiful.org



Sue Webber MSP



Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Lothian Region

The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba



Monthly Advice Surgeries

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

- Contact Sue Webber**
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Many thanks and well done to all 16 entries in this year's Scarecrow Competition which took place over the first weekend of June in Balerno, writes Valerie Reid, Marketing and Events Officer at Balerno Village Trust. There were some really creative entries this year, but the most popular Scarecrow went to 23 Lovedale Crescent for their Super Mario entry, with Mr Macgregor's Garden second and Chewbacca in third place. Well done also to Jigsaw Nursery for winning the Business Category this year—we're hoping that more businesses might like to get involved next year. It'd be great if Balerno's Main Street was a street for Scarecrows in 2026! As always, a huge "thank you" to Scott Irvine at Harmonies in Wood for making this year's Scarecrow Trophy, and to Bill at Balerno Hardware for distributing print outs of the Scarecrow Map. • www.balernovt.org.uk



City's Library Opening Hours Extended

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
 C&B NEWS

New cost-saving plans will – surprisingly – see an overall net-increase in the opening hours of council-owned libraries serving the upper Water of Leith valley.

The proposal, agreed by the City of Edinburgh's Culture and Communities Committee on 5 June, will replace the library service's current three "opening hours" schedules with two.

Under the new initiative, the "full time" Currie library will open at 10am weekdays and Saturdays: it will remain open until 7pm (rather than 8pm) on Mondays and Wednesdays; 5pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, and 4pm (rather than 5pm) on Saturdays. Despite some earlier closing times, the regular earlier starts mean an overall increase in opening hours— a total of three additional hours, from 42 to 45 hours a week.

Under the new scheme "part time" branches, which include Balerno and Colinton libraries, will follow the same schedule, but remain closed – as they currently are – on Thursdays. This will result in these libraries being open six hours a week more than currently, rising from 32 to 38 hours a week.

The revised opening hours, combined with some reductions in the number of organised events being held by the local libraries, are expected to save CEC around £165,000 a year.

Young Riders Shine at Mountainbike Championship

ELISENDA REINES PLOER
 COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER, HARMENY EDUCATION TRUST

Nearly 100 young cyclists from across the capital gathered at Harmeny School on 11 June for the 2025 Edinburgh Schools Mountainbike Championship.

Organised by the experienced team at Edinburgh Road Club, and generously supported by the City of Edinburgh Council, the day celebrated community, inclusivity, and a shared love for mountain biking.

The event brought together pupils from Primary 7 through to S6, offering them a taste of competitive riding in a supportive, welcoming atmosphere. The course weaved through Harmeny's 35-acre estate and provided enough challenge for those aiming to sharpen their technical skills, with optional "direct lines" mimicking elements found in national-level races.

For newer riders, bypass routes ensured that everyone could ride confidently, regardless of ability. "The idea wasn't to find the fastest racer, but to create a space where kids from all backgrounds could enjoy mountain biking," said one of the event organisers.

Races were held across four age groups, from the 20-minute P7 race to the more demanding 35-minute contest for S5 and S6 students: the riders gave it their all, cheered on by friends, family, and school staff lining the course.

While the competition format followed British Cycling-sanctioned standards, the emphasis



throughout was on participation and enjoyment. Volunteers, teachers, and club members worked behind the scenes to make the day run smoothly, with many praising the spirit of encouragement and camaraderie among the young competitors.

"It was great to see such a diverse mix of kids having fun, supporting each other, and testing their limits," said a volunteer marshal. After the race, the children were tired but proud of their accomplishments and we celebrated the awards ceremony.

With the Scottish Schools Mountain Bike Championship coming up in September, several riders used the event to challenge themselves on more technical lines and gain valuable race experience—but for many, the lasting memory will be the thrill of the trail and the shared sense of achievement.

BRIEFLY...

p7>>>

about the capital, 74.19% of which (according to a quick calculation on our fingers and toes) are open to interpretation. Sadly, there are no breakdowns by either parliamentary constituency or council ward. However, we guess that a fair proportion of the 0.3% of the city's population (1,250 people) said to be working in agriculture, forestry and fishing during 2023 were likely based in or around the Pentland Hills.

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.

BALERNO

• Remove sycamore (23 metres tall); 1 Ravelrig Hill. (25/02960/TPO) Comments by 4 July.
 • Proposed single-storey rear extension and alterations to existing property; 21 Ravelrig Park, Ravelrig. (25/03147/FUL) Comments by 9 July.

COLINTON

• Willow—fell, Beech—reduce large limb at 8 metre by around 50% to growth points, remove epicormic growth, fell sycamore and pine trees, lift crown of trees on boundaries with 59 - 63 Katesmill Road, fell 10 small rowan trees and remove others on boundaries; Merchitson Castle School, 294 Colinton Road. (25/02823/TCO) Comments by 1 July.
 • Single storey and front/rear dormer extensions to house; 52 Redford Loan. (25/02969/FUL) Comments by 3 July.
 • Single storey side extension, new rear French door opening and replacement of rear door with full-fixed window unit; 9 Campbell Park Crescent. >p11

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Currie Family Ride Returns

GRAHAM DANE
CROM

There were 34 horses in this year's family fun ride organised by Currie Riding of the Marches (CROM) committee.

The procession started at the boundary of the Pentlands Regional Park, came down Kirkgate, along Lymphoy Road and back along the Water of Leith Walkway, with an excursion up Waulkmill Loan to George V Park for a short break.

Now in its second year, we hope this junior cavalcade will help these young riders grow in confidence and appreciation for their community and that one day some of them will want to carry the flag themselves over a longer Riding of the Marches.

During the refreshment stop souvenir medals were presented to riders by Gordon Macdonald MSP, Cllr Graeme Bruce and Dr Keith Symington, Chair of Currie Community Council. Several former Currie Ensigns (flag bearers) took part as Stewards and organisers, supporting the young riders.



Donation Supports Colinton P7 Fun at Benmore

LOUISE HILL
COLINTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Our Colinton Primary 7s had a fantastic week at Benmore Residential Centre in late May 2025.

We travelled there by bus, train and ferry which was a great adventure! We took part in lots of fantastic activities such

as canoeing, caving, climbing and mountain biking. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed their week and many of them said their favourite thing was the yummy food, especially the daily 5pm Tea & Cake straight after activities!

We are very grateful to C&B News for their kind donation towards our trip as it helped

reduce the overall cost for some of our families. We are also thankful to our wonderful community who supported our fundraising efforts—carol singing and bag packing in Tesco Colinton, and our Sponsored 5K Fun Run in March 2025.

• <https://colintonprimary.com/>



BRIEFLY...

p9>>>

(25/03002/FUL) Comments by 3 July.

• Proposed side extension (falling under PD) as an extension to original approved rear extension under 22/04660/FUL; 16 Bonaly Crescent.

(25/03068/CLP) Comments by 3 July.

• Reduce width of sycamore crown by 1 metre, height by 1.5 metres, reduce height and width of crown of horse chestnut by 1 metre; 4 Underwoods Grove. (25/03167/TPO) Comments by 9 July.

JUNIPER GREEN

• Widen driveway entrance by removing 60cm of boundary wall and relocating existing gatepost; 22 Belmont Road.

(25/02580/FUL) Comments by 4 July.

PLANNING DECISIONS

BALERNO

• Removal of existing porch and erection of engineered hardwood sunroom extension; 6 Lovedale Road. (25/02331/FUL) Granted, 4 June.

• Extension to rear of dwelling; 21 Johnsburn Road. (25/02409/CLP) Granted, 9 June.

• Removal of 12 lower branches from Sitka spruce; 10 Clayhills Grove, Johnsburn. (25/02142/TPO) Granted, 13 June.

• 3 Norway spruce trees cut to stump; 18 Clayhills Grove, Johnsburn. (25/02102/TPO) Granted, 13 June.

COLINTON

• Removal of existing extensions, construction of new kitchen and garden room extension, replacement of existing windows and other alterations to main house; 2 Pentland Road. (25/01854/FUL) Granted, 3 June.

• Installation of solar PV panels on south-west-facing roof; 4 Underwoods Grove. (25/01934/FUL) Granted, 4 June.

• Removal of sunroom roof, raise floor level to match house and install orangery style roof; 1 Westgarth Avenue. (25/02058/FUL) Granted, 9 June.

• Erection of new house on land adjacent to (35 metres south of); 37 Woodhall Road. Refused, 12 June.

JUNIPER GREEN

• New entrance with

>p13

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The staff and children at Currie Nursery Class are very proud of one of their pupils and friend, Lina (5), who has done something extremely kind and selfless, writes Nicky Macnamara, Senior Early Years Officer, Currie Primary School Nursery Class. Lina has donated 30cm of her hair to the Little Princess Trust – her first ever haircut! – as part of her fundraising for best friend Ethan, who was recently diagnosed with leukaemia. Well done Lina, and we send our get well wishes to Ethan.

Open Rehearsals for Community Choir

MARGARET KIERAN
COLINTON & MERCHISTON COMMUNITY CHOIR

We warmly invite you to join us for either or both of our forthcoming Open Rehearsals this autumn. The Colinton & Merchiston Community Choir is a very welcoming, non-auditioning choir with a mixed range of ages and singing/sight-reading abilities. By attending you can see what it would be like to sing with our choir, with no commitment or pressure to join, nor any charge—unless you decide to join the choir for the full term. We will be singing well known Christmas music in preparation for our annual festive concert, on Monday evenings in the Memorial Hall from 8 September onwards. Our normal rehearsals begin at 7.15pm and end at 9pm. We have great fun but also learn a lot with our enthusiastic Director of Music, Tim Coleman, and our Accompanist, the excellent Morley Whitehead.

The Open Rehearsals begin at 7pm on Mondays 8 and 15 September, in the Memorial Hall, at Merchiston Castle School, 294 Colinton Road. For more information, visit: www.colintonchoir.org or our Facebook page.



Green Spaces Grass-Cutting Update

KEN BROWN
CHAIR, CURRIE & BALERNO GREEN SPACES

Following on from our article in April's C&B News, we've achieved a positive outcome. Stephen MacGregor, the Parks Technical Officer, reviewed the 25-page letter issued by Currie Community Council (CCC) Grass subcommittee, containing SWOT and Risk assessments, the online petitions and comments, residents' comments from the open meetings, and marked up drawings and a summary of concerns. In parallel Sue Webber MSP supplied 1,000 leaflets which were hand-delivered by the subcommittee to residents 450 metres (492 yards) either side of the grass strip, and their concerns and comments on the feedback forms were passed on to the City of Edinburgh Council. Stephen and I met and walked through the entire area; he then revisited the area with the manager and chargehand responsible for the grass cutting. This was followed with a walk-through meeting with Stephen and I on the Parks' response proposals. I then informed the subcommittee and CCC of the proposals. These were: verges will be cut every two weeks; main areas which have a high level cut (approx 4 feet/1.2 metres) will be cut every six weeks (rather than four weeks) enabling wild flowers to grow. Following the first cut on 29 April, this would give dates of: 10 June, 22 July, 2 September, 14 October and 25 November. The planted areas that flowered will be cut once past, at 12 weeks: on 22 July and 14 October. To promote the working together,



Top: Sue Webber MSP and Currie & Balerno Green Spaces' Chair Ken Brown discuss matters with Stephen, with local residents and Boris the dog. Above: Grass and wild plants at five weeks.

a follow up meeting with residents was held on Tuesday 10 June with Stephen and the residents where it was agreed that working together to achieve a balanced outcome was a "win-win" for all concerned. The grass areas, when cut, create open spaces for all to enjoy, where people feel safe, kids can play, dogs can be walked and their responsible owners able to pick up after them. There are dedicated areas of planting with flowers promoting insect and butterflies. Stephen has taken on the task of writing an article on the Council website promoting "You Said/We Did".

As residents take pride and interest in the area and paths, the group is suggesting forming a working party to start widening the paths by lifting the overgrown grass, which is over a foot in some areas. If you are interested please get in touch: curriegreenspaces@yahoo.com

BRIEFLY...

p11>>>

external steps, loft conversion with dormer and re-roofing (as amended); 561C Lanark Road. (25/00623/FUL) Granted, 4 June.

- Cut back three sycamore trees overhanging boundary and reduce height of remaining trees by 2.5 - 3.5 metres; 40 metres south of 521 Lanark Road. (25/02738/TCO) Tree preservation order not made, 13 June.
- Fell dead tree; 7 Juniper Park Road. (25/02712/TCO) Tree preservation order not made, 13 June.

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. Details correct at time of going to press.

- BALERNO**
- Minor local restrictions on Cockburn Crescent, Cairns Drive, Crosswood Crescent and Crosswood Avenue, temporary traffic lights on Harlaw Road between Bavelaw Road and Mallyen Millgate from mid-July (TBC), for SGN gas main renewal; until end of July.
 - Mansfield Road at Harlaw Road, three-way temporary traffic lights for sewer repairs (Clancy Docwra for Scottish Water); 28 July - 5 August.
- BONALY**
- Bonaly Crescent closed between Laverockdale Loan and Bonaly Terrace (Openreach); 14-15 August. (Dates and details TBC)
- CURRIE**
- Dolphin Gardens West, Pentland Place, Rowantree Avenue, Forth View Avenue—carriageway resurfacing with lane and parking restrictions as signed; until 1 July.
- DALMAHOY**
- A71 at Dalmahoy junction, off-peak temporary traffic lights for GPR survey (CEC); 8 July.

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'Horti' Show Approaches!

SHEILA MASON
SHOW SECRETARY

How quickly the time has passed this season, so the Horticultural Society hope you have been successful in growing some flowers, fruits, and veggies in your gardens which you would like to proudly enter for competition at our Annual Show

Hopefully also the "crafty" among us are working to make items or create the floral art displays the judges would like to admire and choose as the winners.

This year is the 145th Show and the schedules – free of charge – are now to hand in various outlets in the area for you to peruse.

There are also competitions for the younger people in the community to keep themselves busy in the school holidays.

The committee look forward to seeing you all!

