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# C&B News

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521 • NOVEMBER 2026

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

C&B News

Launched in February 1976, *C&B News* is a volunteer-run, independent, non-party-political, 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 traditional 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: 10 NOVEMBER**
**EDITORIAL: 15 NOVEMBER**
**IN THE SHOPS: 27 NOVEMBER**

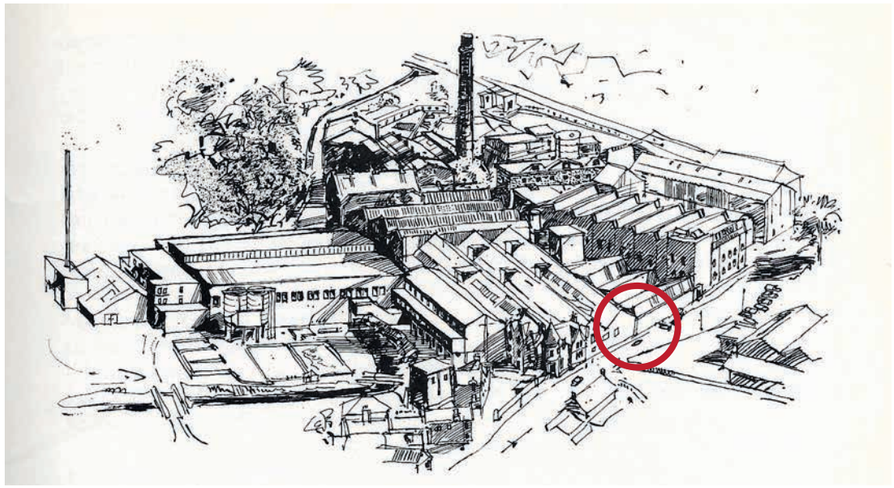
Cover photo: James Bell



# Picture News

Above: Braidburn School teacher, Leo Hannan (left), has been bringing different groups of pupils to Campbell Park and Spylaw Park every week for outdoor activities–regardless of the weather! However, on the day pictured (Tuesday 29 September) Colinton was bathed in glorious sunshine, ideal for raking up meadow sycthings to make mini hay stacks.

Below: Seagull Trust Cruises will be running their popular (and free!) Christmas Canal Cruises, departing daily at 10.30am and 1pm between Monday 30 November and Tuesday 15 December. Each of the charity's three boats can accommodate up to 12 passengers, including up to four wheelchair users. To book: call 07749 034468 or email: SGTsantacruises@outlook.com



Above: this issue's Snapshots of the Past article (starts page 14) looks back at the founder of John Galloway & Co Ltd, operators of the now-largely demolished Balerno Bank Mill beside the Bavelaw Burn. The above sketch gives an idea of the buildings; just to help readers orientate themselves, circled is the estimated position today of the "TopMid" and Balerno Fry!

Colinton Bridge may have been very different today if a proposed scheme to replace the original (above) with a new ferro-concrete successor had gone ahead during the early 20th century. (See page 16 for more details.) A hint of what it might have looked like can be seen at the south east entrance of Saughton Park (below), which is the oldest surviving ferro-concrete bridge in Scotland.

# BRIEFLY

## NEWS...

• **BRIDGE CLOSED:** Following inspection works, including a detailed assessment of the underside of the bridge, the City of Edinburgh Council has confirmed the closure of the Kinauld Tannery Footbridge on the Water of Leith Walkway (east of Waulkmill Loan, Currie). This is expected to remain in place "for a significant period" while repair or replacement options are considered. A signed diversion is now in place via Lanark Road and Kirkgate. Residents have been politely asked to respect the closure barriers and to follow the diversion for their own safety. However, given the repeated pulling down of such barriers since June (and indeed at other officially "closed" sections of the Walkway in recent years), we don't have high hopes...

• **CHURCH VOTE:** The union of Balerno Parish Church and Currie Kirk to form the single congregation of "Edinburgh Kirk of Currie and Balerno Church of Scotland" was approved by the two congregational votes held on Sunday 18 October. In Balerno 61 votes were for the union, 7 against (with 58 in favour of the "Reviewable Charge", 8 against, and one spoiled paper); in Currie, 46 were for the union (and also the Reviewable Charge), 3 against both. Formal approval of the Union by the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian might be given at their December meeting, after which they will set an official date for the union next year.

• **AI CENTRE:** At their October meeting, Currie Community Council unanimously voted to oppose the proposed AI Data Centre development at Wester Hermiston.

• **MUIR WOOD FIELD PATH:** According to Walking Scotland, 15,873 journeys were made along the Muir Wood Field Path between Currie and Juniper Green during August, up more than 8% on July's figure of 14,637. It remains to be seen if the 16% monthly drop in the September total ("just" 13,306 journeys) is a one-off or perhaps a sign of a seasonal change. >p5

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**Advice Surgeries**
I hold surgeries on the **first Saturday of the month**. Locations rotate each month, but include:
- Fountainbridge Library
- Wester Hailes Library
- Colinton Mains Tesco
- Oxgangs Library
- Sighthill Library
- Colinton Library
- Currie Library
- Chesser ASDA

*No issue is too big or too small, so if you think I can help, please get in touch to check this month's locations and arrange an appointment.*
*Please note there are no surgeries in* ***January or August.***

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**MONTHLY SURGERIES**

**1st FRIDAY OF MONTH**
09:15-10:15:
Slateford Green Comm. Centre
11:00-12:00:
Carrickvale Comm. Centre
12:30-13:30:
Wester Hailes Library

**3rd FRIDAY OF MONTH**
10:00-11:00:
Oxgangs Library
11:30-12:30:
Currie Library
**Note: No surgeries on public holidays.**

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# Can You Help Deliver *C&B News*?

GAIL RANKIN
CHAIRPERSON, THE CURRIE AND BALERNO NEWS

As a community magazine, *C&B News* depends on a team of volunteers to help produce and distribute each issue. We are looking for some additional help with the monthly delivery of the magazine.

Deliveries take place on the last Thursday of the month. This involves collecting around 20 boxes, each containing about 40 copies of *C&B News*, and delivering them to a few of the local shops which stock the magazine. You will need access to your own car and to be able to lift and carry the boxes.

You will be joining the wider *C&B News* volunteer team and will also be welcome to join our monthly Monday evening planning meeting, where we plan future issues of the magazine.

There are other opportunities to get involved too. We are still looking for a Treasurer, following our article in the October issue.

• *If either role interests you, or you would simply like to know more about volunteering with* C&B News*, please contact me at chairperson@candbnews.com*

# From Police Station to Welcome Station!

VICTORIA RAM
BALERNO VILLAGE TRUST

Just one year after Balerno Village Trust received the keys to the former Police Station on Bridge Road, the building has been transformed and reopened as The Welcome Station—a new community hub with something for everyone.

Following a substantial refurbishment, the building now offers three rooms for public hire (ideal for classes, workshops, meetings and events) as well as space for fitness and wellbeing activities.

The Welcome Station is already a busy community base. Youth Vision has relocated its office to the building, Simply Play runs its after-school club there, Monday to Friday, and the Post Office operates every Wednesday between 10am and 2pm.

Owned and managed by Balerno Village Trust, the building will be staffed and open for people to drop in Monday to Friday, 10am - 2pm. Public toilets at the front of the building will also be open daily.

Sustainability has been central to the refurbishment, with solar panels and air-source heating helping to give the former Police Station a greener future.

A spokesperson for Balerno Village Trust said: "Our vision is for The Welcome Station to have something for everyone. We're delighted to see the building already being used by so many people and will be adding more weekly classes and one-off events over the coming months. We want everyone to feel welcome here, so pop in, say hi and have a look around. Our new coffee machine will be arriving shortly too, so soon you'll be able to grab a coffee while you're here!"

The Welcome Station is open, the rooms are available to hire, and everyone is welcome.

A recent carers information event held at the Welcome Station

• *For room hire and further information contact: hello@balernovt.org.uk*

# Pentland Community Chest Deadline Approaches

ANDREA BREWSTER
PENTLAND COMMUNITY CHEST

The deadline for the next round of funding from the Pentland Community Chest is fast approaching.

Pentland Community Chest is a joint venture funded and run by Balerno Village Trust and Currie Balerno Rotary, which twice a year makes grants of up to £600 to local community groups and organisations.

Since its launch in 2017, grants have been made to more than 50 different organisations, benefiting countless individuals. The funding has provided support as wide-ranging as sports equipment, food bank resources, tools, playground resources and musical instruments.

• *If you know of a local organisation that may benefit from a grant please visit pentlandcc.org.uk to check out the eligibility criteria and find an application form.*

• *The deadline for applications is Monday 30 November.*

# BRIEFLY...

p3>>>

• **XMAS FAIR:** Ravelrig RDA will hold their Christmas Fair on Saturday 6 December at their premises at 21 Ravelrig Gait, between 11am and 3pm. Attractions will include pony rides (£5) and a visit to Santa in his Grotto (£8: pre-book to avoid disappointment on the day at: fundraising@ravelrig-rda.org.uk). Plus a raffle, lots of exciting stalls, carol singers, soup, hot rolls, coffee/teas and lots of goodies.

• **POPPIES:** Juniper Green and Baberton Mains Community Council and Currie Community Council will be again selling poppies in support of Poppy Scotland during the three weeks leading up to Remembrance Day in November. Poppies will be available in shops and other businesses, with an opportunity to make electronic payments as well as using cash. Last year, the community councils raised £1,530 for the charity.

• **JAZZ BIRTHDAY:** By the time you read this, international touring star Greg Abate, the New York City bebop saxophonist, will have helped local grassroots jazz club Juniper Green Note celebrate its first anniversary on Thursday 29 October.

• **ELECTION:** Current Colinton/Fairmilehead councillor Conor Savage has been blocked from standing for Scottish Labour at next May's local government election. We approached Councillor Savage for comment.

• **ROLEY'S WOOD:** While owned by the City of Edinburgh Council's Education Department, the strip of woodland between Currie Community High School and Currievale Drive is maintained by CEC's Parks Department. Ward Councillor Neil Gardiner is looking to see a more proactive ownership under the Parks Department, to enable improvements suggested and supported by the local community.

• **HOLE IN THE WALL:** The wall between the Currievale Estate and Curriehill Railway Station, damaged by a fallen tree many moons ago, will hopefully be repaired by the time you read this.

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**Unfortunately, the fund-raising Casino Night organised by Currie Balerno Rotary and previewed last issue (see page 7) had to be cancelled, *writes Mike Rowe.* Community Members Circle Security (Currie) and Jack Brown Eyecare (Juniper Green), which were supporting the event, both asked that their donations of £150 each should still go to the designated charities: Ravelrig Riding for the Disabled and Dementia Friendly Pentlands. This will be arranged, along with contributions from Currie Balerno Rotary.**

Last year's fund-raiser.

# New Award Launched to Celebrate Local Heroes

CAITLIN ROSE BROCK
OFFICE OF SIMITA KUMAR MSP

Stacey McGregor has been announced as the first recipient of the new Edinburgh South Western Local Hero Award, launched by local MSP Simita Kumar.

The new award will be presented quarterly and aims to recognise people who make an outstanding contribution to their communities. Residents are invited to nominate individuals who have made a positive difference across the Edinburgh South Western constituency.

Stacey, who works for The Health Agency, has spent more than a decade supporting the Wester Hailes community through a variety of community engagement roles.

In her current position, she leads the Tasting Change programme, which works to tackle food insecurity through initiatives including a weekly community lunch, the Sunflower Pantry and practical cooking workshops that help local people prepare healthy, affordable meals.

Her work is driven by a belief that everyone should have access to good-quality food and by her dedication to reducing health inequalities and promoting social justice.

Stacey McGregor (left) with Simita Kumar MSP and local residents.

Commenting on her role at the Health Agency, Stacey McGregor said: "It's great to be a part of something so special."

Commenting on the award, Edinburgh South Western MSP Simita Kumar said: "I am delighted to recognise Stacey as our first Local Hero. Through her work at The Health Agency, she has made a significant contribution to improving the lives of people in Wester Hailes with a grassroots approach.

"Everyone I spoke to, from colleagues to local residents who benefit from the services she leads, spoke highly of her dedication, humility and character. She is a truly deserving recipient."

• *Nominations for future Edinburgh South Western Local Hero Awards are now open. Residents can nominate an individual who has made a positive contribution to the local community by emailing Simita.Kumar.msp@parliament.scot*

• *Simita Kumar MSP explains more about the new award on page 31.*

# Could Your Company Become Part of Tiphereth's Story?

FRASER THOMPSON
TIPHERETH CAMPHILL COMMUNITY

Tiphereth – which from its community on Torphin Road, Colinton, supports adults with significant learning disabilities and autism – is keen to build stronger relationships with businesses and employers across south west Edinburgh and beyond. It would particularly like to hear from business owners, senior staff and those responsible for charity partnerships.