• *The 145th Horticultural Show is on Saturday 30 August, in Balerno Community High School. Doors open 1.30pm. More details on our website: www.currieshow.weebly.com*



Did you know that in 2023, 73% of Balerno residents manually removed the weeds in front of their property without the use of harmful chemicals, writes *Pesticide Free Balerno's Annie Macdonald*. In doing so they were supporting the community initiative for health and environment. With obvious benefits for health, residents motivation has increased again—and again, across Balerno. Thank you, Balerno residents! PFB Volunteer weeding group are here to help assist Balerno's less able residents and those needing assistance or a little support and encouragement. Please continue to help by: manually weeding the small strip in front of your property; helping less able residents; letting us know of any weedy areas in Balerno; and volunteering to help out.

• Email: Pesticidefreebalerno@gmail.com or visit: www.PesticideFreeBalerno.com

Hub@531 Buzzing for Great Big Green Event!

ANNETTE WILSON
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, HUB@531

The Great Big Green Week is an opportunity for communities to come together to learn, share, swap and grow in a wave of action to support the planet and nature.

This year we focused our activities all on one day – Saturday 7 June – and welcomed lots of local people along to take part in free activities such as river dipping in the Water of Leith, making beeswax wraps and trying some vegan snacks and cake.

We had stalls supported by the Edinburgh Tool Library, Fairtrade and the Co-op, while our own gardening group were selling plants and cuttings for donations. We hosted an interesting talk from Jim Lee, board member of the Edinburgh Community Solar Cooperative, about the ongoing rollout of solar panels in partnership with The City of Edinburgh Council, local communities and other organisations.

Our thanks go to trustees Lynn and Anne who organised the event, Gus Eagan from Earth Calling, Anne Trew from the Coop, representatives from Edinburgh Tool Library and Fairtrade, and (of course) all the families and local people who came along on the day!

We have a passion for making sure we are as climate friendly as we can be at the Hub@531, and we'd love to build our Great Big Green Week event for next year.

• *If you are interested in getting involved, or have ideas for activities you'd love to attend, please get in touch with us at hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com*



We organised a clothes swap on 29 May 2025, writes *Jacob, Finlay, Oliver, Maven, Lucie and Olly at Currie Primary School*. Pupils who wanted to bring in clothes were recommended to bring in five items of clothing to swap for something else. The Swap-Shop was a great success! We started with over 100 pieces of clothes and were left with fewer than two bags' worth. All of the leftover clothes will be going to charity. The reason why we did the Swap-Shop was because we discovered the truth of fast fashion and the harm that it does to our ecosystem. We had the idea to try and raise awareness of this cause and to make a difference in our school.



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Hazy Days?

LESLEY HENDERSON
BALERNO FAIRTRADE VILLAGE GROUP

Hotfoot from its post-Rigg Race wash, our much-loved ancient giant banana reappeared at the Gala Day's Fairtrade (FT) Banana Hoopla, with Scotmid again generously sponsoring real bananas. Happy children, their elders, and politicians from three parties flung a good 500 hoops, the weather held and, boosted by the Parish Church's Sunday leftover banana sale, Transform Trade got a healthy donation. So,



a fun event with a serious purpose.

Days later, in went the FT-themed plants to the Main Street's floral tub, thanks to kind planters and Balerno Gardeners, ready again to cheer up our street and remind us all summer to buy FT whenever we can.

Capping May/June, Balerno Fairtrade Village Group had a great surprise when Dean Park Primary School kindly nominated the group for their Community Award. We enjoyed a wonderful morning of hospitality on Thursday 12 June, with songs from P3 and P4; the children showed how well Dean Park teaches them all about caring,

fairness generally and Fair Trade/Fairtrade in particular. This was followed by the presentation of a beautiful trophy.

With commitment like Dean Park's, we're so reassured to feel the future of FT locally in such good hands.

To finish, a date for your diary: our next meeting starts at 7.15pm on Monday 21 July, at the Ogston Hall of Balerno Parish Church. Everyone's welcome; please come and help decide where Balerno's FT should go next!

• <https://www.facebook.com/Balernofairtradevillagegroup/>

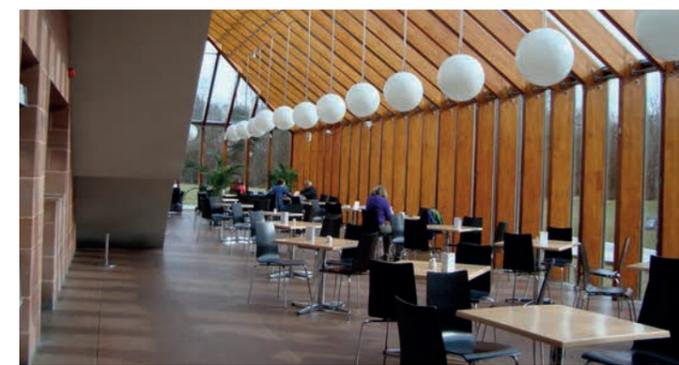
Balerno SWI and the Burrell Collection

EDINGELL THOMSON
BALERNO SWI

Balerno Institute's annual June outing this year was to Glasgow to visit the Burrell Collection, a huge art collection gifted to the people of the city by life-long collector Sir William Burrell, and housed in an award-winning, purpose-built gallery originally opened in 1983, free for the public to visit.

Arriving just before noon, having had to be decanted in Livingston from the original coach to a minibus due to a windscreen wiper malfunction, some of us decided to start with a delicious snack in the lovely downstairs restaurant, before tackling the extensive galleries.

With a collection of around 9,000 works of art to look at, there was no possibility of seeing it all in one afternoon, so I – with some of the other



ladies – concentrated on the ground floor galleries, with their eclectic mix of medieval sculptures, tapestries, Chinese and other ceramics, and French and Scottish paintings.

Impressive carved stone archways, rescued from old ruined churches, linked many of the rooms, some of which were representations of original rooms in Hutton Castle, home of Sir William Burrell until his death in 1958.

Of all the items, what I liked best, personally, was a simply carved unpainted wooden angel with a comically quirky face. I'm sure not everyone would

agree on that, but what all the ladies were agreed on, was that it was a very interesting and well organised trip.

• *Our monthly meetings resume on 2 September after the summer break, at 7.30pm in Balerno Community Centre, where we will get a head start on Christmas by learning how to make sewn fabric, and origami Christmas tree decorations.*

• *New members are always welcome—further details may be obtained from our secretary Angela by emailing: BalernSWI@gmail.com*



Oriam Joins Currie Balerno Rotary

MIKE ROWE
CURRIE BALERNO ROTARY

Oriam, Scotland's sports performance centre based at Heriot-Watt University, has joined with Currie Balerno Rotary in supporting our local community.

Alongside its provision of facilities for Scotland's national sporting bodies, Oriam has, from the start, been committed to supporting local sports groups and the local community—and they see this partnership with Currie Balerno Rotary as strengthening these links.

Oriam will work with Currie Balerno Rotary and the other Rotary Community Members to serve the local community by providing help where it's needed, encouraging the healthy development of young people and protecting the local environment; and they have made their first contribution by supporting Rotary at the Balerno Children's Gala.

"Oriam are delighted to be joining the Currie Balerno Rotary Club. Being part of the local community is extremely important to us and we look forward to working alongside this fantastic organisation to strengthen our links in the surrounding area," said Colin Muir, Facility Service Manager, Oriam.

• *Oriam is the sixth Rotary Community Member—joining Circle Security, Dalmahoy Hotel & Country Club, Jack Brown Eyecare, Lindsay & Gilmour, and William Purves in working with Currie Balerno Rotary to support the local community.*

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Christopher Cowe Memorial Fund Update

ROSS & SHIVA COWE
CHRISTOPHER'S PARENTS, ON BEHALF OF THE CHRISTOPHER COWE MEMORIAL FUND, CARDIAC RISK IN THE YOUNG (CRY)

We have just completed the second heart screening at Balerno High School in Christopher's memory and, as part of his legacy, around a further 200 young people have been screened to ensure futures are secured and we avoid the heartbreak of losing another young person if further intervention is required.

We cannot do this without the support of the wider community and it's with great excitement that we can confirm several events over the remainder of this year, which the community can get involved in, raising awareness and funds to continue funding local screenings.

The most pressing engagement for three Balerno stalwarts – Fiona, Sharon and Laura – is a charity skydive near St Andrews on Saturday 5 July. The ladies, who have planned the event around a major birthday celebration, also very kindly decided to fundraise for Christopher's memorial fund. Good luck to the team and thank you for supporting Cardiac Risk in The Young and the Christopher Cowe Memorial Fund.

In September we have two of our annual flagship events. The Christopher Cowe Community Shield Football Match between Balerno and Currie Former pupils' class of 2023 will take place at the Balerno Astro on Sunday 7 September 2025, between 11am and 1pm, and all are welcome. Entry is free but there will be the opportunity to donate during the event.

The following week we have our fourth annual "Wee Wander for Christopher" on Sunday 14 September 2025 during the Edinburgh Kiltwalk. We welcome friends and family and members of the community to join us and help raise funds.

• *Skydive: Having smashed through their initial target, further donations and support can be made via: www.justgiving.com/team/jumpfor50*

• *Wee Wander for Christopher: to join the team, email Ross: ross-cowe5@gmail.com*

Goodbye and Hello from Currie Kirk

FIONA PIGOTT
CURRIE KIRK

Goodbye! On Sunday 15 June we said a fond farewell to both Rev Dr Anne Logan and Rev Susan Galloway. Anne has been our Interim Moderator for almost two years now, while Susan has been our locum for the past 10 months.

Hello! The following Thursday, 19 June, we held a Service of Introduction for Rev Roy Henderson, our new Interim Minister for the Linkage of Currie Kirk and Balerno Parish Church. Roy will be living in Balerno Manse and working with both congregations towards a Union. Services will be held at 9.30am in Balerno Parish Church and 11.15am in Currie Kirk each Sunday until the end of August. For further information please check the websites of Currie Kirk and Balerno Parish Church. We wish him well.



• *Rev Roy Henderson can be contacted on: (0131) 449 3830, 07961 736061 or email: RHenderson@churchofscotland.org.uk*

• *Currie Kirk office (Gibson Craig Halls, 156 Lanark Road West) is open Tuesdays and Fridays, 9.30am – 12.30pm; and Saturdays 9.30am – 4pm, when items for Fresh Start can be left. Tel:*

(0131) 451 5141, email: admin@curriekirk.co.uk

• *Our Coffee Stop! continues every Saturday until end of September in Currie Kirk; it's a great place to meet at the end of a walk for refreshments, open 2pm – 4pm. Thank you to everyone who has come along so far.*



Sun Shines on Currie Guild's Summer Outing

ISOBEL WEBBER
THE CURRIE GUILD

The Guild's Summer Outing this year took place on Thursday 15 May. The sun was shining and it was a wonderful day.

We left the Gibson Craig at 10am, with a great driver from Hunter's of

Loanhead—who also gave us a tour guide experience!

Our first stop was at Caulders Garden Centre in Cupar where we enjoyed coffee/tea and homemade scones and a good bit of retail therapy. Travelling onwards to Anstruther, via St Andrews, we received another history lesson from our driver. It surprised many who were not fully aware of some of the historical buildings in St Andrews, and his knowledge impressed our group.

Arriving at Anstruther – keeping

away from the very windy harbour, we instead crossed the road where it was like the Mediterranean – we spent an hour looking round the little shops, with some of us indulging in ice cream before making our way to our final stop at Pettycur Bay for our meal.

The above photo was taken at Pettycur Bay, with great views over the Forth.

• *The Guild starts again in September where we welcome men and women to join. The Currie Guild meets in the Gibson Craig Halls.*

LOCAL UPDATES • LOCAL UPDATES



2025 Currie Beer Festival a Great Success

HAZEL LUMSDAINE
CBDRT

Currie, Balerno & District Round Table would like to say a massive "thank you" to everyone who came, sampled beers, ate delicious curry and danced their socks off during this year's Currie Beer and Curry Festival. It was an amazing weekend.

We once again stuck with the amazing Kasbah Curry house in Marchmont and were again treated to really tasty (and spicy) curries. Our selection of beers featured a good few new labels that we hadn't tried before, all coming together to be what was a great party.

Saturday night was a sell-out and Friday was also really well attended, meaning that more than

700 people joined in the fun.

There was a change in band line up for this year: we introduced the Jammy Devils and Blue Soul on Friday and welcomed back Bedlam House Band on Saturday, with the wonderful Standard Grades on support both nights. All the bands were clear crowd pleasers and had the dance floor packed all weekend, but... the star of the weekend was the amazing North Dogs—a new and welcome addition to our contact list. Their last song on Saturday night ended on the stroke of midnight to chants of: "One More Song, One More Song!" They were phenomenal and the perfect way to round up another fantastic Beer and Curry Festival.

The bar was staffed again this year by our friends and regular supporters from Currie Chieftains. We have a great relationship with them and regularly rely on their support for an injection of helpers—this was never more appreciated than on Sunday morning when a



Rotary at the Balerno Children's Gala

MIKE ROWE
CURRIE BALERNO ROTARY



Currie Balerno Rotary were there to support this year's Balerno Children's Gala on 31 May and (above) are organiser Colin Aspinall (on the right) with Ken Lindsay, four bears and a giraffe.

The bears and the giraffe were there to be won. The magnificent giraffe was donated by a Rotary member and the bears were all provided by our Rotary Community Members, who were identified on a display board alongside a record of the funds raised and distributed by Currie Balerno Rotary since its formation in 1981.

We also had a Shelter Box on display. These are sent out to disaster areas across the world to support people displaced from their homes. Each box contains a tent and living essentials to provide temporary accommodation. Currie Balerno Rotary has funded Shelter Boxes over many years—last year we were awarded the Shelter Box Silver Partnership Award in recognition of our support.

The contents of the box were on display at the Gala, including the tent, which the team erected, not without a little difficulty and which they managed to get back in the box at the end of the day—also not without a little difficulty.

For all of this – the organisation and preparation, the erecting and dismantling of the tents and their enthusiasm throughout the day – our congratulations and thanks go to the Rotary Gala team – Colin Aspinall, Don MacLeod and John Wilson, plus the co-opted member on the day Janette Aspinall.



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Snapshots of the Past

Currie—The Community That Cared?