Fundraising Manager Fraser Thompson said: "There are some remarkable businesses and talented people in our local area, and we would love more of them to get to know Tiphereth. A business might support a project, make a corporate donation, fundraise with its staff or share resources and expertise. The best place to start is simply to visit us and understand what our members are achieving."

Tiphereth hopes these conversations will lead to lasting partnerships that bring together its work with adults who have substantial support needs and the skills, resources and community ambitions of local businesses.

• *To discuss a visit, larger gift or possible corporate partnership, email: fraser.Thompson@tiphereth.org.uk*

# BRIEFLY...

p5>>>

• **NURSERY PATH:** CEC has yet to confirm when work will begin on a new pavement leading to the children's nursery on Riccarton Mains Road. Resurfacing work on the Riccarton Mains Road/ Riccarton Avenue roundabout is hoped to commence in November.

• **CURRIE GREEN SPACES:** Local residents who restored the width of the tracked path on the open space between Currie and Balerno (as featured in last month's *C&B News*) have been congratulated for their work by CEC's Park Department. Organiser Ken Brown also informed the October Currie Community Council meeting that he had been approached by a Balerno resident wanting to organise something similar in their area.

# 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.***

***Note:* C&B News *now regularly publishes lists of new and current local planning applications and decisions on our Facebook page every Tuesday or Wednesday at 7pm.***

**BALERNO**

• **Extensions and alterations to dwelling; 11 Cherry Tree Avenue.** (26/04086/FUL) Comments by Tuesday 3 November.

• **Proposed single-storey extension and redesign of previously consented garage; 14 Ladycroft.** (26/03771/FUL) Comments by Friday 6 November.

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# Survey Highlights Local Opposition to 'Gateway' New Build

AMANDA PATERSON
GREEN GATEWAY COMMUNITY GROUP

Green Gateway Community Group would like to thank everyone who took part in our survey about a proposed building on Woodcroft Field, opposite Balerno High School, and everyone who helped deliver flyers or share the survey.

The survey closed on 30 September with 892 responses: 701 (78.6%) opposed development, 128 supported (14.3%) it and 63 were neutral (7.1%). Among the 852 respondents who identified themselves as Balerno residents, 675 (79.2%) opposed development.

Traffic and parking were the most frequently selected concerns, followed by loss of green belt and open countryside. Other concerns included scale and visual impact, village identity, wildlife, horse-riding and grazing use, and drainage.

Written feedback included opposing, supportive and mixed views. Supportive comments highlighted St Mungo's community work and potential additional facilities. Some respondents questioned the survey wording.

Participation was voluntary, so the results describe only respondents' views rather than those of all Balerno residents.

The survey also found that 459 respondents (51.5%) would definitely submit a formal objection to any planning application lodged with The City of Edinburgh Council, while a further 260 (29.1%) might do so if the process were made easy for them.

In response, we have organised two informal drop-in sessions to help residents understand the planning process, at the Ogston Hall, Balerno Parish Church, on Thursday 19 November (7pm - 9pm) and Saturday 21 November (11am - 2pm).

Our aim is to protect Woodcroft Field and its green belt setting. We would oppose development on this site regardless of who proposed it. Our campaign is not against St Mungo's Church or its members.

For further updates, email: greengatewayadmin@gmail.com

PAM MALONEY
CBDRT

Santa is getting his sleigh ready, helped by CBDRT, Rudolph and his elves. He will be visiting all the boys and girls in Currie, Balerno, Juniper Green and Colinton before Christmas, so look out for him!

And remember...be good!

*• For route maps and more information, visit: cbdrt.com/santa*

As always, Santa's elves will be collecting donations as we visit each street.

All donations will be used to support good causes in the local area. Some of the elves will be digital, so donations can be made by card.

*• Donations can also be made at cbdrt.com/donate-to-us*

*• If you would like to volunteer to be an elf this year, please contact pam@cbdrt.com*

## SANTA'S SCHEDULE (by location):

- **Baberton Mains:** Sunday 13 December
- **Bells:** Sunday 20 December
- **Bonaly:** Saturday 19 December
- **Colinton:** Monday 7 December
- **Currie Castle & Cherry Tree:** Monday 14 December
- **Currie Central:** Sunday 6 December
- **Currie East:** Saturday 12 December
- **Currie Spine:** Thursday 3 December
- **Currievale:** Thursday 10 December
- **Dean Park & Marchbank:** Tuesday 15 December
- **Johnsburn & Lovedale:** Tuesday 8 December
- **Juniper Green:** Saturday 5 December
- **Kingfisher Park & Pilmuir:** Thursday 17 December
- **Ravelrig & Ravelrig Heights:** Wednesday 16 December
- **Wester Currie:** Wednesday 9 December

# Visitor Levy Money to Help Future-proof City's Cultural and Heritage Buildings

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
C&B NEWS

The City of Edinburgh Council has launched a new £3.8m funding programme to support improvements to the city's public cultural and heritage buildings.

Applications are now open for the Small Scale Accessible and Sustainable Capital Fund, a three-year programme reinvesting income from the Edinburgh Visitor Levy directly into sensitively upgrading Edinburgh's cultural buildings.

The fund will enable owners and operators of eligible buildings to apply for grants of between £10,000 and £500,000 to invest in projects that make them easier for people to access, and also help cut carbon emissions so they can operate more sustainably in the long term.

Applications for the fund are now open, with a rolling application deadline: Round one closes Friday 20 November 2026; round two closes Friday 26 February 2027; round three closes Friday 10 December 2027.

*• More information: https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/smallcapitalfund.*

# BRIEFLY...

p7>>>

COLINTON
**• Replacement of two defective lantern roof lights at bar and kitchen areas; Redford Barracks, 265 Colinton Road.** (26/04052/LBC & 26/04070/FUL) Comments by Friday 13 November.

**• Reduce crown of Ash tree laterally from adjacent garage roof by 2 metres, lift crown of Norway maple to 3 metres, fell Lime, crown lift Whitebeam trees to 2.5 metres, reduce crown of Cherry tree laterally by 2 metres from adjacent building, reduce low branch of Norway Maple by 2.5 metres to clear road, crown lift Norway maple to 3 metres over road, remove hangers and reduce leader of Norway Maple 2.5 metres to sound wood; Bonaly Wester, Colinton.** (26/0839/TPO) Registered on Monday 5 October.

# PLANNING DECISIONS

***Information provided by The City of Edinburgh Council.***

BALERNO
**• Ancillary garden room outbuilding in rear garden, to be used for golf simulator and teenage space including pool table; 16 Clayhills Grove, Johnsburn.**(26/03827/CLP) Granted, Wednesday 14 October.

COLINTON
**• Proposed alterations to existing attic including new rear dormer, velux rooflights and front infill porch, plus repair/recladding (as amended) of existing front dormer; 19 Westgarth Avenue.** (26/03438/CLP) Granted, Tuesday 13 October.

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# LOCAL UPDATES•LOCAL UPDATES

## Do It Fair – Fairtrade Fortnight

KAREN DOWNARD
BALERNO FAIRTRADE VILLAGE GROUP

Has anyone seen these few pieces of needlework on railings in Balerno recently and wondered why they're there?

They were a little bit of craftivism to celebrate and promote Fairtrade during this year's Fairtrade Fortnight, which ran between Monday 21 September and Sunday 4 October. The theme this year was "Do It Fair—for people, planet and fair pay", which really is the whole ethos of Fairtrade. The craft is intended to be a beautiful way to gently nudge people to buy Fairtrade where possible.

I also went into Scotmid to see what Fairtrade products are available locally. There was quite a selection including: chocolate bars, coins and truffles; teabags, coffee (instant, ground and beans) and sugar; ice cream; flowers; bananas; baby tomatoes; and wine—including a non-alcoholic one!

## Balerno SWI October Meeting Update

EDINGELL THOMSON
BALERNO SWI

Balerno SWI celebrated its 91st birthday in October, with cake and a quiz night.

The birthday candles were lit by our longest-standing member (perhaps not tactful to say "oldest"! ) Phyllis Tait and fanned out by our newest member Christine Moodie, before the cake was cut by Edingell Thomson, chosen because her marmalade was "Commended" at the national SWI competition in Dundee in September.

Then teams of four competed in the fun (but challenging) quiz organised by our quizmaster for the evening, Lorraine McCafferty. The scores were close, but after a nail-biting tie-break finish, the winners were declared to be Team 1, the "Marmalade Ladies".

This enjoyable evening was rounded off with tea and (of course) birthday cake.

• *Our next meeting, held as usual in Balerno Community Centre, starting at 7.30pm on 3 November, is our AGM, followed by a demonstration of Sugarcraft Flowers by member Maggie Cumpstey.*

## Room at Juniper Green Village Hall

SUE WEBBER
ON BEHALF OF VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

After decades of little voices filling Juniper Green Village Hall, the playgroup has sadly had to close. This has left a real gap in more ways than one; we'd love to see the hall busy again during the day.

The Hall is already home to Irish and Scottish country dancing, fitness classes, kickboxing, drama, Balerno Dance Academy and a monthly Hungarian playgroup. But weekday daytimes are now largely free. It's a flexible space that would suit a toddler group, a class, a club or a meeting, whether weekly or one-off.

• *To book, or for more information, visit: https://jgvhall.org/*

• *In addition, a date for your diary: join us on Sunday 22 November at 4pm for the annual Juniper Green Christmas tree lighting. The local primary school choir will sing carols, followed by a social in the hall. Everyone is welcome, so bring the family!*

## Currie wBalerno Rotary: Christmas Time!

MIKE ROWE
CURRIE BALERNO ROTARY

It's not Christmas yet but preparing for it makes this a busy time—not just for Santa, but for Currie Balerno Rotary too.

We're starting in November, supporting the Colinton Primary School with a stall at their Christmas Market (Saturday 28 November, from 11am to 1pm), where we will be selling our miniature Christmas trees and snowmen (hand-made by Rotary members Colin and Don). Then, if there are any left (and there will be), we go on to offer them at the Balerno Christmas Farmers' Market on Saturday 12 December. All proceeds – every penny – go to our local charities.

On Thursday 3 December, we light up our "Tree of Life" in front of Balerno Parish Church. From 6pm we have music from the Balerno and District Pipe Band and Santa has promised to be there.

Every year we invite people to sponsor a light on our Tree of Life in memory of loved ones or to mark special occasions or events and we ask for a donation for each light sponsored. This year donations will go to Alzheimers Scotland.

Then it's on to the Gyle shopping centre, where we shall be offering our gift-wrapping service from Friday 18 December, right through to Christmas Eve! Look out for us there and do your best to keep us busy.

That's Rotary at Christmas. We'll be busy, but we enjoy it.

• *For information about Currie Balerno Rotary, visit: www.cbrotary.org, follow us on facebook.com/cbrotary1020 or contact Mike Rowe at PR@cbrotary.org*

# LOCAL UPDATES•LOCAL UPDATES

Above left: Nick Timms transports the bench to its new location. Above (left to right): Cathy Michie, Ron Smith, Nick Timms and Sofia Soboleva. Below: Varnishin the bench in Harmeny's woodwork workshop.

## Oak Bench Installed on Remediated Land 2026

CATHY MICHIE
HARLAW LAND REMEDIATION

A beautifully crafted oak bench has been installed on the remediated land opposite the "iShare" former phone box on Harlaw Road, Balerno.

This community project was envisioned during the Covid-19 lockdowns, beginning in 2022 when local Ward Councillor Graeme Bruce helped several Harlaw Road residents obtain permission from Rosebery Estates to remove many lorry loads of fly-tipped material and remediate the land.

Funding was provided by EB Scotland Limited, as Harlaw Land Remediation (HLR) became a subgroup of Balerno Village Trust (BVT).

Local volunteers then cleared the remaining bricks, broken glass and a very rusted shopping trolley and a barrier membrane was laid down for eighteen months. It was recommended that we extend the use of the membrane in order to eradicate the invasive Mediterranean plant Allium triquetrum (commonly known as three-cornered leek), which was successful. Once the membrane was lifted, preparation began for sowing native wildflower meadow seeds.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank: John Lessels Landscapes for clearing the land; the Pentland Men's Shed for the bee hotel; and Ron Smith, together with Harmeny School, for the construction of the bench. A great community effort.

The 400 square metres of land, which lies at the start of a lovely walk into the Pentlands, is now a place of beauty and calm.

Thank you to everyone who made this community project happen.

## Harmeny Crafts Bench for Harlaw Road Green Space

ELISENDA REINES
COMMUNICATION OFFICER AT HARMENY

Harmeny has supported the transformation of a community green space in Balerno by creating a handcrafted oak bench for the newly revitalised Harlaw Road remediation plot.

The project was developed in collaboration with Harlaw Land Remediation, part of Balerno Village Trust, after the organisation approached us to explore how our young people could contribute to the improvements being made to the area. This is not our first collaboration with Balerno Village Trust on Harlaw Road: we previously created bespoke shelving for the red telephone box library located on the same street.

Community volunteers have been transforming the formerly unused plot by planting flowers and other vegetation, bringing new life and colour to the space. As part of these improvements, they suggested adding a bench where residents and visitors could sit, relax and enjoy the view across the meadow.

One of our young people built the six-foot oak bench in Harmeny's woodwork workshop, with guidance from our long-standing volunteer woodwork instructor Ron Smith, shortly before his retirement in April.

The project gave the young person an opportunity to develop practical woodworking skills, build confidence and contribute something lasting to a shared community space. It also allowed us to support a local initiative by using the skills and resources available within Harmeny.

In October, volunteers from Harlaw Land Remediation prepared a solid base and installed the bench in the revitalised green space. Residents and visitors can now take a seat, pause and enjoy views of the meadow, which is still dotted with late-blooming poppies, cornflowers and corn marigolds.





LOCAL UPDATES•LOCAL UPDATES

## Currie Balerno Rotary: Burrell Collection Refurbishment

MIKE ROWE
CURRIE BALERNO ROTARY

Above: Balerno's Duncan Dornan, former head of Glasgow Life Museums and Collections

Last month members of Currie Balerno Rotary were delighted to welcome Duncan Dornan, former head of Glasgow Life Museums and Collections (and, incidentally, a resident of Juniper Green) who gave a fascinating insight into the history of the Burrell Collection.

His talk started with Sir William Burrell, an obsessive collector, before moving on to the Burrell Collection as it is today after a £68 million refurbishment.

Born in 1861 in Glasgow, William was an art lover from an early age and bought his first painting at the age of 13. He joined the family business, initially a canal transport company, and built it up into a successful maritime shipping company. This allowed him to develop an extensive art collection over 75 years. He was knighted in 1927 for services to art.

In 1944 Sir William and his wife Constance gifted their collection of more than 6,000 artworks to the City of Glasgow, to be displayed and made available to the people of the city. The Collection was eventually housed in Pollok Country Park in 1983, which provided the ideal location to display such a wide range of exhibits.

Unfortunately, while Pollok Park provided the ideal setting, the building housing the Collection developed structural problems and had to be closed in 2016 for a major refurbishment which took all of six years, at a cost of £68 million.

As Head of Glasgow Life Museums and Collections, Duncan oversaw this refurbishment, working with an "outstanding" team to deliver a refurbishment which enabled many improvements to be introduced, including much-needed improvements in lighting.

In 2023 Duncan received, on behalf of Glasgow's museums, the Art Fund Museum of the Year award for Glasgow's Burrell Collection.

## New Funding Campaign by Tiphereth

FRASER THOMPSON
TIPHERETH CAMPHILL COMMUNITY

A Tiphereth leaflet may have recently landed on your doormat. It marks the beginning of a campaign inviting local people to find out more about one of the area's largest charities.

From its community on Torphin Road in Colinton, Tiphereth supports adults with significant learning disabilities and autism. Tiphereth has supported people in Edinburgh since 1993 through residential care, supported living and vocational day opportunities. The campaign invites the wider community to become part of that work.

The campaign responds to a growing challenge. The gap between the statutory funding Tiphereth receives and the true cost of providing the support and opportunities its members need has widened. Tiphereth must now raise around £300,000 each year through donations and charitable fundraising to make up the shortfall.

This funding helps provide not only essential care but also the wider opportunities that enable people to flourish. In its vocational day service workshops, members undertake meaningful work, develop skills, form friendships and contribute to the wider community.

Activities include woodwork, pottery, textiles and screen printing, gardening and food growing, producing compost from local green waste, and processing firewood for sale. Each opportunity is tailored to individual abilities and support needs, providing structure, purpose and the satisfaction of making a genuine contribution.

Learning disabilities can make meaningful work and wider community life much harder to access. Families say these opportunities help people grow in confidence, form friendships and develop a sense of belonging.

As one parent explained, having somewhere meaningful to go each day gives their family member the same sense of purpose as others in the household: "Our family member sees all of us getting up and going to work in the morning, so he feels he is doing the same, which is very important to him. It makes him feel proud to have his own 'work', as he calls it. It also provides both independence and social opportunities."

### AN INVITATION

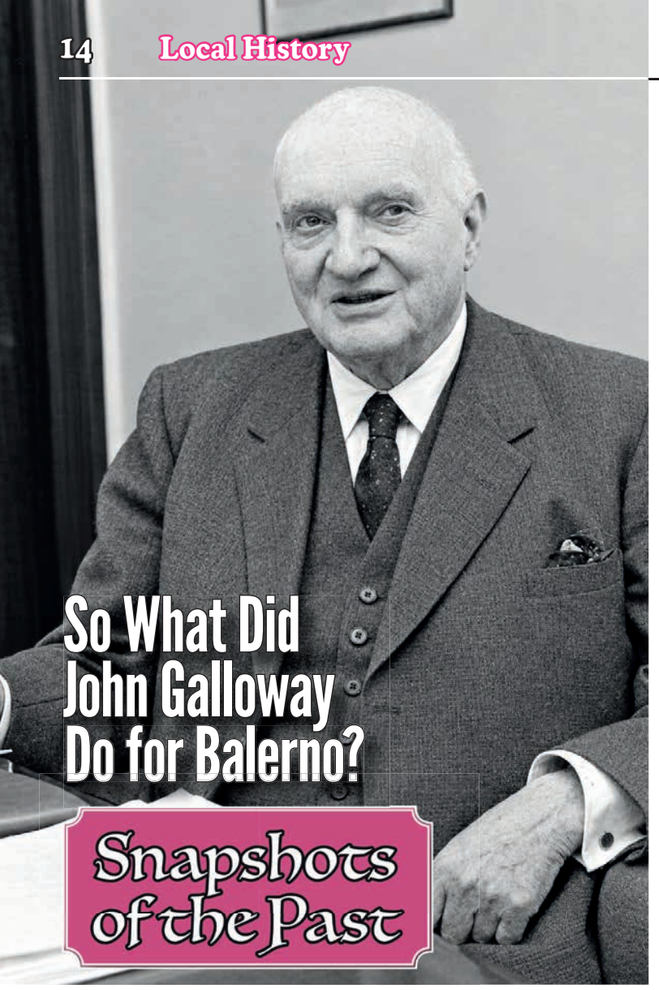
The campaign asks local people to help in whatever way suits them, whether through a one-off donation or a regular monthly gift. Modest donations from many supporters can provide reliable income and help sustain these opportunities throughout the year.

Tiphereth would also like to hear from people considering a larger charitable gift. Prospective supporters are invited to visit the community, see the workshops and learn more about life and work at Tiphereth.

Whether through £10 or £20 a month, a one-off donation, a larger gift or a corporate partnership, every supporter can help Tiphereth provide the relationships, meaningful work and opportunities that enable its members to take part and contribute.

*To make a one-off or monthly donation, visit Tiphereth's donation page: https://www.tiphereth.org.uk/donate*

*To discuss a visit, a larger gift or a possible corporate partnership, email: Fraser.Thompson@tiphereth.org.uk*



# So What Did John Galloway Do for Balerno?

## Snapshots of the Past

**DOUGLAS LOWE**
CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

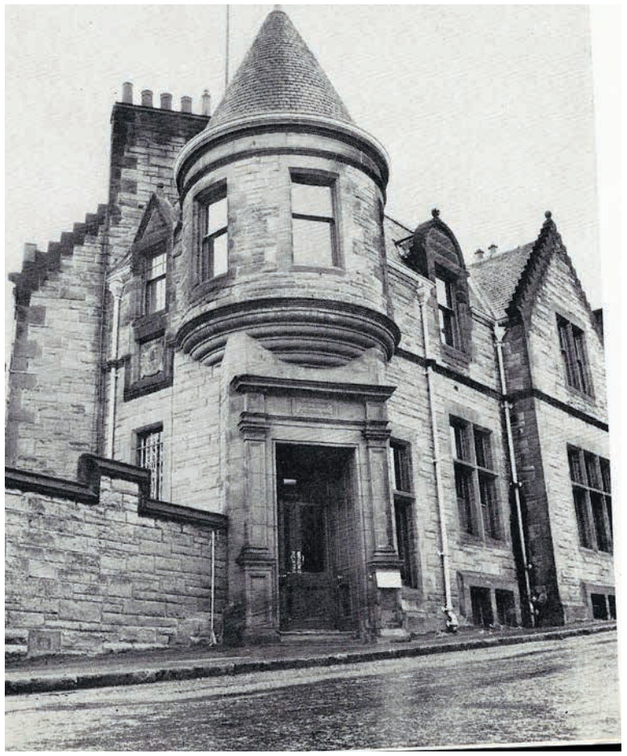
One of our recent residents contacted me to ask various questions about Balerno village and specifically about John Galloway (1879 - 1965), who was the managing director – the boss – of Balerno Bank Paper Mill. For any more recent residents, this mill covered the area between Harlaw Road, Bavelaw Burn and Bavelaw Road, the area occupied by the MillBank houses. It also stretched over the burn to where the Bavelaw Gardens houses are.

One of the questions I was asked was: why is there no statue, or something similar, to John Galloway? I had to advise that there wasn't one either to Henry Bruce, who had owned Kinleith Mill in Currie for around 50 years. I was also asked where John stayed, the resident assuming this to be in Balerno. I had to disappoint him on this as well, as I thought that John had been a resident of Murrayfield. However many of the paper mill's managers stayed in the Balerno area, as did the majority of the workers.

To go back to the beginning: I took much of the following from Galloways of Balerno, published by Newman Neame in 1968. (There's a reference-only copy in both Balerno Library and the Edinburgh & Scottish Collection in Central Library; the latter also has a copy you can borrow.)

John Galloway (senior) was born in 1844 to a family of farmers near Leuchars in Fife. His first job was at the Royal Bank of Scotland in St Andrews. After three years he joined the wholesale stationary firm Lumsden's in Glasgow, before joining Moffat Paper Mill and then Somervilles of Lasswade.

Armed with both accountancy and paper-making experience, he was appointed



Left: John Galloway in his office (picture tidied up using ChatGPT). Above: the entrance to the Balerno Bank Mill head office, now let as accommodation. Below: Dignitaries at the formal opening of the Balerno tennis court and the putting green. John Galloway is second from the left, Lord and Lady Rosebery are towards the centre.
Photos courtesy: Douglas Lowe/CDLHS.





manager of Guardbridge Mill in Fife. John Galloway, the father, had been Managing Director and John, the son born 1879, had expected to succeed him. When this didn't happen some two years later, he took his shares and, in 1916, bought Portobello mill for £30,000 (around £2,342,000 today).

This was registered as John Galloway and Company Ltd and he set about reforming the paper-making processes, introducing Esparto Grass rather than wood pulp and installing new machinery: paper output consequently doubled.

However John was dissatisfied; in 1924 he and four others raised £100,000 (£5,457,000 today) to buy Balerno Bank Mill, beside the Bavelaw Burn. The mill had recently been re-equipped with new machinery following a disastrous fire in 1909. John Galloway & Co Ltd started using esparto grass and, refitted with top of the range machinery, continued making high quality coated paper.

So what did John Galloway do for Balerno?

For starters, John Galloway employed a high proportion of Balerno residents—almost one in six. Virtually everyone either worked in or had relatives working in the mill. (The workforce in 1968 was 400, when Balerno's population was 2,362 (up from 1,640 just four years earlier.)

Many of the houses in Balerno were "mill houses" built by the company for their workers.

John Galloway & Co Ltd also built and provided an 18-hole putting green, which was subsequently built over when Bavelaw Road was constructed. The wee chap who occupied its kiosk, took our 3d and gave out the clubs, was also an ex-employee of the mill.

The company also built and provided Balerno's tennis courts: these and the putting green were officially opened by Lord and Lady Rosebery, along with John Galloway, ministers and other dignitaries in September 1935.

John Galloway took on the village hall in Ladycroft, originally built and endowed by Miss Annie Gibson-Craig, following her death.

His company also provided lorry transport and other expenses for the Gala Days after they restarted in 1957; there is evidence that the Mill provided trophies and other expenses for earlier sports days in the village.

I found also that the mill had provided joiners to construct prize-giving stages in Balerno school playground. I remember Miss Dagg mentioning Mr Galloway visiting the school and providing scrap paper for projects. He also provided the glossy paper that was used in the first SWRI Balerno Village history book.

In the book the village and mill are described as being linked like the clasped fingers of two hands.

John Galloway was described by some as a demanding and sometimes ruthless boss, but with the ruthlessness tempered with humanity: he gained a certain respect from his staff.

Just a few years after his death, however, the mill ceased production and closed in 1971, while a recently-constructed paper coating plant limped on for a few more years.