DOUGLAS LOWE
CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Last month I delved almost two hundred years into the past and related a tragic event which resulted in the death of Alexander Lawson, aged around 50, in Currie. Mr Lawson and his family, originally from Ireland, had been travelling mostly on foot, looking for work. As no country police existed until the 1840s the two accused of the crime – stone masons John Campbell (31) and William Helm (23) – took themselves personally into Edinburgh to face the charges. They were arrested and found themselves in the Edinburgh Lock-up House awaiting trial. Subsequent proceedings in the city's High Court led to these two men being found guilty of the culpable homicide of Alexander Lawson, and were given "short" sentences of transportation for seven years. However, in the High Court, the wider community of Currie was accused by both the Lord Advocate and the judge, of treating the family badly and of the "unfeeling treatment" of the victim, his wife and family of five children. Both these criticisms, and the wider court case, were widely reported in the press of the day, and the accusation upset many in the area. Currie's then Minister, the Reverend Dr John Somerville, and Mr Newton of Curriehill House had both given character references on behalf of the accused during

the trial, which possibly led to the shorter sentence being imposed. In the aftermath of the trial they also had a joint letter published in the press, primarily defending the Currie Parish residents against the assertions made by the Lord Advocate and the judge, providing a rebuttal to many of the "inhuman" points mentioned during the trial. They pointed out that, although Mr Lawson and his family had only arrived in Currie village on the evening of 6 August, they had been travelling through Currie Parish for a number of days and had received assistance in the form of some money, bread, meal and broth from a number of parishioners. Their view was that, during the family's journey through the Parish and prior to their arrival in the village and subsequently, that "nothing can be imagined kinder or more humane" than the treatment given to them by Currie parishioners. The trial had taken place in November 1827 at the High Court in Edinburgh and, following the guilty verdict and sentencing, John Campbell and William Helm were despatched, in custody, to be held in one of the prison hulks off the south coast of England. They found themselves in HMS Retribution which was moored just off the coast at Sheerness in Kent. Previously the 74-gun HMS Edgar, originally launched in 1779 and repurposed as a prison hulk in 1814, the vessel held 600 prisoners—some in leg

Main picture: Currie Toll area—where it all began. Below: Millbank, Currie, where John Campbell, his wife and family were living in 1841. Photos: Douglas Lowe/CDLHS.



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



Above: A Prison hulk at Sheerness, on the River Medway; possibly HMS Retribution, painted in oils by an anonymous mid-19th century artist.

irons, many waiting to be transferred on to seaworthy convict ships and transported to Australia or the West Indies. As I mentioned in my previous article I was surprised at how many "transportation" sentences were given out at this time.

Courtesy of the British Newspaper Archive I found many given transportation for what appeared to be relatively trivial crimes. William French was sentenced to seven years transportation to Australia for the crime of stealing eight turkeys and six ducks.

Another, obviously "well heeled" inmate wrote a book on his experiences; he described the floating dungeon of nearly 600 men, most of them "double ironed", being filled with "the continual rattling of chains" and "the filth and vermin naturally

produced by such a crowd of miserable inhabitants". He also described being stripped, washed and dressed in a suit of coarse material and then having his irons applied before descending the hatchway to the "infernal regions".

All men capable of work were taken ashore on boats to work at all kinds of labour: each group of between 16 or 20 men being watched over by a brutal tyrannical guard. They returned to the boat at noon, ate dinner, then returned to work at 1pm, continuing until near sunset. He described heavy labouring at various public buildings—such work wouldn't cause too many problems for John Campbell and William Helm, both being stonemasons and used to heavy work.

I had assumed that they would be on their way to Australia to complete their sentence but it appears from what I could find that they continued to serve their sentence on HMS Retribution. I also found documents showing that both men (plus a

number of others) were released early on 10 May 1832, having served "four years, one month and 23 days". This was under an existing scheme whereby "Male convicts, being Three out of every Hundred now confined on board the Retribution Hulk at Sheerness, who have served more than One Half of their Sentences" were to be released "on account of their orderly and uniform good conduct", selected by the overseer, approved by the Chaplain, recommended to the Superintendent and ultimately approved by HM Command, Melbourne.

I did a bit of digging around. According to the 1841 census, John Campbell was back living in Currie in the house Millbank, with his wife Euphemia and three children. He was still a stonemason. William Helm, meantime, was living in Fountainbridge, Edinburgh, with his wife and two children. He was also still a stonemason.

As to the ultimate fate of Mrs Lawson and her family, I have not been able to discover anything—yet!

Big Year Ahead for Heritage Hub Project

CVE TRUSTEES
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We are delighted to confirm the sale of Angela's generously bequeathed property in Colinton, which marks a significant turning point for securing funds to develop the

Old Coach House in Spylaw Park, known locally as "The Shed".

Colinton Village Enterprise eagerly awaits final confirmation of further funding, via The City of Edinburgh Council, that would help us move even closer to realising our vision of transforming The Shed into an inclusive community space for Colinton residents and visitors.

As you may already know, in September 2024, we obtained planning permission for the redevelopment of the building. With continued support from

THIS MONTH IN...

1998

LOCAL HISTORY AS REPORTED BY C&B NEWS.

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
C&B NEWS

There is no doubting the lead story in this 28-page special summer issue of *Currie & Balerno News*: the official completion of a £6.5 million (£12.5 million in today's money) renovation of Currie Community High School. Star guests at a special concert and opening ceremony, held on Friday 5 June 1998, were Councillor Elizabeth Maginnis (Convener of The City of Edinburgh Council's Education Committee which had latterly overseen the work) and local MP Dr Lynda Clark QC.

The renovation had taken around two years to complete, according to Head Teacher Eric Melvin, who "recalled some of the lighter moments" of the process, including "the Japanese visiting group who came specifically to inspect the new toilets". The result, by common agreement, was "a school that looks better, feels better and works better".

What is less certain, however, is the fate of the "time capsule" which, Graham reported, had been "assembled with contemporary items, including the June issue of *C&B News* and the day's *Scotsman*". Elsewhere in the issue, in the "High School Notebook" submitted by CCHS itself, there was talk instead of "a time-chest which will be displayed in the school", consisting of items representing "aspects of CCHS and its associated Primary Schools"—although, apparently, the most treasured item was considered to be a signed programme from the previous month's 2-1 victory by Edinburgh's Heart of Midlothian Football Club over Glasgow Rangers, which had won them the 1998 Scottish Cup. What happened to this time capsule/chest is not clear: 27 years later, with an entirely new CCHS about to open, no one seems to know where it is—assuming it even still exists!

In what would become something of a



Above right: the front cover of the July/August 1998 issue. Main picture: Dr Lynda Clark MP (left) and Councillor Maginnis display the plaque commemorating the official re-opening of Currie Community High School.

tradition during the early 2000s, this 238th edition of the paper was the first July/August issue to be distinguished from the other monthly editions during the rest of the year by the inclusion of a significant number of full-colour pages—all the better to reproduce the vibrancy of the recent Currie Fair and Balerno (Children's) Gala Day. (Regular monthly editions would remain monochrome, albeit with a single spot colour added for variety.)

Unexpectedly, this also meant a full colour portrait of the then-convener of CEC's Transportation Committee, whose office provided almost a full page article on apparently the big issue of the day—the "proposal to install bus boarding platforms at certain bus stops on the Lanark Road and Lanark Road West". So, unusually, not so much the traditional *C&B News* concern about buses and bus routes, but the apparently wild idea of extending the pavements out into the road to better enable the new low floor vehicles to access the kerbs. "I am concerned that all too often we tend to view transport policy from behind the windscreen of a car," Cllr David Begg wrote, foretelling so much about the future of Edinburgh, suggesting

that the "bus stop boarders" would be of particular value to "those with mobility difficulties".

Elsewhere, the paper reported on planned improvements to the Pentlands Medical Centre (which had recently acquired a new ECG machine), an application for a small extension to the north-facing rear of the Gibson Craig Hall, and the ongoing consequences of the April landslip which had forced CEC to close Gillespie Road to all traffic—as well as the nearby Spylaw Bank Road, on the grounds that it was "unsuitable as an alternative route". This meant traffic to and from Colinton was having to be diverted via the City Bypass and Craiglockhart Avenue.

The ongoing investigation of the underlying ground, and subsequent work to stabilise Gillespie Road – some of which was still to be put out to tender – were expected to take most of the summer, and the clock was definitely ticking—partly because of the loss of such a major route, but also thanks to scheduled work due to start on the City Bypass in September. Was Gillespie Road successfully reopened in August as officially hoped? Well... that would be telling!

David Moore, MDA Studio (Edinburgh) Ltd, we recently submitted architectural building warrant drawings to the council and anticipate a timely assessment by the Planning and Building Standards Team. There will be some survey work carried out in the coming weeks to ensure no materials pose a risk during construction, and to assist with planning external works and service to the building itself.

Thanks go to Community Enterprise, who enabled us to conduct a survey on the

Community Heritage Hub Project. Also a huge "thank you" to all those who were able to complete the survey. We are now reviewing the responses to help us develop ideas for the venue to include a café, information centre and event space.

Thanks also to those who attended and volunteered at the recent Repair Café, an event run at The Shed by Edinburgh Tool Library and SW20. It's safe to say a great day was had by all, and some fantastic repair work was carried out with Paul Bullen and his team. We are looking forward to more

fundraising events during 2025, and welcome your support..

This is also a great opportunity to introduce you to our new Board of Trustees! Lorraine O'Shea remains our Chair, with Pam Wardell as Vice Chair and Julie Johnson as our Treasurer. Kim Anderson has recently joined as Secretary, alongside Trustees Jennie Loudon, Elise Anderson and Amanda Easton.

Watch this space for the launch of our iconic Phone Box on Bridge Road, soon to become The Colinton Village Exchange of

information, books and plants.

If you'd like to donate to the project, or volunteer at one of our events, please reach out to us at colintonvillage@gmail.com, scan the QR code below, visit us at www.cventerprise.org or follow us on our socials for the latest updates.



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Cooking the Books



STEF LYONS

It's raining. It's pouring. The old man is... thanking the gods for the rain so that the garden can be a little less parched. The thing is though: it's June. On Saturday 21 June, it's officially-no-bones-about-it summertime. May was quite warm. June so far has been a damp squib. My need to see the sun shining and feel the warmth of it on my back has left me wanting.

Many people go away in the summer. This is not something we are planning in the Lyons house. In some ways I would love to, but my pale skin and ginger hair is a major factor in deciding not to endure 40° heat waves on mainland Europe.

This decision comes with the realisation I will have to look at everyone's photos on social media as they swan off to hotter climes in the coming months. Though I am hopeful of a glorious Edinburgh summer, I am realistic that this can be unpredictable at best. A wash out at worst. In the meantime, I have a plan up my sleeve to fake it till I make it and bring the sunshine to Casa Lyons in a different way. Yes, you guessed it, with food.

Taverna, by Georgina Hayden, is a book of family recipes from her Greek Cypriot kitchen. Any time I ever cook from this book it brings the sunshine directly into my life. As I open the first page I am transported across the seas to places where people sit out in cafés during the day, snacking on *keftedes* and dining on *souvlaki*.



Above: Kleftiko. Below: Koulouri.
Photos: Stef Lyons.

I'm not exaggerating when I say this book changed my life. The opening chapters talk about Cypriot Breakfast. As a person who has zero care for soggy cereal, the concept of breakfast has never really appealed to me. Until now. Olives and pickles. Roasted oregano and lemon feta. Salads. Grilled halloumi. Eggs. Bread. Greek yoghurt and honey. Jams. My mouth is watering at the thought. Doesn't sound like much we eat here in the morning but this is my absolute ideal start to the day.

There are many family favourites and great dishes chocked full of gorgeousness in *Taverna*. I tricked both my children into enjoying courgettes and different cheeses by making courgette fritters (*kolokythokeftedes*). These are consumed warm from the pan and contain feta, which my two had previously said was awful and they would never like it, and another cheese called anari. That's a very mild cheese like ricotta which you can substitute it for if you can't source it. Luckily I found some in a great little Mediterranean supermarket near Haymarket station, where I also got tonnes of spices, tahini and pickles.

At celebrations we have had *kleftiko*, a slow cooked lamb dish where wine and herbs and lamb juices melt into potatoes cooking beautifully underneath. I make lentil dishes and chickpea dishes to go with it, as well as *koulouri* - sesame seed bread rings - to soak up the sauce.

I could keep listing all the things I love from this book but that would drastically exceed the allotted word count. However, Hayden's masterpiece of a book never fails to make me feel all warm inside. Which I need because, as I type this, the heating came on automatically for the first time in months because the temperature dropped below the thermostat setting. In June. Sigh. I guess I need to use this book for all it's worth and be a little less bah humbug about the summer and give it a bit more *yiamas*. Pass the *retsina*, *parakalo kai efcharisto*.

Senior Snippets



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

What I Wish I'd Known in My 20s

If you've just left school, college or university why not seek out an elderly relative, neighbour or friend and chat to them about this advice from an older person?

Looking back, my 20s were a mix of freedom, fear, and figuring things out. If I could sit beside you now, fresh diploma in hand, I'd say this: you don't have to have it all sorted. No one does—even the ones who look like they do.

- I wish I'd known that it's okay to change your mind. About work. About love. About where you live or who you think you are. Life isn't a straight line. It's more like a patchwork, and some of the most beautiful pieces are stitched in later.

- Don't be afraid to take risks, especially when the stakes are still low. Travel if you can. Try something different. Talk to people who see the world in ways you don't. It will make you wiser and more compassionate.

- Look after your health—your body and your mind. Learn to rest before you're exhausted. Learn to say "No" without guilt.

- Be kind. Success matters, but how you treat people will be what they remember.

There's no single path to a good life, but if you stay curious, stay decent, and stay true to what feels right deep down, you'll get there. It's not a race. It's a journey. And you've just taken your first big step.

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

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Looking after yourself doesn't need to be going to the gym, or sticking to a diet. For lots of people, these things are just not what they want to do, and one thing's for sure—if you're not interested by something, it sure is hard to keep at it! For this summer bumper issue, I thought I'd share a brain dump of stuff to do that makes the most of the season, that can really help boost your health and wellbeing and, best of all, that's FREE!

Stuff that's good for your health might include being active, getting outdoors, meeting up with other people, helping in your community, having fun!

Why not give some of these a go this summer?