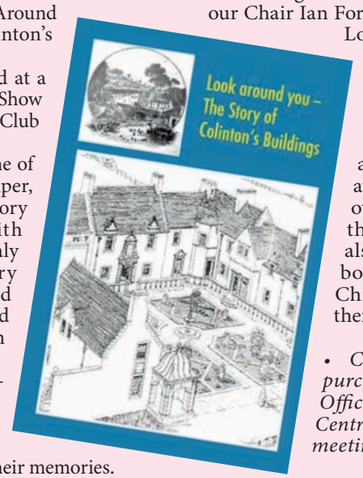
# New Book on Colinton's Buildings

**DEREK DOUGLAS**
ARCHIVIST CLHS

Although we always have a break from our regular meetings during the summer months, some of our members use this time to research various aspects of our local area. This year has been no different, with a considerable amount of work being done researching our buildings, monuments and structures. The outcome is our newest of five books, Look Around You – the Story of Colinton's Buildings.

The book was launched at a Coffee Morning and Film Show held at Colinton Bowling Club on Saturday 3 October.

Several weeks earlier one of our members, Tammy Piper, had launched a local history film competition, with invitations going to Bonaly and Colinton Primary Schools, the 18th Pentland Scouts and the Pentland Creative Club. Children from P6 to S2 were challenged to create a three-minute documentary about a historic feature of Colinton, or to interview a long-time resident about their memories.

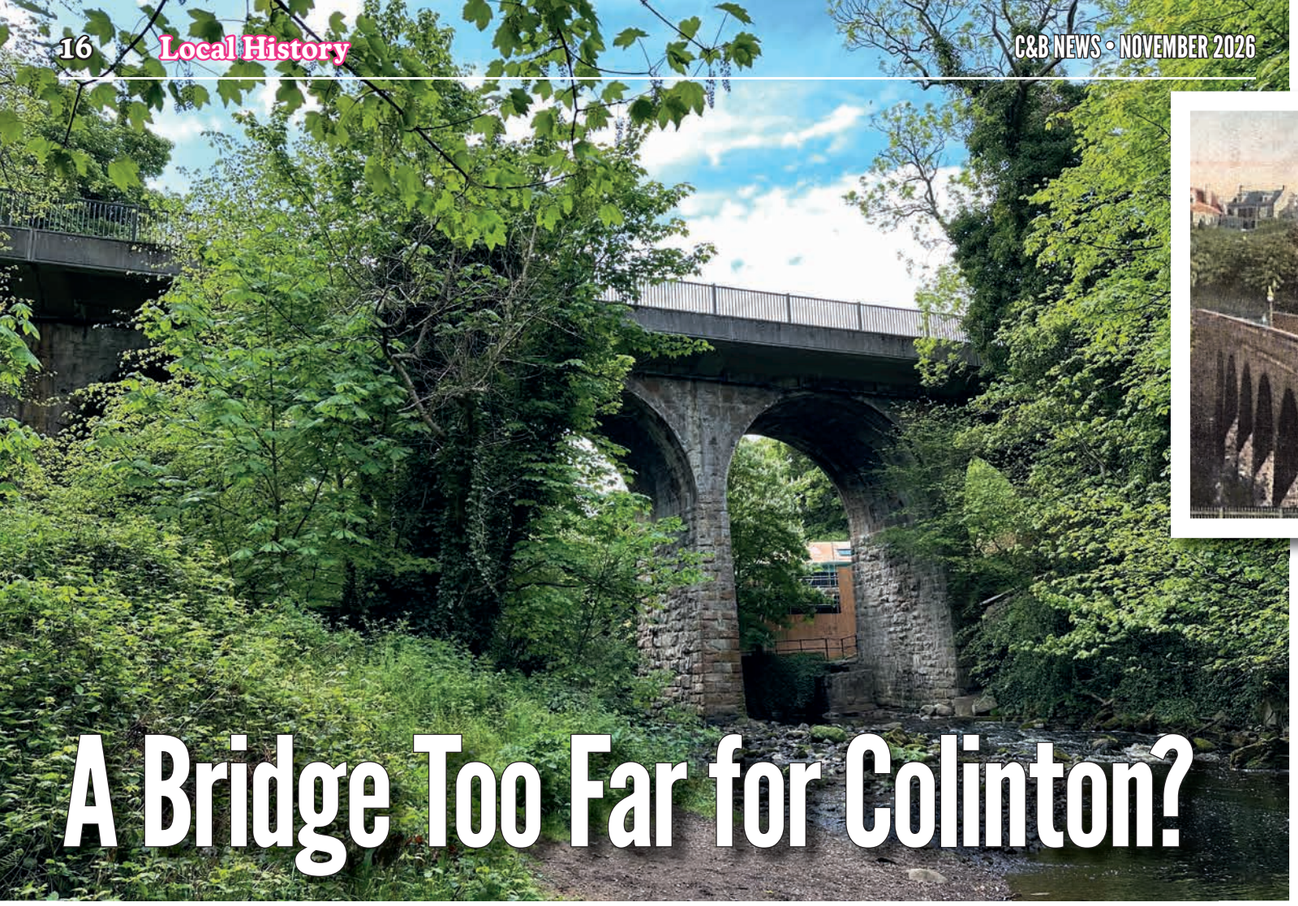



The Society judged the winning entry to be by Ailsa Harrison and Lois Wood, two Firrhill pupils and members of the 108th Pentland Scouts. Their documentary explored Robert Louis Stevenson's connection to Colinton Parish Church. They researched his visits and interviewed the church officer, who kindly provided access to historical items. The film was thoughtfully edited, complete with soundtrack and even closing credits.

After being shown at the Coffee Morning, our Chair Ian Forder presented Ailsa and Louis with their prize and a certificate. Their film is now added to the Society's archives for posterity.

The morning was a great success: the audience not only chatted over coffee and enjoyed the old film clips, but also bought many of our books—quite a few for Christmas presents. (Now there's a thought!)

• *CLHS books can be purchased in Colinton Post Office, the Water of Leith Centre, at any CLHS Monday meetings, or through Amazon.*



# A Bridge Too Far for Colinton?

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
C&B NEWS

For quite a few years now, Colinton Community Council has been campaigning for road safety improvements at the junction of Bridge Road, Spylaw Street and the bridge which stretches across the Water of Leith, Spylaw Park and the Water of Leith Walkway.

A limiting factor on the proposals has been the effective blind corners at either end of the bridge, which are compounded on the southern side by the sharp angle of the Spylaw Street junction.

Ironically, back in the early-20th century, it was proposed to significantly alter both the bridge and its "blind spot" approaches, but these plans were strongly opposed by leading Colinton residents at the time.

## THE BRIDGE

Although initially described as a "great boon to the district", Colinton Bridge – officially opened by Sir William Gibson-Craig on Thursday 6 November 1873 – was soon being criticised for the narrowness of its carriageway (just 14 feet 10 inches/4.5 metres), and the potential dangers to pedestrians from both bolting horses (spooked by noises from the Caledonian Railway sidings underneath) and increasing motorised traffic.

Practical proposals to widen the road deck were first drawn up in February 1903, but it wasn't until after a petition by local residents in 1907 that things began to progress—albeit, very, very slowly. By September 1911, revised plans by Midlothian County Road Surveyor John Robb were given an "independent" thumbs up (barring "certain trifling amendments") by Professor Sir Thomas Hudson Beare, Regius Professor of Engineering at the University of Edinburgh.

And then, like the bridge itself, some councillors representing Midlothian's suburban district (which included Colinton), took an unexpected turn, accepting Robb's subsequent suggestion that a completely new bridge (following "a more convenient line") might be a better, longterm solution.

## A NEW BRIDGE

As proposed, the new bridge would have stretched across the Water of Leith valley in a direct straight line from Bridge Road, necessarily stretching for a greater distance across the valley and also rising somewhat to meet Gillespie Road, further to the west of the existing turning.

It is entirely possible that such a bridge might have encouraged faster east-bound traffic into the village, given the descending gradient from Gillespie Road, but this would not appear to have been a major concern of local residents – or at least certain wealthy residents – once they saw the plans.

What raised most objections were the new bridge's scale – "several feet higher than the present one, some 40 feet broad", according to one letter published in *The Scotsman*, and the "industrial" choice of construction material—ferro-concrete. Slanting across the valley, it was suggested that this new bridge would "destroy one of the most beautiful spots in the neighbourhood of the city".

## THE CAMPAIGN

At the head of the local opposition to the new bridge was Colinton resident and acclaimed architect Sir Rowand Anderson. While best known for major projects such as McEwan Hall and the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, he and several former assistants (such as Sir Robert Lorimer) had genuinely reshaped Colinton into a desirable suburb for Edinburgh's growing middle classes, designing and building numerous large villas for those willing to commute into the city by train.

In the run up to a public meeting in late May 1913, at which a committee was formally elected to raise public awareness of, and opposition to, the new bridge, Anderson (in a letter to *The Scotsman*) argued that "the existing Colinton Bridge can never be of any importance for through traffic, and a widening of the present bridge would be quite sufficient, and could be carried out at a reasonable cost".

Today, anyone with the slightest experience of Colinton Village whenever the nearby Edinburgh Bypass is closed would deny that first assertion, but it's worth noting that the original proposal to widen the existing bridge was considered "inadequate" by Lieutenant-Colonel John Moubray Trotter of Colinton, the effective "Laird" of the parish, resident of Colinton House and (among various roles held within the County of Midlothian) Chairman of the Suburban Council.

## 'THE COLONEL'

In his detailed, comprehensive paper on the subject – published in *The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, Volume 21 (2025) – Steven Robb (the great-great-nephew of Midlothian County Road Surveyor John Robb) suggested that Trotter –"the Colonel" – wasn't entirely convinced of the need for the new bridge, despite defending the project at the public meeting.

In the weeks and months that followed, the proposals continued to be decried by numerous readers in *The Scotsman*, while deputations – led by Anderson and the committee – continued to be made at the Parish Council which, after receiving a petition with more than 500 signatures, agreed to "respectfully" ask the Suburban District Committee to consider an alternative scheme.

Curiously enough, a popular suggestion at the time was that the County's self-declared "comprehensive and coherent scheme of road improvement" would be best served by constructing a new road westwards from Colinton along the southern bank of the Water of Leith at least as far as Currie, with the business of a connecting bridge between it and the existing Lanark Road, on the northern bank, safely hidden away at Juniper Green.

## THE END OF THE BRIDGE

A significant factor in the new bridge ultimately not being built was John Robb's unexpected death in January, just a week before the first "concerned" letter appeared in *The Scotsman*. It wouldn't be until the summer that Robb's official successor, surveyor Robert Moir, was finally in post—and the latter's necessary focus on other projects provided the Council with a legitimate excuse for delaying any final decision on the project.

However, the newly-named Committee of Colinton Ratepayers, headed by Anderson, was not keen to let the matter rest in limbo, and continued to exert pressure on Midlothian County Council both publicly and privately—not least by urging local electors to think of the project when considering the nomination of candidates for the forthcoming County Council elections in November.

The fate of the new bridge was ultimately decided at a private meeting held in early November between "the Colonel" and local resident and chemist Professor A P Laurie, whose subsequent letter in *The Scotsman* (published on Monday 10 November) confirmed that Midlothian County Council "was in no way pledged to a new bridge at Colinton" and that any subsequent proposal along similar lines would be first put to a vote among Colinton ratepayers.

## WIDENING THE BRIDGE

With a completely new bridge off the table, attention returned to schemes to widen the existing bridge across the valley.

Thanks in no small part to the outbreak of the First World War, however, nothing would happen until almost a decade later, by which time the Parish of Colinton had been incorporated within Edinburgh's boundaries. The limits of the existing bridge – especially when it came to the city's buses – finally forced the issue.

In 1922 Colinton bridge was widened with cantilevered concrete beams and slabs supporting two 5 feet (1.5 metres) wide pavements, each with a pierced concrete balustrade/parapet. This widening would survive until 1994, when the additions were replaced by new concrete slabs and the current open steel balustrade on either side.

## A FIRST FOR EDINBURGH?

In his article, Steven Robb suggests that, although now largely forgotten, it's "tempting" to see the 1913 campaign "as both a triumph for local democracy and an early victory for amenity or place-based conservation". But he does also ask: was it "simply a sophisticated NIMBY campaign focusing on the terror of reduced property prices", due, if not to the bridge's non-artisan concrete construction, then to the increased traffic congestion it might encourage?

On the whole, Robb believes the campaign against the bridge was "a sincere effort to protect the amenity of the expanding village, by objecting to something that would have adversely affected its character". Remember, all this took place long before the concept of planning permission was given legal standing by the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. The concept of conservation areas, meantime, wasn't given legal status until 1967, and Colinton would not become a conservation area until 1977.

It's also possible that the memory of the campaign's success helped galvanise many local residents, in 1927, to form the Colinton Amenity Association in order to "preserve and enhance" the character of the village as it became an increasingly popular visitor destination. At least two members of CAA's inaugural committee were veterans of the campaign, while Colonel Trotter's daughter, Margaret Nina Trotter, was CAA's second president.

Main: Colinton Bridge as it is today. Photo: Paul Fisher Cockburn. Above left: Colinton Bridge before it was widened. Above right: The 1930 Infirmary Pageant crosses the widened bridge. Right: Bridge repair work during 1994. Photos: Colinton Local History Society. Our thanks to archivist Derek Douglas.

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# Autumn Colours are Beautiful

GAIL COUSINS
BALERNO RAMBLERS

The "Three Nights Away" to Whitby (see last issue) was a great success. The hotel was excellent, location perfect, weather sunny (no rain) and, there was the bonus of experiencing the Northern Lights on Saturday night.

Walk options catered for all abilities and distances. Thanks to our car drivers and walk leaders: all 27 ramblers travelled and returned home safely.

The only question now is where are we going in the Autumn 2027?!

Before then some of our members will attend the Scottish Gathering, which will be based in Peebles from Friday 23 to Monday 26 April 2027. Walk leaders from Balerno Ramblers will be leading the walks on the Saturday.

Daring to mention the "C" word, our weekend group will be holding their festive lunch at Howies, Waterloo Place on Thursday 19 November. The midweek group, meantime, will be dining at Merchants Golf Club on Wednesday 2 December. No walk planned on that day: a chance to ditch the walking attire!

- *For more details of our upcoming walks please check the C&B News What's On listings, or visit the Balerno Ramblers page at: 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 the information on forthcoming walks. Email: balerno-ramblers+subscribe@googlegroups.com*

**Main photo: Weekend group members on the Fife Coastal Path. Photo: Liz Robertson. Above: Walk leader Sandra Hole of Horcum. Photo: Jongky Harlim.**

## STEF LYONS

I'm feeling nostalgic. But also slight panic. It's November and I know that the festive period is approaching and people in my vicinity will want to be fed exciting baked goods and treats for the best part of the next couple of months. When I first got into baking, back in my early twenties, I bought into the cupcake fascination we had in those days. Many a cupcake shop opened up, also promising larger cakes and/or twee little bites of sweetness and joy. Brownies, cookies, loaf cakes and slices. All to have with a lovely cuppa over gossip with friends. I lived in South London at the time, which was the capital of such places. Unless you lived in North London, in which case you felt like you had the most cupcake-based cafés and could look down at your southern neighbours with derision and superiority.

I know people still like cupcakes. But there was a thing in the early 2010s when they were everywhere. Half cake: half icing ratio. All sorts of combinations and clever twists to keep us interested. The only reason I'm talking about this is because Christmas is coming and therefore feeding thousands of people with easily baked goods becomes a part-time job for me. A book I purchased way back in the day for all this stuff was the Primrose Bakery Christmas. The book is by Martha Swift, whose bakery The Primrose Bakery is in north London, near Primrose Hill. I bought this book in 2014 and, after a

Google search, I can see that the place is still going even now; 12 years later, it's still producing cupcakes galore, brownies and all sorts. Some of the goods have not changed in all that time. The people of Primrose Hill must really want their sweet treats to remain untampered with.

Anyway, I have made an absolute tonne of their recipes over the years, and their Christmas book is no exception. Some of my favourites are the Toblerone Cupcakes (which have a piece of Toblerone baked into them and one placed on top of the icing), and the Apple Crumble Cupcakes (yep, that's exactly what they are). Larger bakes I have made a billion times are the Rainbow Cake, the Marjolaine Cake (layers of meringue, chocolate, hazelnuts and cream… so, so good), as well as the moreish Cheesecake Brownies, Chocolate Peanut Butter Pie and even the cake for dogs has gone down well (with dogs).

These are all bakes that are great at this time of year. Fun, silly, tasty, and not too taxing on your time. You can whip them up and please a crowd and have many people feel joy in the whimsical nature of these bakes.

I know we are all busy at this time of year, and welcome shortcuts are aplenty. But this book provides us with the few times we may actually have the time and energy to be bothered to get on and create something fun for the family and bask in their admiration for your genius and ability to create lovely sweet treats. It's a full-on win. Even if it's a bit aged and not too fashionable with baking anymore. But as they say, the oldies – Wait, am I saying things from the 2010s are old? – are the goldies. Oy vey. This older millennial cannot believe I'm saying this stuff is old. But like a fine wine it's still great. And everyone will love what you make. So there.

Happy eating.

## LUCIE NOVOVESKA

### Water of Wreath

My husband came up with this month's title, claiming that everyone will get the play on "Water of Leith". Was he right?

This year I made a decorative wreath for every season. You can see the wreaths are simple with just a few decorations on the bottom and seasonally-coloured ribbons on the top. They look minimalist and humble—for now. The plan is to add more decorations each year, to eventually fill up the full circle.

I reused the wreath base, which means a little extra work by having to take the decorations on and off and exchange ribbons, but it fits my "re-use and upcycle" ethos. I don't have to store four wreaths and each wreath is a unique version: it will never be the same. Off season, the unused decorations sit on the shelf in the hall, patiently waiting their turn, but a joy to look at nevertheless.

I like to use natural materials where I can. The disadvantage is they don't last as long as paper, yarn or textiles. For me, it is fun to keep on the lookout for replacement materials and judge leaves on the pavement to see if they are worth a space on our wreath. The summer wreath highlighted a certain sporting event this summer but, given the results, I promptly pivoted to celebrate all things Scotland instead.

A happy wreath on the door will cheer you up, score occasional thumbs up from delivery drivers and even the highest praise of all: an encouraging nod from a neighbour.

## URARA DONOHOE

### Cinnamon

Cinnamon (Cinnamomum verum) bark is an essential part of most kitchens in the UK, with its use becoming even more frequent in the winter months leading up to Christmas. From gingerbread and Christmas puddings to mulled wines and ciders, many Christmas recipes include cinnamon as one of the key essential ingredients. And what a wonderful herb to include in your culinary ventures as the weather gets colder.

Cinnamon is a heating, drying herb, a perfect antidote to damp cold winters that Scotland is prone to. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, it is blood nourishing and treats yang deficiency; that is to say, it increases both energy and warmth, giving you a bit more va-va-voom. An excellent digestive aid, firing up sluggish guts, it also relieves gas and pushes warm blood to your fingers and toes.

More recently, cinnamon has been found to help reduce glycaemic index of foods it is added to, and possibly even increase your insulin sensitivity thus reducing the risk of diabetes (but don't go stuffing your face with cinnamon cookies yet—the results are preliminary!) Further, some, but not all, studies have shown moderate effect in reducing cholesterol.

Whatever the science, cinnamon is delicious and warming, so it really would not do any harm to start adding it to your recipes right now. Why not a dash of cinnamon into your coffee or even cocoa? Add it to your darker stews like bolognaise or boeuf bourguignon. Even add it your standard sweets like brownies and chocolate cake!

• *Please forage responsibly, taking no more than 10% of any patch of plants/flowers/leaves/berries.*

• *Forage from areas free from herb/pesticides, pollutants (e.g. heavy traffic), mindful of dog poos! There are poisonous and deadly plants including lookalikes, so never consume any plant unless 100% certain of what it is.*

**Urara Donohoe is a Medical Herbalist at the Rose and Yarrow Clinic and Dispensary in Balerno: https://www.roseandyarrow.com**

## ANNETTE WILSON

### Mobile Phones

I was waiting for a train recently and, glancing around the platform, noticed that all other eight adults waiting were on their phones. Head down, phone in hand… and it made me think about how quickly mobile phone use has become a default behaviour for so many of us. We hear so much about teens and phones, but I wondered about how many adults may be impacting their health through phone usage?

So I checked. The average adult in the UK checks their phone 58 times a day. They spend, on average, 3.5 hours every day on their phones. 41% check their phones within five minutes of waking up. At least 36% of mobile phone time is unintentional scrolling. One in eight adults experience behavioural addictions related to internet, social media, or phone use,

Even if your own usage is not at this level, do you check how you are using your body while you are using the phone? Holding your head down to look at your phone is creating around four times the weight load on your neck compared to holding your head straight up. No wonder so many people suffer from chronic neck and shoulder tension! As a massage therapist, I always work on the jaw to wrist connections and notice how much more tight it can feel in someone's dominant hand… overworked thumbs and mouse clicking fingers! Eye strain and dry eyes (from lack of blinking) are other common side effects from lots of phone time.

Mobile phones are part of our daily lives, so how can we use them in a way that better supports our health and wellbeing? Here are some ideas you might like to consider.

Go hands free whenever you can. Leave your phone in another room overnight. Try some eye exercises and stretch regularly. Monitor your own screen time, set limits and reminders to take a break. Enjoy meeting people on the train platform and having a conversation occasionally!

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

## JO DOUGLAS

### Feeling Stressed?

A degree of stress is a normal part of life. However, if stress is extreme or ongoing, our response can be overwhelming and take its toll on our bodies. Did you know that there is a link between the mind and gut? The vagus nerve plays an important role in this communication and, by nourishing our bodies with the nutrients they need, we can help support our nervous system and how we respond to stress.

An anti-inflammatory, Mediterranean-style diet is a great place to start. Think plenty of fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, whole grains, extra virgin olive oil, fish and lean meats. Where possible, try to limit highly processed foods and foods high in unhealthy fats, as well as keeping alcohol intake moderate.

Stress can trigger cortisol release in our bodies, which may affect our blood glucose levels. To help keep those more stable, try including protein and fibre with your meals, having a protein-rich breakfast and reducing your intake of refined sugars. These small changes can help support more consistent energy levels throughout the day

.

• Don't forget to support your gut microbiome! Try to introduce some prebiotic and probiotic foods into your weekly shop.

• Prebiotics help feed the beneficial gut bacteria and include onions, garlic, leeks, artichokes, apples, pears, kiwis and oats.

• Probiotics are live microorganisms that can help support our gut microbiome. These include yoghurt with live cultures, sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha, miso and tempeh.

Finally, caffeine can be absolutely fine for some people, but others are more sensitive to it and may find it worsens feelings of anxiety or jitters. If this sounds familiar, try switching to decaf or incorporating some lovely herbal teas into your day, such as chamomile, lemon balm or lavender.

**Jo Douglas runs Live With Hope, a nutritional therapy and lifestyle business, based in Balerno: https://www.livewithhope.co.uk/**

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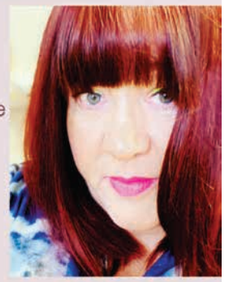

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FRONT COVER STORY

# The Journey of a Pumpkin

JAMES BELL
HEAD GARDENER, MALLENY GARDEN

A long time ago (well, March 2026!) in a garden nearby, the idea of a Pumpkin growing competition within the gardens of The National Trust for Scotland was suggested.

We jumped at the chance to take part. A 240-year-old walled garden seemed like an ideal place to grow a giant pumpkin. The lofty altitude of being in the mountains (OK—the Pentland Hills!), with its shorter growing season, didn't deter us. With guidance from our expert George, we were hopeful of being able to grow a champion pumpkin. We embarked on the challenge, competing against – amongst others – Culzean, Hill of Tarvit, Castle Fraser, and Newhailes. It was all very "friendly".

Our pumpkin of choice was "Atlantic Giant", considered to be the cultivar which usually produces the largest pumpkins. Would it help grow our Malleny Champion?

We held off sowing the seed of our "Champ" until the beginning of May. Hill of Tarvit (in Cupar, Fife) had already planted theirs outside by then, but we were not worried by sowing late. A little bit of *Magicae cucurbita pulvis* would help them along.

Our "Champ" germinated a little over a week later – looking strong and powerful – with many siblings to keep it company. They were grown for a couple of weeks in the greenhouse, before being hardened off outside for a week. The "Champ" and its siblings were then planted out at the beginning of June, after risk of frost had passed. (That risk is real, given we are growing in the mountains—AKA the Pentland Hills!). George had prepared the plot with a deep trench filled with our garden compost: enough nutrients to feed these hungry plants through the summer.

And they grew. The hot, dry summer (not helpful for pumpkin growing) required regular watering and care. Thinning the fruits to one pumpkin per plant helped focus energy into the "Champ". A few of its siblings were planted outside the garden in a spare plot: one of these climbed back into the garden and became an unintentional wall grown, hanging pumpkin. Not the normal way to grow a pumpkin, but it seemed to like it, growing to an impressive 29.1 lbs (13.2 kg)! Throughout the year the other pumpkins grew, getting noticeably larger each week.