- Get outdoors and go for a walk—why not take a bus to somewhere and walk back? The Water of Leith is a great path and it's only four miles (6.4 km) from Colinton Dell back to Currie. Or try something further afield in the Pentlands or East Lothian for the day?
- Plan a picnic—make some of your favourite healthy snacks then head outdoors to the garden, a park or beach to enjoy your picnic with friends.
- Head to your local library and find out what's on—they have lots of free activities for children and adults.
- Head into nature and take a closer look at plants, bugs or birds. There are some great free apps to help you identify what you see, and it can be fun to try to capture photos or videos, or draw or paint what you see.
- Go on a litter pick in your local area—a little bit of hard work can be rewarding when you see the difference you've made AND you're helping your community and the local wildlife.
- Swim or paddle in the sea—and to keep it cheap you could take the train and make use of the Kids for a Quid deal (four children can travel return for £1 for each paying adult).
- Brave the tourists and spend a day in town, avoiding the shops, and visiting all the amazing attractions that are completely free, like the museums, art galleries, botanical gardens and play parks. Take your packed lunch to keep the cost down.
- Did you know there is a board game library in Edinburgh? It's not free but low cost and your membership lasts a whole year.

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



Malleny Garden: Early Summer Colour



JAMES BELL
HEAD GARDENER, MALLENY GARDEN

Early summer sees the garden at its most colourful. Roses, peonies, Philadelphus (mock orange) and an array of herbaceous fill the garden with fragrance.

We were disappointed to have to cancel our Malleny Plant Fayre at short notice. After a successful first year in 2024, we'd hoped to continue this year. Alas, circumstances prevented it going ahead this year. But...don't despair—we're already planning for a bigger and better event next year, with a more sophisticated offering designed to enhance the experience for everyone involved. Support from the community makes these events possible.

In the garden, we have been hard at work to keep the weeds at bay and planting out where we can. The berberis borders next to the greenhouse, have been planted out with a colourful seasonal mix including: sweet peas, Dahlias, Antirrhinum (snapdragon) and Scabious. A sunny and warm summer will see them give a colourful display until October.

The big attraction of early summer though is the rose collection, with more than 200 roses across the estate—of which 80 form a National Collection of 19th-century shrubs roses. A short flowering window of mid-June to mid-



July has been brought forward a week or so by the very sunny spring. These old roses possess a fragrance often lacking in more modern varieties available in garden centres. Please do come along to experience the fragrance – it can't be fully appreciated by words alone.

Behind the scenes, we are busy with propagation. If you look carefully around the garden, you might find some of our Rhododendrons with an odd bit of black plastic wrapped around a branch. This is for air layering: a technique of propagation for plants slow to root from cuttings. The little parcel is filled with moss and leaf mould. In one-to-three years' time, hopefully roots will have formed allowing us to separate them

from the parent plant and grow them on.

Rhododendrons are often difficult to identify, and we don't yet know the species or cultivar of all of ours; they might be rare or quite common, but we do know we have just one of each! Propagating them more gives us time to find out, in case we lose the original plant. It's not a quick process but certainly satisfying.

• 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/malleny-garden>



Hot Weather Tips for Pet Owners

If you're anything like me and spend a bit too much time scrolling through social media, you've probably seen those well-meaning posts about pets and hot weather. And while some of them are helpful, there's also a lot of confusion out there. So, let's clear things up—because heat stroke is a real risk, even here in Scotland!

What is heat stroke, anyway?

It happens when a pet's body temperature rises above normal (usually over 40°C) and they can't cool down. Early signs include heavy panting, drooling, red gums, vomiting, or diarrhoea. If it gets worse, they might become lethargic, collapse, or even have seizures. It can be fatal, so spotting it early is key.

Who's most at risk?

Flat-faced breeds (like pugs and bulldogs), overweight pets, very young or old animals, and those with health issues are especially vulnerable. The catch is it doesn't have to be blazing hot. A warm or humid day plus a bit of exercise can be enough. In fact, 74% of cases are linked to exercise!

So what should you do?

Cool first, call the vet second. Get your pet out of the heat and into a cool spot, ideally with a fan. Then get cold water on their skin. Forget the myths, cold water is best (a garden hose works wonders). Just don't wrap them in a wet towel as it can trap heat. Once you've started cooling, ring your vet for the next steps.

A study by SRUC found that fewer than 30% of pets were cooled before arriving at the vet, but we know that quick action can make a huge difference.

So enjoy the sunshine, but stay smart. Keep walks short, carry water, and never leave pets in cars or conservatories. Let's keep our furry friends safe and cool this summer!

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>

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Celebrating 40 Years of Balerno Ramblers



With Ramblers walks, please register with the 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 up-to-date details of our upcoming walks, please access the Balerno Ramblers page on the Ramblers Scotland website: <https://www.ramblers.org.uk>

New members are always most welcome. We offer you three "trial" walks as a non-member, hoping that your experience with us would then encourage you to become a member.

If you are interested in joining us, we have a mailing list, which you are more than welcome to join to receive information on forthcoming walks. Email: balerno-ramblers+subscribe@googlegroups.com

LINDA CARTMELL BALERNO RAMBLERS

In 1985 the Ramblers Association held a public meeting in Balerno High School to test reaction to the setting up of a local Ramblers Association group. The response was encouraging and a steering group of three was formed. We began with a walk a month, some led by more experienced leaders in the Edinburgh group.

By 1987 we had a full programme of fortnightly walks, evening walks, social events and our first weekend away. This was a trip to Crianlarich with a mixture of youth hostel and guest house accommodation. A memorable ascent of Ben More for the more adventurous and a more leisurely section of the West Highland Way for the less energetic.

Over the years we have progressed to a weekly walk, Saturday or Sunday and often a Spring and Autumn weekend away. Popular destinations have included the Highlands and Islands, Dumfries and Galloway, the Lake District, Yorkshire Dales and Northumberland.

We have also completed many of Scotland's long distance walks, as a series of day walks followed by a weekend away for the more distant sections. The West Highland Way was our first adventure, followed by the Southern Upland Way, St.Cuthberts Way, Borders Abbeys Way, Fife Pilgrim Way, and the Fife Coastal Path.

Some of us have been in Balerno Ramblers for the full forty years and are still enjoying the walks, social events and companionship. It's more than just a walk, it's great to commune with nature, good for physical and mental wellbeing and can be a learning experience as some members are knowledgeable about wild flowers and birds.

To celebrate our 40th anniversary we are having a short walk at Swanston, led by Linda Cartmell, followed by lunch and cake at the Swanston Bistro. The date is Saturday 30 August and we welcome members old and new.



Main: Balerno Ramblers' Weekend group at Dundas Estate. Photo: Linda Cartmell. Left: Loch Quoich, c1994. Top: the June 1985 Currie & Balerno News included an article promoting the setting up of a Ramblers group in Balerno. Middle: Ramblers on Mull, 1994. Above: Hoping there are no nettles! Photo: Roger Jonathan



TOM KELLY
Wildlife Photographer



How did you get into wildlife photography?

By sheer accident. When I was recovering from total knee replacement surgery in 2019, I decided to pick up a camera and wander around Edinburgh and surrounding area. I needed to walk as much as I could, to help the recovery process. I soon realised that, while the walking was helping my recovery, I was not a very good landscape/cityscape photographer. Towards the end of 2020, once lockdown rules allowed us, I started photographing the wildlife on the Water of Leith. After photographing a kingfisher on my first day, I was hooked and there was no turning back.

I was a wildlife enthusiast when I was younger but I had never photographed wildlife before. So my journey of recovery and discovery began on the Water of Leith, on 1 January 2021. I decided to walk 10,000 steps a day, for a year, with the aim of setting up a website at the end of that year, documenting what I had seen.

What do you hope to achieve with your work?

If you had asked me that question on 1 January 2021, I only had two goals—to walk 10,000 steps a day for a year, and to have enough semi-decent wildlife photos to build a website. I didn't think anything much would happen after that. Never in my wildest dreams did I think my wee

photography project would turn into a full time job, taking me to every corner of Scotland.

As I started my second year in 2022, the only goal was to keep improving my photos and learning more and more about the urban wildlife around us. Needless to say, I had dreams of, one day, some of my photos being in an exhibition or appearing on the likes of the BBC's website. I thought that if my photos were published on BBC *Springwatch* or used by the Scottish Wildlife Trust and some of the national newspapers, then I would have earned the right to call myself a "wildlife photographer".

Little did I know that I would have achieved all of the above within a further 18 - 24 months! Firstly, the Water of Leith Conservation Trust kindly asked me if I would like to exhibit my work, in the Visitor Centre in 2022. I am now on my second exhibition there. I ended up working with the BBC *Winterwatch* team for six months for the series where they filmed in Edinburgh in 2023. I was responsible for choosing locations and justifying them with photos. The BBC have put an article about my story on the BBC Scotland website and also on BBC Radio Scotland's *Scotland Outdoors* show.

I have been so busy over the last four years that I have had little time to plan what I want to achieve next. However, one thing that I did commit myself to achieving this year was doing a monthly 2 minute video on YouTube. These videos document what my trail cameras and I see every month. Many creatures, from the Colinton to Balerno section of the river, feature

in many of the videos.

Ultimately, I hope others are inspired to get out into nature and immerse themselves in what is around us—if my photography inspires a handful of people to get out there, then that's fantastic! It is amazing once you start and you may be surprised at what you see!

What is it about the Water of Leith, in particular, which appeals to you?

I have lived within a few hundred yards of the Water of Leith for the last 38 years. Admittedly, those years have been in four different properties, from Canonmills up to Colinton. For a long time, while the kids lived at home, the walkway was involved in our family's weekly routine for many years.

From a wildlife point of view, over the last four years, I have been documenting the activity of many creatures on the water. In particular, I document the protected species (otters and kingfishers) for the Water of Leith Conservation Trust, from Balerno down to Leith. This information is used whenever work is required along the walkway or surrounding areas. In order to accurately record these creatures, I use 15x trail cameras to monitor their movements, day and night. This work gives me an amazing insight into their lives and it allows me to be able to watch them, almost on a daily basis.

I think it's the Water of Leith Conservation Trust that makes this river so special. The work of the Trust and the work of the many volunteers,

on the river, has really turned it into a haven for wildlife. It is a small river which means that photographing creatures is a lot easier than on the Tay, the Tweed or the Spey! If you're patient and listen and look out for wildlife then you will start spotting some amazing creatures in Scotland's capital city!

Have you ever been surprised by what you've seen on the river?

I have indeed. The first creature that surprised me was an albino squirrel, as it landed on a tree. At first, I hadn't a clue what I was looking at, as its four legs were spread-eagled across the bark. It then turned and looked right at me, with its bright red eyes! These creatures are quite rare but Edinburgh seems to have about five or six of them.

Next was a weasel, at rush hour, one Monday morning. It was next to the river at Saughton Park and only 5-10 yards from a very busy Gorgie Road, bringing in the commuter traffic from the west. Thankfully, it darted towards the Water of Leith instead of Gorgie Road and disappeared into the vegetation! What a sight to see, in the middle of a city, at 8am!

The more time you spend on the river, the more you will be surprised at what you see.

Do you have any recommendations for budding wildlife photographers?

I think the thing that got me off to a fast start

was having a reasonable knowledge of wildlife. This was kindled in me from a young age, as a result of my parents having a caravan near Amulree, in Perthshire. It was on a farm and was pitched about 10 yards from the River Braan.

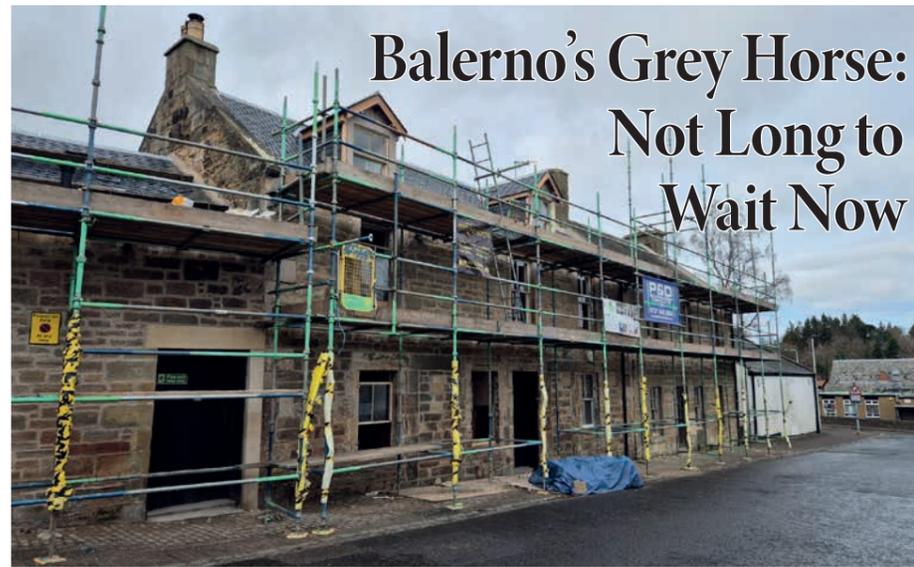
So I would recommend that any budding wildlife photographer gets to know their subjects really well. You must fully understand where they live and why they live where they do, what they feed on and when. When do they sleep? When is breeding season? When will you see the youngsters? The list could go on and on but I would say subject knowledge is a key point.

Know your camera inside out and have a good understanding of all the possible exposure settings you may require, on a morning, by a river. You'll have plenty time if you're photographing a heron but less than a second to react if a kingfisher flies passed at 25 mph!

And finally, read the Facebook/X/Twitter pages of local wildlife photographers or wildlife group pages. It will help also to find out what everyone else is seeing and when.

• I now have two websites: www.TomKelly.co.uk is dedicated to my work around Scotland, while www.GoWildinEdinburgh.co.uk is dedicated to my work in and around Edinburgh, and also includes my monthly blog where I detail my story during the last four-plus years.

• You can check out my YouTube videos here: <https://tinyurl.com/3uuyw8uk>



Balerno's Grey Horse: Not Long to Wait Now

NIGEL DUNCAN
C&B NEWS

After a lengthy period of closure, the much-loved Grey Horse, famed throughout the Lothians for its real ales, will soon be opening its doors again.

Balerno-born and raised John McArdle and his partner, Gillian Wilkinson, are behind the move and the long journey from acquisition to opening has been a trip down memory lane for the businessman.

His late father Jack was a well-known regular and John followed in dad's footsteps, popping in for a refreshment or two in his youth and later life. John admits he bought the pub with his heart and not his head because of his strong local connections, going back many generations, and the pub's link to his past.

The project to restore one of the last Victorian public bars remaining in and around the capital has involved months of planning and a great deal of work behind the exterior scaffolding. To help them on this major undertaking, they have engaged the services of designers, builders and trades all with extensive experience in the hospitality industry.

As well as the public bar, there will be a revamped lounge bar while the awkwardly-situated function suite will be converted into a venue in its own right and, with a nod to the old pub past, be known as The Back Room

Before the internal transformation could begin, there was a major clear-out filling countless skips, months of issues with drainage and a pesky leak, repaired stonemasonry, a new roof, electrics, plumbing and heating.

They know there is great anticipation and enthusiasm to get the doors open as soon as possible, which is brilliant to hear—rest assured they are working flat out to get the pints flowing at the beginning of August.

John and Gillian are delighted that Amy Buchanan has agreed to be the tenant: her fantastic transformation of the Colinton Inn, plus her local knowledge and connections, will be invaluable in making the Grey Horse great again. Amy will also be known to many Balerno residents through her role as the



Top: The exterior of the Grey Horse, undergoing a major refurbishment. Above: The former bar. Photos: Nigel Duncan.

School Administrator at Dean Park Primary, which she will leave at the end of term to concentrate on the Grey Horse. John and Amy grew up together in Balerno and, as her father Jimmy drank in the pub with John's dad back in the day, there is a feeling of coming home on both sides.

Initially, the Grey Horse, or "Brow's" as it is known locally, will concentrate on the bar trade, with at least four cask ales at the centre of the offering, including two constant beers. Food will be kept simple but tasty—charcuterie, cheese boards and snacks to accompany the great beers and wines.

The Back Room is being transformed and will be a great space for meetings, parties and events; as there is a sizeable kitchen, either catering can be done in-house or outside caterers can be brought in. There has also been a fair bit of interest from well-renowned Edinburgh chefs keen to explore pop-up events which will be brilliant for the village.

So, for all the locals knocking on the window, not long to wait now. The journey has taken a bit longer than hoped with a few obstacles in the way, but they are really looking forward to opening the doors again soon. With the Public Bar, Lounge Bar and The Back Room, there is something for everyone: sociable pint, Friday night out with friends, or music events and parties.

Gala Week 'A Great Success'

JENNIE POPE
BALERNO CHILDREN'S GALA COMMITTEE

On behalf of the Balerno Children's Gala Day Committee, we want to say a huge "thank you" to everyone who helped make this year's Gala Week such a success. After months of planning, it was a joy to see Malley Park full of families, sunshine and community spirit on Gala Day itself.

The week began with the always-popular parade, held the week before Gala Day, which brought colour, creativity and plenty of smiling faces to the streets of Balerno.

Throughout the week leading up to Gala Day, a fantastic programme of events kept the community engaged and active. New additions like grass bowls proved a great success, alongside football matches, cycle races, and hockey games that drew enthusiastic participants and supporters alike. Even a bit of midweek rain didn't dampen the fun or the spirit!

Finally, Gala Day at the park was a brilliant celebration, with stalls and funfair rides entertaining the kids all afternoon and the beer tent proving as popular as ever with the grown-ups—we suspect some came for the "refreshments" and stayed for the chat!

The bake-off made a fantastic return, with some impressive (and delicious) entries. The gunging was just as messy and hilarious as everyone hoped and the races and tug of war drew big crowds and big energy—a real highlight for many.

A huge thank you goes out to every volunteer who gave their time, energy and enthusiasm to make the week run smoothly. Your support keeps this tradition going.

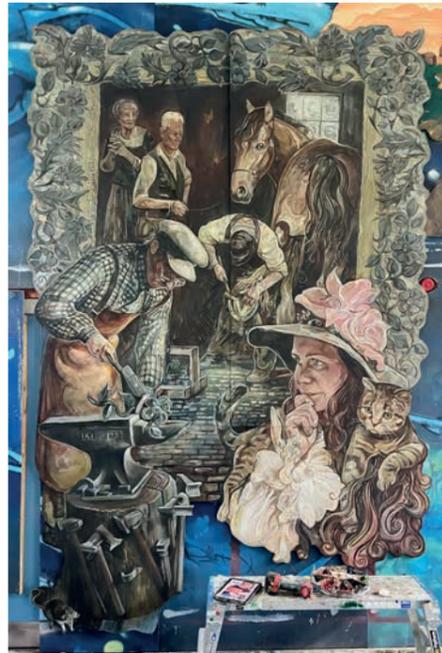
To everyone who helped, participated, or simply came along—thank you. You made it special.





Watch This Space!

Last October, Mike Scott and Eddie Banks of the Colinton Amenity Association Artwork Team updated *C&B News* readers about the Colinton Gateway Mural project along Cuddies Lane, in the heart of Colinton Village. The first element of the mural had been completed and fixed onto the end wall of Colinton Pharmacy by late August—however, the much bigger second element is now quite definitely on its way...



It is a pleasure to report that Stage 2 of the Cuddies Lane project will shortly become evident. Funding is in place, thanks to generous donations from Sustrans, the Redeemer Church, The Spylaw and other local businesses and individuals. The owners and residents of the buildings that back onto Cuddies Lane have also confirmed their support.

Visitors to Cuddies Lane will have noticed that the multi-coloured harled wall is now home to a series of vertical wooden battens. These were installed in March, when we test-fitted the marine-ply panels on which the mural will be painted. Those panels were then removed, and are currently in Chris Rutterford's studio where work has already begun to create the mural. As you can see, the panels only take up around a third of the wall height, but

Main: Work in progress, in April 2025, on the background of stage 2—do you recognise the scene? Artists Chris Rutterford and Eddie Banks wave, while Lubi Lykan offers a carrot to the horse! Middle left: Stage one of the mural, now on the wall of Colinton Pharmacy. Left: Stage two—Battens in place and marine ply panels were test-fitted before being taken back to the studio. The batten height and overall size will reduce slightly when the mural is mounted. Photos: Mike Scott.

will cover a variety of unsightly pipes and cables.

In true project management style, there are several steps within this stage of the project. Mounting the battens and test-fitting the panels was first. The next step will be to paint the entire wall along Cuddies Lane, and its continuation up Spylaw Street. The currently eclectic colour mix will become off-white, to match the classical colour scheme of the former mill-workers' cottages along Spylaw Street. We anticipate that the colour change will have an immediate impact in terms of reducing the visual impact of the building. That work should be under way – or even be complete – by the time that you read this article.

The mural itself is being created in the studio, where Chris Rutterford is being assisted by Eddie Banks. (Eddie, despite his age, is now known to the Artwork Team as “the lad”!) The scene that is being created draws upon local history and people, continuing in the subdued and sepia-toned colour palette that was used on the wall of Colinton Pharmacy. We have provided some small sneak previews here, but much remains to be revealed.

The finished artwork will be installed over a two-day period in mid-July, though the date has not yet been confirmed. Inside sources tell us that an opening ceremony is also planned. We will then provide *C&B News* readers with detailed pictures and the stories behind the various elements of the mural in the September edition. As the headline says, watch this space!

• As ever, financial contributions to the project are always very welcome. Our *JustGiving* page is accessible through the CAA website, www.colinton-amenity.org.uk

• Alternatively, you can donate directly to the Colinton Amenity Association's bank account. A/c: 00125283, Sort code: 83-19-01. Please quote “Mural” as the reference.

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Balerno Community Centre—Three Years On

VALERIE REID
BALERNO VILLAGE TRUST

At the beginning of 2022 Balerno Village Trust was granted a 10 year lease of Balerno Community Centre by the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC), on the proviso that we took steps to make the building more sustainable, energy wise.

Three years on, as the Community Centre Energy Project draws to a close, how are we doing—and how can you help?

When we took over the lease of the building, it was very apparent that there was a lot of work to be done! It was damp in areas, chilly and the back hall still had the remains of the Playgroup that had been on site until closing in 2020. The first thing we had to do was restore this area to a more mainstream space; we then made a plan of what needed to be done.

We put in double/secondary glazing in all the windows in November and December 2022, as well as coping with a burst pipe which brought down part of the ceiling in



the main hall. We then had to wait until CEC completed an asbestos survey of the loft space and ceiling: luckily, all was well and we were back in the building from April.

The rest of 2023 was spent applying for funding to help with the work; this involved lots of writing reports, getting quotes, and waiting. Apart from putting dehumidifiers into the front and bottom halls to help cope with the damp, the only other activity was the Centre becoming a film set for six weeks during October and November. (The film, *The Fall of Sir Douglas Weatherford*, has been



bought by a streaming company but has yet to be released in the UK.)

We were very fortunate to get funding from CARES (Community and Renewable Energy Scheme), managed by Local Energy Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government, for a large proportion of the cost of the rest of the work.



In March 2024 Eco Alba put in a small 4kW solar panel installation with a battery that could store the energy produced for use within the building. Not only were we limited to the size of array we could install within the conservation area, we also realised that the Centre needed to be completely rewired if it was to cope with the system we wanted.

This work was carried out promptly by local firm MSF Electrical, who also upgraded the old fluorescent lighting to LEDs. The solar panels and battery were installed; then Heatsave Scotland, in May 2024, installed full

loft insulation throughout the building. CEC subsequently informed us that the electricity bill for April – June 2024 was half of what it had been for the same period the previous year!

It's not just been about inside the building; we applied for planning permission to remove the cotoneaster trees in the front



plant bed because their roots were cracking a water pipe; this was granted on the proviso that we replanted the bed, which we have done with wild flowers and native plants. Thanks to the work of Bob Douglas and Balerno Gardeners, we hope to create a bee and butterfly-friendly "pollinator patch" in the heart of the village.

The final part of the Community Centre Energy Plan involved the installation of air source heat pumps by Sean Brown Plumbing and Heating in February 2025. These have made a huge difference, with regular users commenting on how much warmer the Centre feels.

So what's left to do? We still need to get the Community Centre looking a bit more "pretty". A deep clean will be undertaken at the beginning of next month in preparation for painting at the end of July. We are looking for community volunteers to help with this. Can you come and help out? Many hands make light work so if you have a couple of hours spare between Thursday 24 July and Saturday 2 August, it'd be great to have you along to help slosh some paint!

• For more information, email val@balernovt.org.uk

www.facebook.com/candbnews





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LETTERS etc!

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



Illustration: Marjorie Beaumont

Grave Misgivings

In response to your recently published letter from Bill Gordon I would also like to make some comment on graveyard provision in the area.

When my husband died recently I was told that there was no availability in Currie Kirkyard for new graves and was offered Ratho or Kirkliston. Because of our liking for both the canal and the Bridge Inn, I chose Ratho. Although (unlike Mr Gordon) I do not believe it is a foreign land I do agree that it is not easy to visit without a car.

On the day of the funeral I was also surprised to find that the hearse had to do a three-point-turn to get through the gate, and parking is impossible without offending the neighbours.

I suppose this is all part of the council hatred of vehicles and maybe in the future we will need to carry the coffin on foot or plan the funeral to meet the local bus timetable.

As the living require shops, schools and medical services, the dead are also entitled to a bit of forward planning by those in power.

When I visit Ratho Graveyard I find it a peaceful place with 360 degree views of the surrounding hills, which I think I find preferable to the idea of siting a grave next to a huge pylon. That said, and despite the increased popularity for simple cremations, this is certainly an issue that needs addressing with some urgency.



Name and address supplied

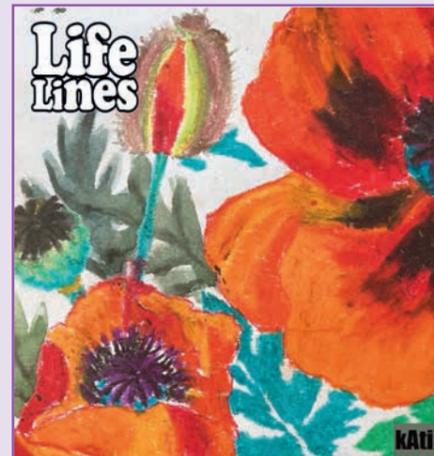
Oops!

We would like to apologise to any readers who tried to access the online questionnaire on proposed Active Travel changes in Currie—the link we published last issue (on page 7) unfortunately took you to an error page on the City of Edinburgh Council's website. This was because, at some point between CEC's Active Travel team submitting their article to us, and printed copies of the June issue appearing in the shops, they changed the URL where the form was available! As soon as we were informed of the issue, we listed the revised contact on our Facebook page and also updated the details in the PDF of the June issue still downloadable from our website. Nevertheless, we're sorry for any disappointment caused.



What the...?

Last issue we unfortunately didn't have the room to include a picture (top left) provided by Pesticide Free Balerno, which illustrates their preferred option when it comes to removing weeds from our streets—manually, without chemical assistance. But, it has to be said, weeds are definitely a growing problem in the village: having received several complaints over the last few months, Balerno Community Council is attempting to compile a dossier of reports from residents concerned about the increasing weeds on their street and surrounding areas—the hope being that BCC can make a case to the City of Edinburgh Council for more regular maintenance in and around the village. However, as the Hired Help has noted on his travels around Edinburgh (see the other pictures), weeds aren't just an issue concerning the upper Water of Leith valley—but large tracts of a city seemingly without the resources to deal with them...



'ONE YEAR'S SEEDING'

Fortunate enough to move into a place with a well established garden, I spent the first year watching in wonder at the succession of plants which revealed themselves then faded, each in their own season. New to gardening, a whole world was opening up to me! I learned to look after the plants already there, how to prune, compost, weed, mow, trim, and most deliciously, to grow my own vegetables.

Unfortunately the next Spring a broken wrist slowed me down, but it has been Long Covid these last few years that has stopped me entirely. Now I rely on gardeners to do the minimum of mowing and trimming and get my enjoyment from watching the garden's seasons instead.

It surprises me how well the garden has

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY kAtie

looked after itself in many ways. I watched from my bedroom window as the vegetable patch was overtaken the first year by wildflowers and then each year since with more bullying buttercups, til this summer it is a mass of yellow. Maybe next year something else will be in favour. Things having been finding their own balance with only the slightest of guiding by my hand, and I find the wildness a delight. The creatures that share this space seem to agree.

Before getting ill I was able to guide my world more; now the skills I am learning are subtler. They're in letting things be as they are, finding peace in them or working with them differently. This wild garden is teaching me rhythms and seasons, life and death, joy and appreciation, no matter its season or mine. I couldn't have hoped for a better teacher.