We harvested and weighed in mid-October. How did we compare to our competitors? Well… caveat time! It's worth noting that the Trust's gardens cover a huge geographical area: Culzean in the tropical south west, 140 feet (42.6 km) above sea level; Hill of Tarvit, Fife, 280 feet (85.3 km); Castle Fraser, cold north east, 370 feet (112.8 km); Newhailes, sunny East Lothian, 75 feet (22.9 km); and Malleny Garden, Balerno, 540 feet (164.6 km). In general, further south and closer to sea level are more favourable to pumpkins. It results in a longer growing season. The protection of a walled garden improves conditions a bit, but a few gardens harvested early due to risk of frost including: Castle Fraser weighing in at 27.8 lbs (12.6 kg) and Hill of Tarvit at 47.2 lbs (21.4 kg). Even "tropical" Culzean were concerned about cold nights and managed a pumpkin of 59.7 lbs (27.1kg).

So, how did we do? Well, we grew a pumpkin which was [REDACTED].

Sorry: at time of writing it's still a secret! To find out, you'll need to either search on the National Trust for Scotland's social media channels (videos of all our competitors/colleagues are available there) or wait until we reveal the weight in next month's *C&B News*!

But we can be proud of the massive pumpkin we grew. It did very well. Thank you to our volunteers and to Balerno Village Trust Gardeners (especially George and Jim) for all their work in growing the "Champ" and its siblings.

Is it the winning or the taking part that counts? Regardless, it was good fun!

*Various pumpkins have been distributed around Balerno for various causes. Some were carved, some eaten, all enjoyed.*

*https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/malleny-garden*

Sowing (May)

Germination (May)

The Champ (June)

(Late June)

(Early August)

(Mid-August)

(Late August)

(Mid-October)

The Champ

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# Blackpool Success for Pentland Gymnastics

NIA KING, SOPHIE RAMSAY, AILSA MACKENZIE
P6 NETHER CURRIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Pentland Gymnastics travelled to Blackpool on Friday 11 September to take part in the Ministrada event at the Tower Ballroom the next day.

There were two different groups that took part in the event: the rhythmic and artistic group. The rhythmic group did a gymnastic display along to Coldplay's "A Sky Full of Stars", "Heaven" by Emile Sande, "Diamonds" by Rhianna and "Pompeii" by Bastille. The artistic group did a series of gymnastics to the songs from the Lion King.

This event was a lot of fun, and it was great to see all of the other groups perform their routines. It was very competitive! The rhythmic team won two trophies: one was for overall performance on the day and the other for technique. Eilidh's choreography was superb.

In the evening everyone got to enjoy fireworks on Blackpool Promenade, which was gorgeous to see at nighttime!

On Sunday most of the team enjoyed a day at Blackpool Pleasure beach and some of us were brave enough to go on the giant rollercoaster called the Big One! We were 235 feet in the air!

- *On Saturday 26 September we travelled to East Kilbride to perform at half time at the Scotland v Northern Ireland netball match. This was also a lot of fun—and Scotland won 67-43.*

# Poetry First for *Telegraph* Columnist in *C&B News*

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
C&B NEWS

*The Telegraph* columnist and assistant editor Michael Deacon recently revealed that his "first ever piece of published writing" was a "condensed rewrite of Robert Burns' *Tam o'Shanter*") which appeared in his "local newspaper", *Currie & Balerno News* when he was a boy.

Naturally, the "hired help" felt obliged to check if this was indeed true—and it is!

Deacon had written the poem as part of a class project at Dean Park Primary School. It was published in our March 1988 issue (number 134).

We emailed the now-Kent-based journalist a copy of the appropriate page, which he described as "a delightful surprise".

*With the author's permission, we are happy to republish the poem as it first appeared—typos and all!*

A VERSION BY MICHAEL DEACON (7 yrs old)
DEAN PARK P.S.

TAM O'SHANTER

Tam O'Shanter in the pub,
He's so drunk because he drank so much,
He goes outside, he's going to go,
Outside it's a storm of rain and snow.
On his horse called Meg he rides,
On and on Meg gallops.
The storm is the worst storm
Tam O'Shanter isn't very warm
Galloping in the night
There getting near the wood
Then Tam sees a sight.
Witches and wizards dancing
Dancing very fast
Dancing round and round they go,
The warlock they dance last.
Weel done cutty sark! shouts Tam.
The witchs they turn round.
The witchs can't go on water
But they can go on ground.
Tam jumps on Meg
Meg gallops to the river.
And then meg begins to shiver.
The witchs go after them
One falls down. Bump!
One catchs Megs tail
And only leave a stump.

# PLANNING, ETC

## Planning and Climate Change–16: Living without Electricity

We take electricity for granted. The fascinating story of the discovery of its properties and their exploitation started around 900 BC*. Electricity began to be generated for public distribution after Thomas Edison opened the first power station, in New York in 1882. Man's inventiveness has since progressed from creating instant light to the abundance of gadgets we now possess.

Which raises the question: how did people manage without electricity before the 1880s?

Around 1AD, global population was about 190 million; by 1900 it was 1.65 billion. That has rocketed to about 8.3 billion today, but electricity is far from being available to all.

We are encouraged to improve our lifestyle with possessions. Our electronic gizmos are so personalised that we relate to them when contacting the tax office, the bank, shopping online, instead of with people. This is unhelpful when we can't tell whether an email from a "friend" requesting money is genuine or some clever criminal trick. We probably spend more time every day sitting using computers than walking down the road to the bank or shopping in the local grocery where we can find out what's going on. We are so accustomed to using self-service supermarkets that we lose the skill to talk—to people.

Without electricity, we would have to speak to individuals or write a letter. We might go back to a typewriter if we felt our handwriting skills deficient. Communication would be quite different if we didn't have a telephone—even a landline. Electric bikes would disappear. For entertainment we might read more or join in community activities. Wind the clock back a little bit and you'll remember the days before 35mm colour film and when cars needed a starting handle if the battery went flat. Our libraries are being replaced by data centres and the satisfaction of making something using non-electric hand tools is being lost.

Reducing electricity supply could dramatically reduce emissions. We would have to plan our towns differently so we could walk between places. Those of us approaching 100 will remember that before TV arrived we seemed to have a more joined-up society.

But looking back, omitting the unhappy memories, were we a more considerate civilisation when electricity was less accessible?

* https://electricityforum.com/a-timeline-of-history-of-electricity

## CityPlan 2040 Consultation

In last month's *C&B News*, I outlined the proposed timescale for the preparation and delivery of the 2040 City Plan. I mentioned that, between July and September 2026, The City of Edinburgh Council had been asking people to contribute to their "Call for Ideas" stage with their suggestions.

The deadline for submitting your thoughts for both the "Call for Ideas" and the "Call for Sites" stages was extended to Wednesday 21 October, which suggests that people are not overly enthusiastic about our planning system. CEC advised that ideas should focus on the use and development of land and buildings across Edinburgh: for example, for an area of land, a site or a building, something you want to protect or improve, or planning policies you want to change. A pretty broad list!

Unfortunately, the City's invitation emerged after the deadline for the October issue: however you could still try and make contact by sending an email to cityplan2040@edinburgh.gov.uk

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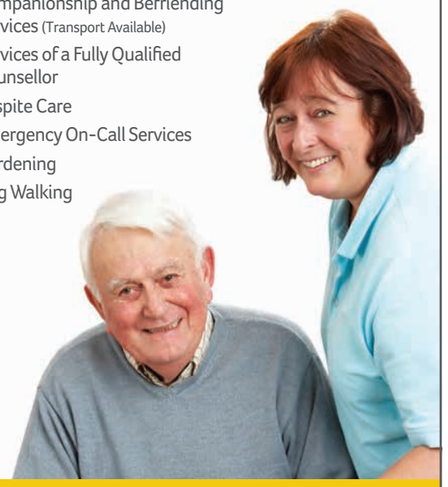

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# PLANNING, ETC BY ARCHIE CLARK

## The Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit

I hadn't heard of the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) until recently. Their website (https://www.energyconsents.scot/) states:"Scottish Ministers decide on applications to build, operate or modify onshore electricity generating stations over 50 megawatts (MW), such as wind, solar, battery and hydropower. Ministers also decide applications on overhead power lines, large oil and gas pipelines, and related infrastructure. These applications are administered by the Energy Consents Unit."

Dig deeper and you will unearth a Consultation paper dated March 2025 prepared under Michael Shanks MP, the UK Government's Minister for Energy, on "Electricity infrastructure consenting in Scotland", with input from Gillian Martin MSP, cabinet secretary for Net Zero and Energy in the Scottish Government.

It's a bit technical. Somewhere it states that "the entire UK needs an efficient planning system that is clear to understand, considers all its stakeholders, and includes local voices. The reforms seek to consult communities at an early stage. This is not about making quick decisions, but instead making considered decisions as efficiently as possible. The energy transition is one that will be achieved by cooperation, not coercion." That's why Shanks stated he believed local communities should be consulted on applications early so as to influence them from the outset.**.

If you feel brave, try and find out what may be happening in your area by navigating the Scottish Government's tortuous ECU portal (https://tinyurl.com/33t34xy6). You should be able to choose a Project Name or Local Authority. Selecting "The City of Edinburgh Council", press "Go" and you will discover entry "ECU00005144 for Riccarton BESS, for a 500 MW Battery Energy Storage System with associated ancillary infrastructure near Currie, Edinburgh". By selecting "Documents", you will (currently) find over 80 items including a plan for the triangle of land opposite the Riccarton Mains Road Substation, near a housing estate.

Those who expect to find such information in the "Weekly Lists", including our Community Councils, will not have seen this. Quite how that fits in with our Governments' stated intentions to "include local voices" is not obvious. The lack of transparency and the ECU's apparent unwillingness to seriously take the views of those who will have to live with these things into account has angered communities across Scotland.

Perhaps our MSPs can help their electorate by early identification of upcoming schemes, like the BESS at Riccarton Mains Road that people will see as related to Apatura's proposed Data Centre at Wester Hermiston, so affected parties can assess the impact from the beginning.

** https://tinyurl.com/b9pem5y9

An application has been lodged for a chicken run in Colinton, to be entirely concealed by trees in a vacant paddock. Ten documents have been submitted, including a four-page letter explaining the applicant's endeavours to address NPF4 policies 3, 6, 8 and 14 and City Plan 2030 Policies Env 3, Env 4, Env 18, Env 20 and Env 21.

However there is no reference to NPF4 Policy 23(e) which mentions the possibility of a Noise Impact Assessment being required if there happened to be a noisy cockerel in the coup.

Sounds a bit of a bureaucratic omelette—and that's before the chicken manager has made his entry in the Scottish Kept Bird Register, "egg-cetera".

## Is Government in Scotland too Centralised?

For quite some time, it has been noticeable that, despite discussions on encouraging people to get more involved with proposals relating to their environment (by asking us to comment on planning applications, Local Place Plans, the 2040 Local Development Plan and other aspects of life, such as the provision of health facilities), we seem to be travelling in the opposite direction with more and more coming under centralised control.

Instead of deepening devolution to allow communities to exert some influence on their own locality, the tentacles of government have reached out to ensure that, despite their promising words, power will remain centralised, with community councils dependent on unpaid volunteers, no staffing, almost no financial resources and no offices. Where community councils exist, their councillors are generally elected for a four year period: community councils can fold completely. Without any mechanism to ensure that there is some form of continuity and retention of records to show what they have done over the years of their existence, the electorate will be unaware of what they have struggled to achieve.

Without some form of indexed record keeping, the big stories of the past, like the 163% rates increases in 1975 [*Currie & Balerno News* (issue 1, February 1976)], the opening of the new Balerno Police Station [issue 8, September 1976], early pressure to build a Community High School at Balerno [issue 33, December 1978], housing proposals on the Muir Wood Field [issues 10 (November 1975), 253 (February 2000), 381 (November 2012), 520 (October 2026)] get forgotten and long memories are neither reliable nor perpetual. If our communities are to survive as progressive and active settlements, arrangements need to exist in a workable format to allow that. At present I am not aware of anything that allows future community councils, Councillors, MSPs and MPs to quickly find out how we have reached our present position, except through the pages of *C&B News*.

I wonder how many of our current elected representatives know about the issues I have listed above that caused so much concern to local people in the past, and some of which will without doubt reappear in the future?

What efforts are they prepared to make to ensure arrangements are in place to improve how we can record information so that it is retrievable when needed in the future?

## Two Planning Appeals

In October 2025, there was a planning application to change the use of a five-storey building to an hotel at four addresses between 14 - 17 Atholl Crescent in the West End. The former office building (part of a Category A listed terrace) had been empty for several years.

Just before Christmas 2025, the Council decided the application (which had attracted 281 objections) was "Deemed Refusal". The applicant promptly appealed to the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division of the Scottish Government (DPEA) on several grounds, including the failure to issue a decision "within the prescribed period". The appeal was allowed in July, 10 months later.