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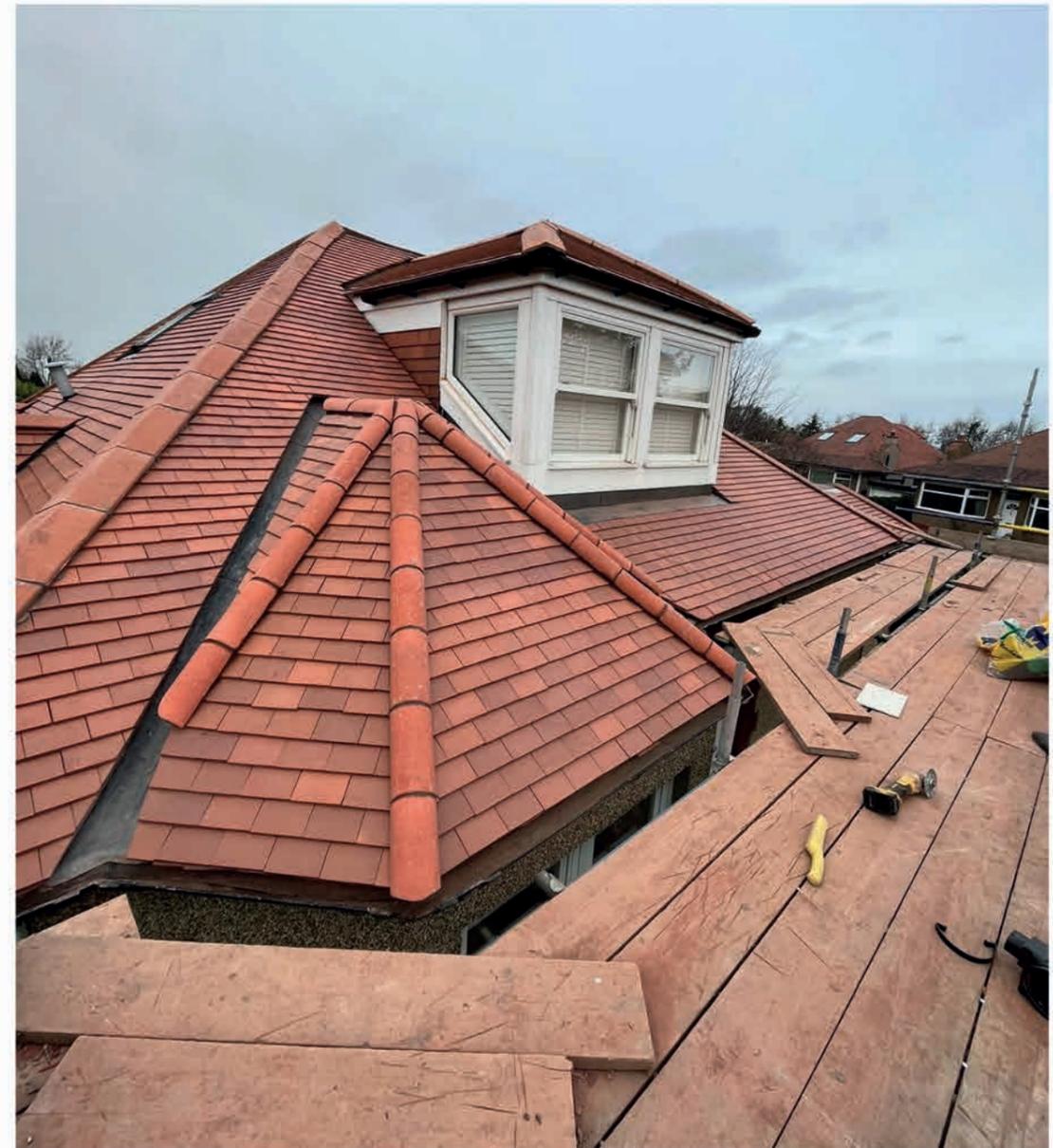


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PLANNING, ETC BY ARCHIE CLARK

The Balerno Gateway

Back in October 1999, Balerno Community Council was deliberating over the refusal of a planning application to build four houses at 572 Lanark Road West, between the two sharp bends before the Lanark Road runs downhill into Balerno. BCC was also advised that the applicant had lodged a new submission to demolish three properties and build six houses.

In the February 2000 *Currie & Balerno News*, BCC's Planning Convenor Tom McCall reported in his article, "This is your Community Council", on "What your local councillors actually do!" Investigating this site alone is quite an eye-opener.

From 1998 to 2025, there have been 15 planning applications for this location—the latest 25/02841/AMC amounting to 40 documents currently totalling a staggering 495 pages. To date there have been two appeals. This is an enormous workload to expect an inadequately financed community council to cope with on top of its regular business—and, despite being a statutorily-established body, it has no Equal Right of Appeal, office, continuity officer, paid executive or professional planners.

The various proposals to date have been for a Certificate of Lawfulness, erection of 10, six or four houses, the replacement of an unfinished house by a new one and miscellaneous other applications. The previous application 20/00302/PPP for six houses was refused in March 2021 but approved on appeal in September 2022. That permission may be expected to expire this September.

Planning and Climate Change-5: Wars, Diseases and Population

As a species, we spend much time and money devising weapons. In 2019, global population was estimated at 7.7 billion. Only six years later, it reached 8.2 billion. Unpalatable thought that it is, the global death toll caused by pandemics, the First World War (15 - 22 million), the Second World War (70 - 85 million), wars in Ukraine, Gaza and numerous other places have barely dented the steady rise in population. But without controls, surely a time must come when diminishing food supplies and climatic conditions will weaken both ourselves, and the other species upon whom life depends?

Wars have helped produce many technological advances and improved ways of doing things. But in their wake, there has been great damage to life and land. The cost of hurling ever larger weapons at each other means that more is spent on defence and less on adding value to life. Meanwhile, rising tides and unpredictable weather result in the loss of good quality land, while fertile fields are converted to non-food purposes. If life on Earth is to improve, we need to re-balance human need against what Earth can sustain and curb population growth.

A fascinating graph* shows life expectancy in Britain

increasing from 40 years in 1540 to 50 in 1900. A century later, life expectancy is now 80 – and if Psalm 90 v10 is a guide, that was not unusual around 1400 BC! But as our ageing (unpaid!) population increases against a diminishing number of "replacement" children, we are faced with complicated ethical questions on birth control, end of life care, work lifespan and how to maintain our GDP.

Human beings will continue migrating to escape war, the effects of climate change or to better themselves. (America is full of them!) I expect several MPs arrived in the UK as children of parents who came here from other continents. The reasons why they arrived in Britain and the valuable service they have provided should be remembered as we react to what some perceive as a relentless tide of immigrants. But until earthlings colonise other parts of the galaxy, we must find ways to contain our population within our climatically-reduced land masses without resorting to wars to acquire others' territory and their assets. That challenge is one we shouldn't leave for the next generation to solve.

*<https://statisticsanddata.org/data/average-life-expectancy-1543-2019/>



Blink and You've Passed It!

Munro Coffee have been granted permission to Change the Use of the small non-food unit at 4A Bridge Road, Colinton from a Class 1 (non-food) unit to Class 3. Class 3 is described in the Town and

Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997 as "for the sale of food or drink for consumption on the premises." The site is in the Colinton Conservation Area.

The drawings do not show any seating arrangements, and the toilet provision is behind the servery. Details of the application can be found on the planning portal under 25/01171/FUL

Planning—What does PPP stand for?

A recent application highlights a planning loophole I noted in the July/August 2011 *C&B News*, under the title "The Curse of Perpetual Planning Permission".

The planning system requires that work commences within three years of approval but does not limit the period for

construction. The purpose of granting planning permission is not to provide a legal permission that effectively retains the enhanced value of land indefinitely, but to enable construction to take place. There is a need to make that clear in law.



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SCOTT ARTHUR MP
EDINBURGH SOUTH WEST

SMARTPHONES

Thank you to the 500+ people who responded to my survey on smartphone use in schools. A strong majority (92%) supported some form of ban, with 82% in favour of a complete ban across the whole school day. I launched this survey in response to concerns from parents about the negative impact of smartphones on learning, wellbeing, and social development.

The key messages from the survey: ongoing communication between students and parents during school hours can undermine student autonomy and teacher authority; any ban must be clearly defined, well-communicated, and consistently enforced to be effective; and exceptions may be necessary for neurodiverse or anxious students who rely on phones for emotional support.

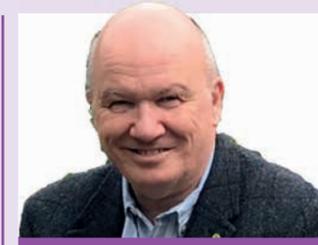
The findings reflect a strong desire for consistent, enforceable policies that prioritise student focus and mental health. There was also criticism of early smartphone use in primary schools, with calls for greater parental responsibility and stronger government regulation.

Notably, 17% of respondents (85 individuals) were teachers – many of whom are also parents – offering a valuable opportunity to compare perspectives. There was broad agreement that smartphones negatively affect learning and wellbeing during school hours.

Teachers emphasised practical challenges around enforcement and classroom management, while non-teachers focused more on emotional concerns. Both groups agreed that clear, consistent policies are essential, and that school-facilitated communication should be sufficient.

With both professional and parental voices aligned, there's a clear mandate for healthier, more focused learning environments free from digital distractions.

Next Steps: A public meeting will be held to discuss the merits and practicalities of a school phone ban with councillors from the City of Edinburgh Council.



GORDON MACDONALD MSP
EDINBURGH PENTLANDS

COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS

The summer celebrations are in full force across the constituency and, once again, I took the opportunity to join in on the festivities at the Balerno Children's Gala Day which brought the week's events to a close.

This Gala goes from strength to strength every year due to the commitment from the local community and of course the members of the committee who work tirelessly to ensure the week's events run smoothly. During the years I have tried a few of the more unconventional activities such as the Fairtrade bike smoothie; however this year was more traditional with a Hoopla stall organised by the Balerno Fair Trade Village Group.

Organising a week's worth of events is quite an undertaking and I would like to thank everyone involved from the pre-planning to expediting—it was again another success, well done.

And just along the road I had the pleasure of awarding medals to the participants of the Currie Riding of the Marches' Family Ride. The route started at Harlaw Road with the medals presented at George V Park to mainly children who took part. Thanks go to all the participants and of course to the Currie Riding of the Marches Committee who continue to ensure this local event is enjoyable for both the riders and the onlookers.

Finally, I wanted to highlight National Carers Week which took place in June; it's a celebration of the work carers do across the country, both paid and unpaid. I'm certain many readers will know someone who cares for a relative or friend and the strain this can take mentally, physically and financially. If you are an unpaid carer, you could be eligible for the support delivered by Social Security Scotland. You can find out more by calling 0800 182 2222 between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.



SUE WEBBER MSP
LOTHIAN REGION

CURRIE HIGH

Readers might recall I fought hard to save Currie Community High School when The City of Edinburgh Council threatened to reorganise catchment areas and create a new "super school" on the other side of the City Bypass.

So, I feel more than invested in the new Currie CHS now being built next to the existing building, and from the outside it looks very impressive.

I'm looking forward to my first tour inside, but it is deeply ironic that elected members from the parties which wanted to demolish both Currie and Wester Hailes High Schools have been going round the new place in their Hi-Viz jackets and hard hats, stating what a fabulous asset it will be.

Recently, I was at a construction skills event where I met pupils from Wester Hailes, who are also getting a brand new, state-of-the-art school in the heart of their community, just like Currie.

When communities across Currie, Juniper Green, Baberton Mains, Wester Hailes and the Calder all campaigned against the SNP-Labour Council plans to close their schools, it was unprecedented. And the sheer determination of communities which knew what was best for them inflicted the administration's largest defeat.

It was a hard-fought victory, and through the exhaustion, panic, tears and joy I made lifelong friends. Together, we achieved so much and have left a legacy for generations of pupils to come.

When the Currie pupils return in August and go through the doors of the new school for the first time, I know I will be shedding a wee tear.

And in August 2026 when the doors open to the new Wester Hailes High School, I will be raising a glass to celebrate. Thank you to everyone who campaigned to make these schools happen. You know who you are!



CLLR GRAEME BRUCE
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

RAILING AGAINST ISSUES

Most of the correspondence this month has been around the Currie area, along with concerns over weeds around the Deanpark area of Balerno.

I will start with the weeds issue in Balerno. As we are all aware, the use of glyphosate has stopped in this area but that means more labour-intensive removal is required to deal with this problem. Although the City of Edinburgh Council have invested in new machinery there is an inherent problem around resources to remove the weeds. The main issue is CEC are simply not receiving the adequate funding to deal with many parts of the organisation, including street cleansing. However, all the councillors and Balerno Community Council are escalating this weed problem to the Cleansing department and I have been assured they will be in Balerno soon to deal with this situation.

It has been reported to myself and other councillors that railings along sections of Lanark Road West are in need of replacement. My task has been to focus on the one at the junction of Riccarton Mains Road. I've chased for an update again and hopefully we are getting closer to getting this sorted.

Just as a reminder for residents that live either side of Curriehill Road about the Active Travel measures being suggested by CEC, and that the consultation closes on 6 July—so please make your voice heard on their website via the "Have your say" section.

Recently, I have had complaints from local residents about the noise issues from the 3G pitch at Currie Community High School, in particular the banging of drums at 730pm in the evening. I've reported this issue to the Council and also Edinburgh Leisure and await their responses.

Lastly, it was a pleasure to meet and present the medals to the riders who took part in Currie Riding of the Marches at George V Park recently. Well done to all!

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CLLR FIONA GLASGOW
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

FESTIVALS & GRANTS

Since my last contribution I have had the pleasure of celebrating my 60th birthday. As a result of taking a trip to celebrate, I missed the amazing Balerno Gala Day—bad planning on my part as I know it is always a day to remember. Well done to everyone who worked so hard to make they day a success.

As a member of the Culture and Communities Committee I attended the launch of the Edinburgh Book Festival which will happen between 9 and 24 August. The launch event took place in the Edinburgh Futures Institute, part of the University of Edinburgh, and was an opportunity to hear about the numerous events that celebrate the power of books, writing and ideas to expand our horizons. This year is themed around Repair, taking account of the issues happening in the world today. "Repair: a word that speaks to hope, resilience and action". There are activities planned to meet the interest of all age groups and families, priced to encourage as much involvement as possible. Everyone is welcome!