By contrast, the Planning Appeal respecting application 24/05865/FUL for the lateral extension to the quarry at Bonnington Mains, Newbridge, has been stuck in the Appeal system since June 2025. Having indicated in April 2026 that a decision was expected in the next week or two, the DPEA changed that to "before the end of August" due to the department having to deal with an unprecedented high volume of cases. As of mid-October, a decision had yet to be announce

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DR SCOTT ARTHUR MP
EDINBURGH SOUTH WEST

## CITYPLAN 2040

Edinburgh has the fastest-growing economy in Scotland and is the only area currently experiencing growth above the UK average. While this growth brings opportunities, it also places increasing pressure on infrastructure and public services. To meet these challenges, the city must plan carefully for the future.

That is the purpose of the CityPlan 2040 process, currently being shaped through contributions from local communities, community councils, and other stakeholders. Through Local Place Plans, residents had an important opportunity to influence how Edinburgh develops over coming decades.

Developers will see this as an opportunity. In Edinburgh South West, we are likely to see proposals for major housing developments, including the release of green belt at scale. Recently, I met two developers intending to submit proposals through the CityPlan process. One concerns the redevelopment of an existing site, while the other involves green belt release. I am also aware of further potential proposals that could bring significant development to the area.

There is no doubt that Edinburgh faces a housing crisis and that more homes are needed. However, every proposal must be judged on its merits. Elsewhere in the city, large-scale development has not always come with the schools, GP surgeries, transport links, and other infrastructure needed to support growing communities.

I have no intention of becoming a NIMBY. However, I take seriously my responsibility to stand with local residents, protect valued green spaces, and ensure development is sustainable. New housing, if it happens, should strengthen communities—not strain already stretched services.

At the same time, discussions around local government reform could see decision-making move further away from local communities. If that happens, it will be vital that we work together to ensure our voices are heard and that the future of Edinburgh South West is shaped with local people at its heart.

SIMITA KUMAR MSP
EDINBURGH SOUTH WESTERN

## LOCAL HERO AWARD

During the past few months, I have had the privilege of meeting with a number of the organisations, charities, and community groups that improve lives across the Edinburgh South Western constituency.

From supporting families through difficult times to tackling social isolation, improving health and wellbeing, and providing guidance, there is a tremendous amount of work taking place every day across our communities.

The dedication of the people behind these organisations and initiatives has been clear throughout, with many working tirelessly to support others and make a real difference.

To help recognise those efforts, I am delighted to have launched the Edinburgh South Western Local Hero Award. Presented quarterly, the award will celebrate local people who make an outstanding contribution across our constituency.

I am especially pleased to announce Stacey McGregor as the first recipient of the award. As Programme Lead for Tasting Change at The Health Agency, Stacey leads a range of services that support residents across Wester Hailes. These include the weekly community lunch, the Sunflower Pantry, and practical cooking workshops, helping people prepare healthy, affordable meals while tackling food insecurity.

Beyond these services, The Health Agency provides a range of support that helps bring people together, reduces loneliness and supports both physical and mental wellbeing.

Stacey's award is a fitting recognition of the difference she has made through her work and the support and friendship she provides to local residents every day. (If you are interested in learning more about Stacey's work, you can find a video about her story featured on my social media.)

The Local Hero Award is about recognising our unsung heroes and saying thank you for all they do.

• *If there is someone in your community whose efforts deserve to be recognised, please send your nominations to: Simita.Kumar.msp@parliament.scot*

MILES BRIGGS MSP
EDINBURGH AND LOTHIANS EAST

## SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Several issues in the community have come to my attention in the last few weeks.

I recently visited the wonderful Tiphereth campus to hear about the latest life-changing work the team has been doing for learning disabled adults. It was excellent to take a tour with Tobi and the team, and see firsthand how creative, meaningful work in a natural environment can bring joy and build skills for people facing enormous challenges. Unfortunately, recent works carried out on Torphin Road, which divides the campus, has left a very uneven surface behind, as well as damage to parts of the charity's estate. This has had a serious impact on the safety of residents crossing the road. As in too many cases, the road has not been returned to the standard promised after the works. I have written to Scottish Water and The City of Edinburgh Council to seek an urgent resolution.

Following complaints from residents about our streets, and my own car's axle recently falling victim, I found that pothole repairs by CEC have nearly halved in the last two years. This is not good enough, especially in growing, busy communities such as Currie and Balerno where many families and businesses rely on vehicles daily. I will continue to push the city council and the Scottish Government to unlock the funding we need to fix our roads.

I'd like to thank Balerno Community Council and Councillor Graeme Bruce for the work they have been undertaking lately, holding visitors to Harlaw Resevoir to account, and clarifying the parking laws concerning yellow lines and verges. Lastly, I'd like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Ally Donaldson, who passed suddenly at the end of September. His impact on Currie, Watsons, and Scottish rugby was remarkable: my thoughts are with his friends and loved ones.

CLLR GRAEME BRUCE
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

## INFRASTRUCTURE

Some good news: after receiving concerns from residents in Baberton Mains about the poor state of roads as you enter the estate from the roundabout from Wester Hailes Road, I contacted The City of Edinburgh Council officers to see if they would consider resurfacing these sections of road and they have agreed to do so (Baberton Mains View and Baberton roundabout), albeit for next financial year but nonetheless progress is in sight.

Staying with poor road services, I have been contacted by residents in Currie about the poor state of more roads (Muirwood Grove and Kirkgate) and have made the council aware of their condition. Hopefully they will receive the same attention as other roads that have been recently resurfaced.

Staying in Currie, I chased up about the pavement that was meant to be extended to the nursery on Riccarton Mains Road: I asked CEC for an update and was told that a wall needs some masonry repairs and then they need to strip back the verge area before construction of the actual pavement. There will be some temporary traffic management so be aware—however, I'm still awaiting timelines for this piece of work.

In Balerno, at the junction of Lanark Road West and Somerville Road, I have been asked by residents to see if it is possible to install a bin at that position as the one within the Kingfisher development (which has still not been adopted by the council) has been overflowing at a phenomenal rate. Hopefully there will be a new bin there soon.

There have been concerns raised by Balerno Community Council at the length of time the wall has taken to be repaired in Main Street: I have escalated this to CEC and await their response. Staying in Main Street, CEC officers have asked me to give the dimensions of the planter that suffered damage by an unknown vehicle, which gives me hope that they might actually replace it. If so, it would be good to have in place for the switch on of Christmas lights.

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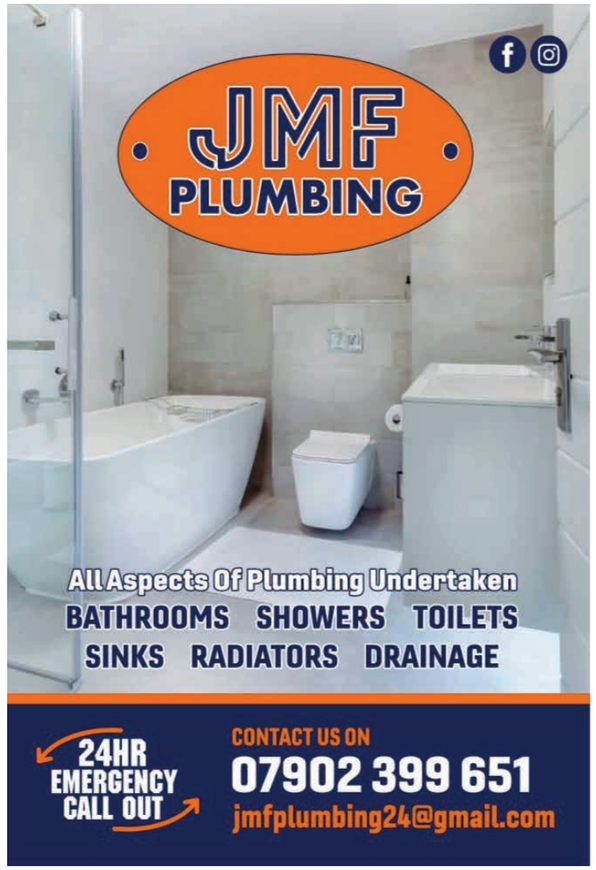


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# The Wellness Centre: a Response

LYNN MILLAR
DIRECTOR OF COUNSELLING, THE WELLNESS CENTRE

For the past 10 years I have had the privilege of leading the Wellness Centre, a professional counselling service here in Balerno. I am writing in response to a letter published in October's *C&B News* that made claims about our service which are untrue, and I am grateful to the editor for the opportunity to set out the facts.

I know that letter may have caused real concern for clients past and present, for our counsellors, for members of St Mungo's Church and, in particular, for members of the LGBTQ+ community so I want to be clear.

We do not practise conversion therapy, and we never have. We are opposed to it. As an organisational member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), we work to BACP's Ethical Framework. BACP is a signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK, which recognises conversion therapy as unethical and potentially harmful. It has no place in our service, and we would never allow it.

These claims have also been independently examined. The believed author of the letter in *C&B News* recently raised the same concerns with BACP, which carried out a full review of our service. On 29 September 2026, BACP concluded:

"We've seen no evidence to support any of the concerns raised.

"We are satisfied that you are operating in accordance with our Ethical Framework and that The Wellness Centre continues to meet the requirements of organisational membership under our Terms and Conditions.

"As such, no further action will be taken under BACP procedures, and we now consider the matter closed."

Everyone is welcome at the Wellness Centre: people of every background, sexuality and gender identity, and people of all faiths and none. That has always been true and it always will be. What we offer is compassionate, confidential and professional counselling, shaped around each client's own needs and goals.

We have always been fully transparent about the fact that our service is funded by St Mungo's Church. That funding is what allows us to offer counselling free or at low cost to anyone who needs it. The church funds our work; it does not direct it. The counselling itself is governed by BACP's professional and ethical standards, and the church's theological beliefs do not direct or determine the counselling provided.

If you are a current or former client, or you have been thinking about reaching out for support, I hope this gives you confidence. Our door remains open.

*If you have any questions at all about our service, I would genuinely welcome hearing from you at lynn.millar@stmungos.org*

**In publishing the October letter, *C&B News* was in no way accepting that the allegations made against the Wellness Centre were correct.**

CLLR NEIL GARDINER
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

## WINTER IS COMING

Winter season kicks off with a bang with the CBDRT-organised fireworks at George V Park, Currie, on Thursday 5 November. I hope this is another enjoyable success!

I continue looking into Roley's Wood: CEC's Education Department confirm they don't fund maintenance carried out by the Parks and Greenspace team. At October's meeting Currie Community Council confirmed they'd like Roley's Wood transferred to the latter account, with a Park Friends Group established so the local community can play an active role in decisions: I'll keep working on this.

It is wonderful to see Currie Community High School nominated for Public Sector Project of the Year Award 2026. This is an inspiration for other low energy buildings: a place of learning providing learning for the construction industry!

In Juniper Green, I've discussed with council officers making Bloomiehall Park approach safe, where a boundary wall was breached along Juniper Park Road.

There was an interesting presentation at Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum, where key landowners / managers working together are restoring wetland landscape areas, removing some drainage ditches, improving climate resilience and ecological diversity.

Congratulations to all who contributed to Local Place Plans for each village, which have now been sent for consideration in the next Local Plan.

Consultation is underway about potential local government changes. Collaboration already exists: like the regional park, and Lothian's bus network, making sense and can be improved. Going forward: should some services continue to be delivered by Edinburgh, as our Capital? There are opportunities for greater input locally, like managing local green spaces. Many questions – kicking off discussion is what consultations are all about.

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CLLR FIONA GLASGOW
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

## WINTER NIGHTS

As the darker nights are here now, I am reminded to think about the need to keep our streets safe. I recently reported a streetlamp outage and was pleasantly surprised to see how quickly the situation was resolved. Please remember to report such situations when you see them: https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/streetlightproblem. Dangerous situations can be avoided through ensuring streets are well lit and hazards are reported quickly. This includes overhanging branches, fallen trees, and pavement clutter that can be reported on the City of Edinburgh Council's website.

The cold and dark weather affects many people's ability to get out and about and this can lead to people staying indoors and becoming isolated. Please keep an eye on your neighbours, particularly those who are alone or infirm. There are many great organisations in the area that offer practical and social support, and they will be happy to help where required. These organisations are listed in the What's On pages: churches, community centres, libraries, community hubs, and local cafes all offer a warm and welcoming space to local residents. There is something for everyone. There are opportunities to volunteer and help out in these many community resources. You just need to be able and willing; your help will be greatly appreciated.

I took the opportunity last month to visit the area highlighted by Baberton Park Residents Association and am pleased to see that the area is looking improved: well done this group! It just shows that a small group of committed people can make things happen.

I have have been asked to highlight an opportunity to learn Gaelic in an informal and welcoming setting, led by residents based at Westside Centre, Wester Hailes. It's a monthly session and takes place in the Community Wellbeing Collective (yellow building). Everyone is welcome.

• *Contact them for further information: http://communitywellbeingspace.com*

CLLR STEPHEN JENKINSON
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

## ROADS & PAVEMENTS

One of the issues residents regularly raise with me is the condition of our roads and pavements. Whether it's potholes, damaged footways or deteriorating road surfaces, these are everyday frustrations that matter to people across Currie, Balerno and Juniper Green.