The Pentland community grants fund meets soon and community groups are encouraged to apply for funding. Grants of up to £5,000 can be awarded to constituted groups for local community activity. The purpose of the fund is to support local groups to try new things and develop small scale activities that will benefit or add value to their community. I'm looking forward to seeing what great ideas our community groups are planning. Last month I mentioned my visit to The Free Company and have just found out that they were awarded the sustainability award at the National Restaurant Awards! Well done to this local gem!

I wish everyone a fun filled summer break and hope that we get the weather we deserve!



CLLR STEPHEN JENKINSON
PENTLAND HILLS

COMMUNITY EVENTS

I was delighted to join our community on Friday night at the annual Currie Beer & Curry Festival held at our much-loved Community Centre on Lanark Road. Now in its eighth year, this event has truly become a staple of our local calendar—an occasion that celebrates great food, drink, and (most importantly) the vibrant spirit of Currie and the surrounding area.

At this year's event over 40 varieties of real ales, lager, cider, and alcohol-free options were on offer, alongside mouth-watering curries served with rice and naan. Live music set the tone for a lively, enjoyable evening—families, friends and volunteers mingling, sampling, dancing, and simply having fun.

But this isn't just about enjoyment—it's about community. All profits from the festival are donated to local charities and good causes. Last year alone, the Round Table volunteers raised over £4,000, distributing funds to vital community groups – such as food banks, youth projects, and support services for those who need it most – for whom this event is a major fundraiser. It's a reminder that when we come together for a good time, we also strengthen the bonds that hold us together. So, seeing the community come out in force, enjoying themselves, catching up with neighbours, and supporting these causes filled me with pride.

Events like this embody what it means to be a community. My thanks to the Currie, Balerno & District Round Table and all who helped make the night such a success. I'm looking forward to next year's event already. Cheers!



RICHARD M HENDERSON
BALERNO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Balerno occupies the largest community council area within Edinburgh, at 44.25km². In terms of population, however, only around half-a-dozen of the city's other community councils have populations smaller than Balerno's 6,755. That figure comes from CEC's 70-page Community Councils Guidance (p31) and is, we assume, vouched by the 2022 Census, even though census figures are not collated for community council areas; there are statistics for Balerno and Bonnington but not for the Balerno CC area. So what?

Community Councils are enjoined to do more on the community engagement front. As The City of Edinburgh Council guidance of May 2025 says: "Ascertaining, coordinating, and expressing the views of the community requires community councils to engage with their community." We know that, in speaking for the community, we should ensure that we can actually point to processes by which we gauge community opinion.

The first stage of ensuring proper community engagement is an understanding of the community; its geography, demographic breakdown etc. Community councils have to rely on central government and the city for such data. Time was when CEC crunched census results and gave community councils the relevant demographic statistics but, apparently, not now. Separating Balerno from Bonnington doesn't seem to be on the city's agenda.

Community councils are statutory bodies, and government, including CEC, should assist them in the discharge of their responsibilities. That should include assistance in relation to community engagement, and that assistance should not simply be through issuing of guidance but also by both organising data so that it is accessible, and by making resources available so that it can be used.



DR KEITH JAMES SYMINGTON
CURRIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

JUNE MEETING

At the June meeting of Currie Community Council, there were updates on multiple projects.

The new High School building will open on the 14 August for the start of term. It is envisaged that the public would be granted the opportunity to view the facilities that week. There was no further update on access to the facilities, though as an Edinburgh Leisure Manager has yet to be appointed to oversee their use.

It was confirmed that the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) will repair the Pentland View car park wall dividing the car park from the adjacent footpath, though no timetable has been set. The damaged wall nearest the shops, however, falls under the responsibility of the shop landlords. Currie CC are tracing ownership to press for repairs while the Councillors will push for speedy removal of rubble near the shops.

Lobbying continues for resurfacing Riccarton Mains Road and its roundabout despite it not being in CEC's 2025/26 Capital Programme. CCC intends to try and secure assurances that resurfacing is added to next year's budget. One win was welcomed as CEC approved funding to upgrade the footpath leading to Currie Nursery on this road.

Currie Green Spaces recounted a positive June meeting with CEC's public-spaces manager. While many improvements have been made, new issues identified were overgrown verges narrowing paths between Currievale and Newmills and tree roots damaging the surface near Cherry Tree Estate.

A local resident joined to discuss the state of Roley's Wood as they have struggled to engage the school. CCC members offered to help identify the right contacts and it was proposed that a "Friends of Roley's Wood" group should be formed to help secure long-term support. If you are interested in helping, please contact us on Facebook!



Edwin G Lucas: A Purely Individual Painter

ALAN LUCAS
SON

My father, Edwin G Lucas (1911-1990), was an artist who lived in Juniper Green from 1916 to 1947.

He was unrecognised during his lifetime but has become known for unique and quirky work since he was “discovered” by the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in 2013. Subsequently, high-profile solo exhibitions have been held in Edinburgh and Southend-on-Sea. This summer his work will be exhibited at Hawick Museum. It’s six years since his last exhibition in Scotland, and excitement is building as I write this!

He started out painting landscape watercolours, including many local scenes in



the Water of Leith valley and around Juniper Green and Baberton Mains. His work took a radical turn when he encountered Surrealism in the 1930s. He later referred to this period as a “flirtation with Surrealism”, but the paintings he made then are notable since very few Scottish artists were working in this style.

The post-war years were his most creative and prolific. He had a day job to provide funds but saw himself primarily as a serious painter. He experimented with many different styles and subjects, leading to work that’s very varied and quite unlike what others were doing.

The Hawick exhibition will display about 40 paintings and drawings, richly illustrating his Surrealist period and the unique body of innovative work he created later. The exhibition will also include several of his Water of Leith and Pentlands landscapes.

Edwin once described himself as “a purely individual painter”, because he was determined to avoid the “-isms” and conventions of the time. I think the unique nature and variety of the work in this show proves his point.

• *Edwin G Lucas—A Purely Individual Painter runs at The Scott Gallery, Hawick Museum, Wilton Lodge Park, Hawick, from Saturday 5 July until Sunday 5 October. Open 11am - 4pm, closed Tuesdays.*



Plan Your Route for the 2025 POST Art Trail

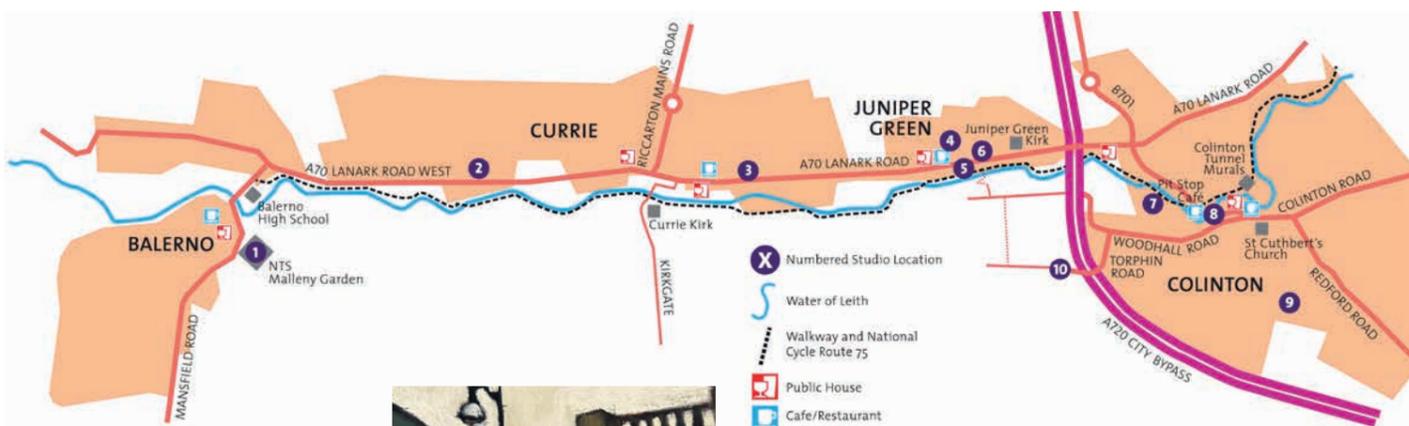
JOHN ELLIOTT
POST

The Pentlands Open Studio (POST) Art Trail takes place on Saturday 30 and Sunday 31 August 2025, offering an opportunity to explore the vibrant creativity of 18 professional artists across 10 studio locations.

The Art Trail map is now live—you can plan your route in advance using it alongside artist details on our website.

The artists include local painters, printmakers, textile artists, jewellery makers, and more. You can visit their pages on our website to explore profiles, artworks, and exact locations using the Google Map. Each artist has their own page, and their studio is pinpointed with “What3Words”, making navigation easy via mobile.

• For updates and to sign up for our newsletter, visit: linktr.ee/POSTstudios, @PentlandsOpenStudios on Instagram, or email: pentlandsopenstudios@gmail.com



Left to right: Textiles work by Liza Green (Studio 7); painting by Gary Anderson (Studio 2); painting by Pen Reid (Studio 8); painting by Jacqueline Watt (Studio 4).

Show Time for Pentland Art Club

ROS SALTON
PENTLAND ART CLUB

It seemed like many, many months since the theme had been announced for Pentland Art Club’s annual 2B pencil drawing competition.

In fact, it was just at the beginning of March and entries were due at the end of May. Some people – the more organised amongst us – had their “done and dusted” in a matter of days. For others – the procrastinators – the deadline loomed like an accusing finger, pointing out our inadequacies and poor time management.

I’m pretty sure I wasn’t alone in thinking I’d have nothing ready to contribute but, when 22 May finally rolled round, the art room in Balerno High was packed with members ready to share their drawings and talk about the challenges with their choice of footwear. Yes, shoes, boots, slippers, the stuff that stops your legs from fraying at the ends, was indeed the subject of the exercise—all drawn using just a 2B pencil. It was a lovely evening, hearing stories about the inspiration behind the heels and flats, reminiscing about the sandals we wore as children and later in our teens.

The standard was especially high this year so we don’t envy judge Islay her task.

• *If you want to see the drawings, they’ll be on display at our annual exhibition at the Scout Hall, 45 Lanark Road West, between Saturday 9 August and Thursday 14 August, by which time Islay will have chosen the winner. See What’s On (p54-55) for more details about opening hours..*



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‘It has been an incredible career when you pause to look back at it, but... it’s not over yet.’

Craig Gordon Testimonial Comes to Tynecastle

NIGEL DUNCAN
C&B NEWS

As a teenager at Balerno High School, Craig Gordon dreamed of playing for his boyhood heroes, Heart of Midlothian FC, and also pulling on the dark blue jersey of Scotland.

Well, more than two decades on, he has played for the Tynecastle team on more than 200 occasions and for Scotland on in excess of 80 games; plus, he has won the Scottish Cup and also kept charge of the goal at Celtic and in the Premier League in England with Sunderland.

The 42-year-old celebrates his Testimonial with Heart of Midlothian FC with a match against newly-promoted Sunderland on Saturday, 26 July 26 (kickoff: 3pm), but he stressed that his career is not over yet.

The evergreen goalkeeper has just signed a one-year extension with the Gorgie club.

“It has been an incredible career when you pause to look back at it, but I do not want to pause and look back at it as is not over yet, the things I have managed to achieve coming through at Hearts,” he said.

“To even get in the first team and be part of it, and move on to play in the Premier League down south it has been a dream. There has been some hard work at times, especially with injuries.

“To be able to do that and still be here and still have another year at Hearts and to have this testimonial is a fantastic thing for my whole family because they are all Jambos. It will be pretty special.”

His biggest thrill remains pulling on a Hearts jersey and taking the field for the club and the 6ft 4in hot-stop added: “Playing for Hearts and playing for Scotland; that was the two things I wanted to do.

“It is brilliant for me, brilliant for my family and I can’t wait for Sunderland to come here

and have that match.”

The club’s Scottish Cup win has been the standout moment for Gordon. “There are a number of Derby matches which have been good and for Hearts to win in the Cup semi-final twice against Hibs has also been memorable, so there are some good moments in there.”

Sunderland were a natural choice for the testimonial match, said the goalkeeper. “I was there five years and playing in that league before such a passionate group of fans.

“I am looking forward to seeing their fans up here. I am delighted they (Sunderland) are back in the Premier League, as it’s been a long time coming. I sat in my living room cheering them on in the play-off final and I was absolutely delighted for them to get there.

“It is a huge club, they deserve to be in the Premier League and I can’t wait for the game. I have had a look at some of their pre-season friendly matches and they have a good group (of them).

“Hopefully, we can keep them out and it is going to be a great game, a big test for us as well to have Premier League players come up and we’ll see what standard they are.

“Hopefully, we give them a good game and get them ready for the Premier League.”

• Tickets for the testimonial are now on sale at Heartsfc.co.uk and supporters can keep up-to-date with all of the latest information on the testimonial at craiggardontestimonial.co.uk.

• The Testimonial Game is at Tynecastle Park on 26 July, kick-off at 3pm. Ticket details and hospitality packages will be announced in due course.



CBDRT would like to say a big THANK YOU to all the sponsors of the 13th Currie Beer & Curry Festival approx. £8,000 raised for local charities and good causes



REMOVALS & STORAGE



Daniel Laidlaw, Ice Hockey Goalie

DANIEL LAIDLAW
P7, CURRIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

My name is Daniel and I am 11 years old. I play ice hockey as a goalie for Murrayfield Juniors Ice Hockey Club and Scotland. I play ice hockey because I like the speed of the sport, the physical hits, team work and having fast hand-eye coordination.

I started in September 2023. In my first season as goalie I got my first shut out (means 0 goals conceded), when we beat North Ayr 6-0. I won four "man of the match" in my first season (18 games) as well as "Spirit of the game" for my team at the awards night.



In my second season I won quite a lot more "man of the match" awards and was selected by Murrayfield head coach, Mark Hay, to attend the national development programme and was chosen to play for the Scottish national team U12s in a tournament vs England. Just last

weekend I played a tournament for under 14s. We got to the final and, although we did not win, I won "Most valuable U14s Goalie" of the tournament. This was a real honour as it was the coaches of the other teams that voted for me. I also got a silver medal as we came second in the tournament.

Playing for the national squad is a big commitment as we train every month for a whole day with two on-ice practices, lunch, a gym session and a classroom session on the technical part of the game and also how important nutrition, water and rest is in a sport to fuel your body and prepare to play.

My goal is to play in the elite league (highest league in Great Britain), Czech league, European Hockey or hockey in Canada. My dad was the one who got me into the sport. Dad is still playing and is the captain of Edinburgh Knights. I hope I am still playing when I am my dad's age!

That's the Rugby Season Over—Or is it?

SCOTT GIRVAN
CURRIE CHIEFTAINS

Just as things quieten down after another successful 7's tournament that would normally round off our playing calendar, we have groups starting pre-season activities, players being recruited and – would you believe it? – the SRU issuing the fixture lists for the 2025-26 season!

Looking back over the last 10 months there are a significant number of highlights worthy of mention.

The 1st XV made the Premiership playoffs again, unfortunately losing to Ayr in the semi-final at Millbrae. We have a proud record in the Premiership as Chieftains have made the playoffs every post season knockout since 2015.

Currie 2nd XV won the National 2nd XV league for the first time.

Our Under 16s and 18s both reached their Cup finals at Murrayfield. Both performed well against strong opposition but couldn't get the win.

Our Under 18 girls won their National Bowl final.

The Under 14s finished top of their league undefeated.

All in all, a tremendously successful year for all our teams.

This is testament to the strength in depth across the Club and we see a wealth of talent progressing throughout all our age group and senior teams.



This has been recognised with a number of both boys and girls being selected in recent months for representative honours by Edinburgh and Scotland.

It's not just on the pitch that we have been seeing great results, however. Our Breakout Café has been doing brisk trade and is a popular stopping place for parents watching their offspring play football or rugby, as well as walkers and cyclists. It's gaining a great reputation for coffees, snacks and home baking, and Vhairs's speciality cheesecakes! It's also dog-friendly. If you haven't visited yet, come along and see what all the talk is about.

We pride ourselves on being part of the community and our facilities are available for hire for a variety of social events and business meetings. We welcome enquiries and can offer a catering and bar service for functions. Please contact our Clubhouse Manager in the first instance to discuss what we can offer.

We anticipate another exciting season of rugby when the action starts in earnest in August.

If you'd like to be part of the Club's continuing success, and support the Chieftains as a member, visit: <https://www.curriechieftains.org/>



Anyone for Free Tennis?

PAUL MURPHY
JUNIPER GREEN TENNIS CLUB

Barclays Free Park Tennis was launched at Juniper Green Tennis Courts on 15 June, with a hour of free-coached social tennis available to all.

Held each Sunday from 10am - 11am, anyone can sign up, no matter your age or ability, and play tennis for free. Don't worry if you have never played tennis before, don't have a tennis racket or don't have a playing partner—this initiative is designed to give everyone the chance to meet new people, enjoy free exercise, gain access to equipment and learn new skills in a fun and welcoming environment. If you want to bring the whole family to enjoy an hour of free tennis together then that works too.

This is the latest in a series of coaching offerings available at JGTC since we recently re-opened the courts after our successful resurfacing project. Additional classes include the popular upcoming Summer Holiday Camps for children of various age groups as well as further classes covering juniors, beginner adults and cardio tennis.

All coaching sessions are run by our coach Kenny Petrie (Licensed LTA Level 3 Accredited+ Coach with First Aid & PVG) and are open to both club members and non-members.

To book your place for Barclays Free Park Tennis, visit: <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/JuniperGreenTennisCourts/FreeTennis>

The club can be contacted at junipergreentennis@gmail.com or followed on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/junipergreentennis>





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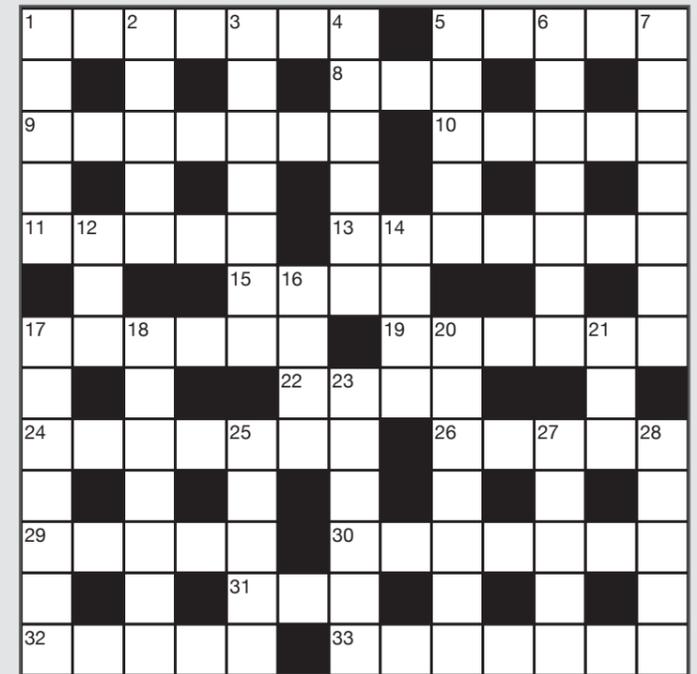
Good luck everyone!

ACROSS

- Female sovereign. (7)
- Portents. (5)
- Gratuity. (3)
- Sweet roll. (7)
- Fit out. (5)
- Vital liquid. (5)
- Appease. (7)
- Woody plant. (4)
- Bewilder. (6)
- Orb. (6)
- As well. (4)
- Armed conflict. (7)
- Problem. (5)
- Hackneyed. (5)
- Chivalrous. (7)
- Furrow. (3)
- Lifting apparatus. (5)
- _____ Nelson. (7)

DOWN

- Arm joint. (5)
- Artist's material. (5)
- Accompanies. (7)
- Treeless plain. (6)
- Musical drama. (5)
- Teach. (7)
- Presume (anag). (7)
- Primate. (3)
- In smaller quantity. (4)
- Back end. (4)
- Captivate. (7)
- Cocktail. (7)
- Well-liked. (7)
- Fish eggs. (3)
- Linear extent. (6)
- Watchful. (5)
- Vertical passage. (5)
- Proportion. (5)



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			4 3 8 5			
	5 7				6	
9		2	6		3	

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

LAST ISSUE'S SOLUTIONS

Last issue's prize crossword was won by James Nairn from Balerno. Congratulations!



EASY

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

Community and not-for-profit listings are free of charge. Email whatson@candbnews.com, including: Day/Date, Event Title, Venue, Time, brief details, and contact phone/email as appropriate. Details correct at time of going to press. Inclusion should not be assumed to be a recommendation by C&B News.

WEEKLY

MONDAYS

• **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!

• **THE MEN'S SHED:** Scout Hall, 99 Forthview Crescent; 10am – 12.30pm. We offer various activities and a chat over a cuppa with new and old friends. We are happy to welcome prospective new members. Come on down! www.pentlandsmensshed.org or pentlandsmensshed@pentlandsmensshed.org

• **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.

• **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.

• **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.

• **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. 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

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

THURSDAYS

• **ACCESSIBLE YOGA COMMUNITY CLASS:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green, 2.45pm - 3.45pm. Accessible Yoga community class—free, donations welcome. Join experienced yoga teacher Bijan 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

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>

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

FORTNIGHTLY

FIRST & THIRD MONDAYS

• **FORGET ME NOTES GROUP:** St Cuthbert's Church Hall, Westgarth Avenue, Colinton; 2pm - 4pm. Join us for an hour of music and memories. Bring a friend or come and meet some new ones. Followed by refreshments. Contact: stcuthbertscomms@gmail.com for more information.

DAY BY DAY

SATURDAY 12 JULY

• **BALERNO FARMERS' MARKET:** Main Street, Balerno; 9am - 1pm. Monthly event attracting local crafts, produce and groups. More information: <https://balernovt.org.uk/farmers-market>

SATURDAY 19 JULY

• **INTRODUCTION TO SHIBORI (Japanese textile dye):** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 1pm - 4pm. A workshop with Dianne Spottiswood Miller for adults and teens 14+. Online booking is available at <https://hub531.appointedd.com> or by email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

SUNDAY 27 JULY

• **RED MOSS PEAT BOG OPEN DAY:** Red Moss of Balerno, entrance near Threipmuir car park; noon - 4pm. Explore the nationally important Red Moss of Balerno Wildlife Reserve on International Bog Day! Learn about this very special ecosystem near Balerno and its key role in storing carbon. Tours with experts, plus have fun with pond dipping and quizzes for children. No booking, payment, or wellie boots required!

MONDAY 28 JULY

• **COLLY BOOK CLUB:** The Colinton Inn, 12-14 Bridge Road; 7.30pm. Friendly and welcoming book club. For more

details, including future choices of books, email: louisejeffrey14@gmail.com

THURSDAY 7 AUGUST

• **BUNTING WORKSHOP:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 1pm - 3.30pm. Kids climate action bunting workshop. Develop basic sewing skills and design your own flag to add to our climate action bunting for the hub! Ideal for children aged seven - 12. With Dianne Spottiswood Miller for adults and teens 14+. Online booking is available at <https://hub531.appointedd.com> or by email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

SATURDAY 9 - THURSDAY 14 AUGUST

• **PENTLAND ART CLUB 2025 EXHIBITION & SALE:** Scout Hall, 45 Lanark Road West; 10am - 6pm (Saturday 9 August), 2pm - 6pm (Sunday 10 August), 2pm - 8pm (Monday 11 August - Wednesday 13 August), 2pm - 4pm (Thursday 14 August). Contactless payments, cheques and cash accepted.

SUNDAY 17 AUGUST

• **WATERCOLOUR WORKSHOP:** the hub@531

Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 2pm - 4pm. Watercolour workshop with Jenny Matthews. Online booking available at <https://hub531.appointedd.com> or by email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

MONDAY 1 SEPTEMBER

• **COLLY BOOK CLUB:** The Colinton Inn, 12-14 Bridge Road; 7.30pm. Friendly and welcoming book club. For more details, including future choices of books, email: louisejeffrey14@gmail.com KLY FROM 10 SEPTEMBER. Contact Claire Maloney: 07999 410721

COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

THURSDAY 7 AUGUST

• **BALERNO COMMUNITY COUNCIL:** Community Centre, Main Street; 7pm. (First Thursday of the month: *NO MEETING IN JULY*)

WEDNESDAY 13 AUGUST

• **CURRIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL:** Gibson Craig Halls (rear), Lanark Road West; 7.30pm. (Second Wednesday of the month: *NO MEETING IN JULY*)

WEDNESDAY 27 AUGUST

• **JUNIPER GREEN & BABERTON MAINS COMMUNITY COUNCIL:** the hub@531 Lanark Road; 7.30pm. (Fourth Wednesday of the month: *NO MEETING IN JULY*)

TUESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER

• **COLINTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL:** Colinton Bowling Club, Redford Road; 7.30pm. (Second Tuesday of the month: *NO MEETINGS IN JULY OR AUGUST*)

WATER OF LEITH CONSERVATION TRUST SUMMER EVENTS

For details and information on how to book, visit: www.waterofleith.org.uk/whats-on Booking essential for children's events. Venue: Water of Leith Visitor Centre, 224 Lanark Road, unless otherwise stated.

TUESDAY 1 JULY • RIVER DIPPING: Ages 5-10; 1.30pm - 3.30pm. £7 per child, accompanying adult free.

THURSDAY 3 JULY • SPLASH: Ages 3-6; 1.30pm - 3pm. £5 per child, accompanying adult free

TUESDAY 8 JULY • STOCK-BRIDGE—A SUMMER EXPLORATION: Ages 5-10; 1.30pm - 3.30pm. £7 per child, accompanying adult free.

THURSDAY 10 JULY • BUSHCRAFT: Ages 5-10; 1.30pm - 3.30pm. £7 per child, accompanying adult free.

SUNDAY 13 JULY • GUIDED WALK—DELLS IN SUMMER: 1.30pm - 3.30pm. Join Kat for a hands-on exploration of Summertime in the Dells. £7 or free to members.

TUESDAY 15 JULY • ULTIMATE SURVIVAL: Ages 8-11; 1.30pm - 3.30pm. £7 per child.

THURSDAY 17 JULY • COALIE PARK—ART IN THE PARK: Ages 5-10; 1.30pm - 3.30pm. £7 per child, accompanying adult free.

TUESDAY 22 JULY • BUTTERFLIES & BUGS: Ages 5-10; 1.30pm - 3.30pm. £7 per child, accompanying adult free.

THURSDAY 24 JULY • EXTREME RIVER DIPPING: Ages 8-12; 1.30pm - 3.30pm. £7 per child.

TUESDAY 29 JULY • FAIRY FOLK: Ages 4 - 8; 1.30pm - 3.30pm. £7 per child, accompanying adult free.

THURSDAY 31 JULY • BUGS: Ages 3-6; 1.30pm - 3.30pm. £5 per child, accompanying adult free.

TUESDAY 5 AUGUST • RIVER DIPPING: Ages 5-10; 1.30pm - 3.30pm. £7 per child, accompanying adult free.

THURSDAY 7 AUGUST • BUTTERFLIES & BUGS: Ages 5-10; 1.30pm - 3.30pm. £7 per child, accompanying adult free.

SUNDAY 17 AUGUST • ADULT GUIDED WALK—CONTEMPLATE COLINTON: 1.30pm - 3.30pm. Join ranger Dan on this reflective walk as we contemplate all things Colinton. £7 or free to members.

SUNDAY 31 AUGUST • GUIDED WADE—STOCKBRIDGE: 1.30pm - 3.30pm. Join our ranger Johnny for a wade on the wild side and experience the river like never before. £7 or free to members.



JUL/AUG 2025

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LOCAL COMMUNITY CAFES

SATURDAYS (DURING TERM TIME)

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

SATURDAYS (UNTIL SEPTEMBER)

• **THE COFFEE STOP:** Currie Kirk, Kirkgate; 2pm - 4pm. Tea, coffee, home baking and a warm welcome.

TUESDAYS - FRIDAYS (& DURING FARMERS' MARKET SATURDAY): REOPENS 15 JULY

• **THE MILL CAFE:** 2 Main Street, Balerno; 9am - 2pm. 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.

TUESDAYS - SATURDAYS: REOPENS 22 JULY

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

FREE!



COVER ILLUSTRATION: JO ANTHONY BOYCE

C&B NEWS