As Convener of Edinburgh's Transport and Environment Committee, improving the condition of our roads and pavements has been one of my priorities. That's why I'm particularly pleased that we've been able to deliver a significant increase in investment, with an additional £11 million a year being spent on road resurfacing and improvements since 2022.

And importantly, that investment is starting to deliver results.

Across Edinburgh, road conditions are improving and the number of potholes requiring repair is falling. That might sound surprising, but fewer pothole repairs are actually a sign of progress. By investing in properly resurfacing roads rather than continually patching them up, we're tackling the underlying problems and delivering longer-lasting improvements. It's a more sensible and cost-effective approach, making better use of public money while improving the roads we all depend upon.

Of course, there's still much more to do. Years of underinvestment cannot be reversed overnight, and I know there are roads and pavements across our local communities that still require attention.

But I'm determined that Currie, Balerno and Juniper Green continue to benefit from this investment, alongside communities across Edinburgh. Good roads and safe pavements aren't luxuries. They're essential infrastructure for residents, businesses, pedestrians, cyclists and motorists alike.

I'm proud of the progress we're making, but I'm certainly not complacent. My focus remains firmly on maintaining that investment, improving standards and delivering the lasting improvements our communities deserve.

RICHARD M HENDERSON
BALERNO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## PARK ACCESS

Accessing the outdoors has significant health benefits for pensioners and older adults, but parking charges at Harlaw and Threipmuir could deter some people from visiting the area.

For years there has been under-investment in the Regional Park. Balerno Community Council had acceded to parking charges in principle some years ago, on the basis that they could facilitate previously otherwise unachievable benefits in maintenance, facilities and security. The charges proposed now seem comparable to many other locations. But that does not mean that the proposed scheme is the right one, especially for the Balerno area.

Harlaw and Threipmuir differ from other Regional Park car parks in that there is a complete absence of any public transport option. A walk in from the nearest bus stop adds up to 2 miles (3.2 km) on top of any walk in the park. 20% or thereabouts of visitors to the Pentlands are retired; 26% of Balerno residents are retired. 62% of over 75s have health limiting conditions, of whom 41% have mobility problems. Many people may have walking difficulty short of severe but that is the yardstick for Blue Badge entitlement. BCC therefore asked for a two-hour free parking period, sufficient to accommodate walking around Harlaw Reservoir (2 miles), taking possibly 1.5 hrs.

The City of Edinburgh Council rejected the free parking proposal, maintaining that installation of Number Plate Recognition (NPR), which they maintain is necessary, renders such a scheme prohibitively costly. It is, however, obviously possible to programme ordinary parking ticket machines to allow a nil charge for any period of time.

Rather than dismissing the possibility of a two-hour free parking period because of absence of appropriate technology, CEC should be investigating how best it may facilitate enjoyment of the park by all.

NIKODEM GOSZCZYNSKI
CURRIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## WINTER DAYS

As the evenings grow darker and winter approaches, several community concerns were discussed at the latest Currie Community Council meeting.

One issue attracting significant interest was the future of Roley's Wood. Local residents have been keen to improve and maintain the woodland for the benefit of the community, but progress has been hampered by uncertainty over ownership and responsibility. The woodland sits within the Council's Education portfolio but is not managed by Currie Community High School, making it difficult to identify a clear decision-maker. Councillor Neil Gardiner agreed to help explore transferring responsibility to the Parks Department, which could support future improvements and greater community involvement.

The meeting also highlighted concerns about community preparedness in the event of a major emergency. While information is available through the City of Edinburgh Council, many residents may be unaware of where to find it or what actions they should take. There was agreement that better awareness and communication would help ensure residents are prepared should an emergency occur.

With darker nights now upon us, residents also reported vehicle break-ins involving individuals wearing balaclavas and travelling on electric bicycles. Residents are reminded to lock vehicles, garages and sheds, and avoid leaving valuables on display. The Neighbourhood Watch Scotland website provides useful crime-prevention and home-security advice.

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**What inspired you to write a book specifically on the element Boron?**

In 2024, I gave two Edinburgh Fringe shows on boron (the fifth element in the periodic table) as part of *The Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas*. This is where top academics, dangerous ideas and a host comedian are put together to bring an academic subject to life. After a quick review of various chemistry topics and elements that I have researched and studied throughout my career, I thought boron had the most interesting and varied stories, as well as the best comedy potential.

After these successful shows, I was then approached by the Royal Society of Chemistry to write a popular science book on boron chemistry for the general audience. I was intrigued by the challenge of writing a popular science book on chemistry; several authors have succeeded with various topics from physics and biology, but I knew that chemistry has not been as easily tackled, so I decided to try my hand at this challenge. Boron has a really nice mixture of "dangerous" areas where it has been applied, from nuclear reactors to rocket fuels, but it also has more mundane uses such as in Pyrex glassware. I thought that this would make for an entertaining yet accessible book.

**How important is Boron to humans?**

There is a whole chapter on whether boron is good for you? Boron is inescapable in the environment so there is a small amount of various boron oxygen compounds in all living things. There were some really nice experiments performed by botanist Katherine Warington in England in the 1920s that showed that boron is essential for the healthy growth of plants. However, it has proven much harder to work out if boron is essential for humans, and the jury is currently out here. Because boron is found in very good-for-you fruits and vegetables, the best approach is to eat more fruits and vegetables, which will make you healthier anyway!

**What kind or readership are you hoping to attract?**

I wrote this book with Higher and Advanced Higher chemistry students in mind. However, I am hoping that the book will also be of interest to anyone with a general interest in science as the topics in the book are important to all of us. From medicines to glass, boron has found a lot of different uses. I start the book with a couple of introductory chapters that will hopefully cover some background science and chemistry in an interesting way.

**What is your own career background?**

I grew up in the northwest of England, in a small village between Blackpool and Preston. I remember primary school trips to the local nuclear fuel packing plant (called Springfields), so science and chemistry have always been of interest to me. I was fortunate to have had excellent chemistry teachers at secondary school who helped make the subject fun and interesting. I then went to study Chemistry at Imperial College London, before a PhD at the University of Bristol. I have been a lecturer and Assistant Professor at Heriot-Watt University since 2013.

**Are there any other books you'd like to write?**

I have a few ideas, but now I know how much effort it takes to write a book, it might take me a while to get started again! I'm interested in the history and development of science and technology, so this would be an interesting area to cover. As for elements, a book on carbon would be really challenging. It is the most important element in chemistry and is absolutely everywhere. If you compare boron to J R R Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, carbon would definitely be *The Lord of the Rings*!

Please join us for our annual Christmas Concert, *writes Margaret Kieran of Colinton & Merchiston Community Choir*, when when we will be singing Mendelssohn's cantata *Vom Himmel Hoch*, Joseph Gabriel Rheinberger's "The Shepherds" from *The Star of Bethlehem*, Gerald Finzi's "In terra pax" and a delightful selection of Christmas Carols–some with audience participation.

- The concert will be held on Monday 7 December in the Memorial Hall, Merchiston Castle School, 294 Colinton Road.
- Doors will open at 7.30pm for an 8pm start. Tickets £10 (or £5 for under 18s) will be available in advance from choir members or at the door (cash only).
- For more information about our choir, please consult our website www.colintonchoir.org or our Facebook page.

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# Currie Chieftains' Busy Youth Section

SCOTT GAMMIE
VICE-PRESIDENT, CURRIE CHIEFTAINS

It's been a busy start to the rugby season for the youth section at Currie Chieftains.

Pre-season training started during the school holidays and the leagues kicked off at the end of August.

Already, the U16 and U18 boys teams (in National League One) have played against West of Scotland, Dumfries, Highland and Mackie. It really is a national league! At the time of writing, both groups are still in national knock-out competitions with away trips to Ayr and Gala on the cards.

U13 to U15 boys are competing in an East Region schools league for the first time, playing locally across Edinburgh. The U14s are also competing in the Caledonia Region conference, such is the size of their squad.

Our girls section continues to thrive and also recruit more and more players to the clan!

The U18s, like the boys, compete in National League One along with Biggar, Highland, Moffat, Cambuslang, Stirling and Dundee. The U16 girls are competing in an East Regional League. Both U18s and U16s are still in the National Cup so we still have four teams (boys and girls) with dreams of making finals day at Murrayfield!

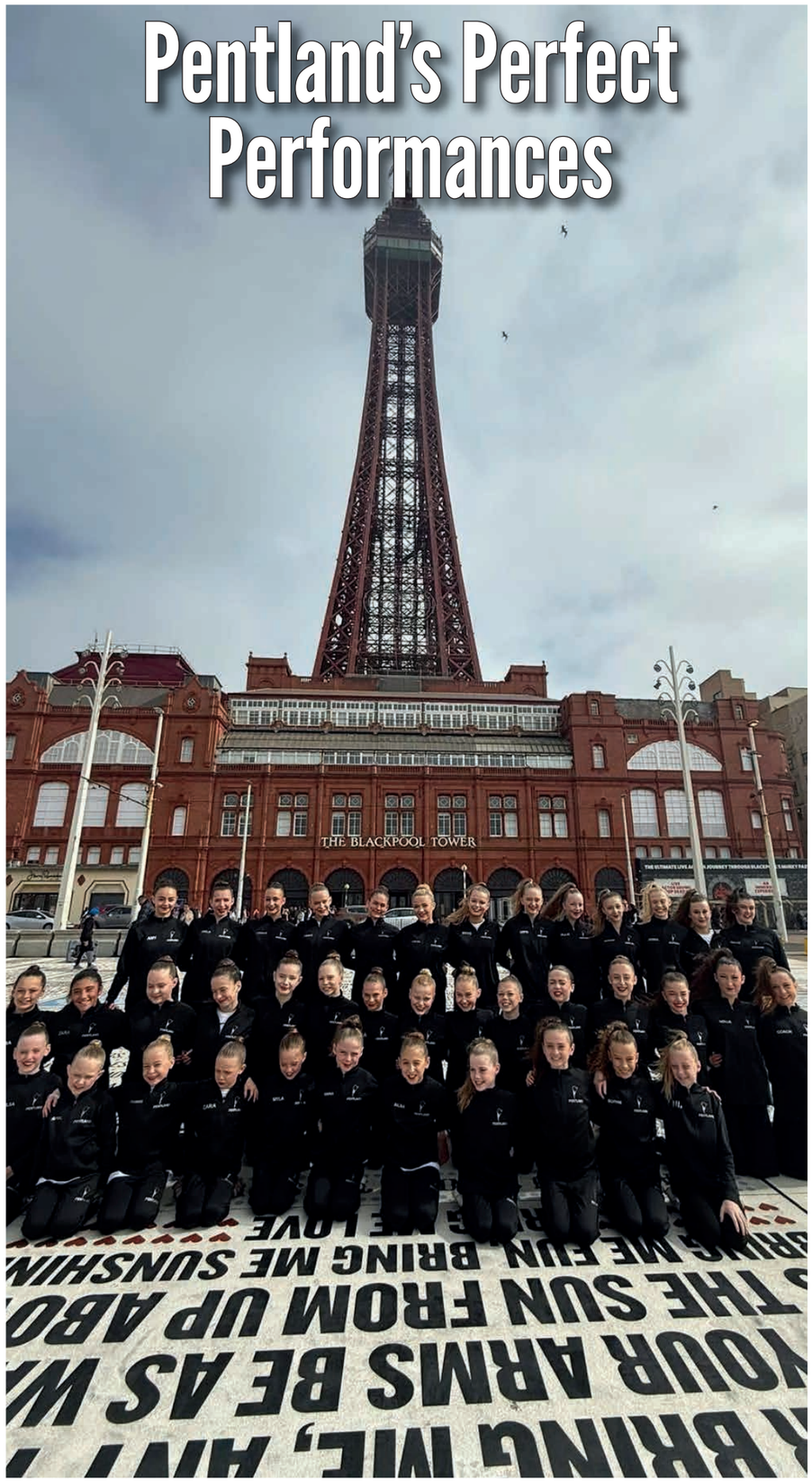
Our mini section is booming and recently had its "Becoming a Chieftain" day at the club. This saw all players from P1 to P7 come along and meet some senior players, including Rhys Davis and Nick Stewart, first XV and Club Captain, who helped out on the day. They've already been at festivals at North Berwick, Biggar, Watsons, Linlithgow and Stew Mel and have had a great time and enjoyed fantastic hospitality from the host clubs.

Watch out for a massive Currie contingent at Scotland v Japan match: 130 of the younger Chieftains will be attending the game taking advantage of Scottish Rugby's Youth Groups and Schools offer.

All told, our youth section is in an amazing place. We now have 430 boys and girls from P1 to U18 playing rugby with a Chieftains badge on their top. This is great for the health and wellbeing of players at our local schools but also for the future of the club. This season, we have already had 27 players who have left the youth section go on to play senior rugby at Currie. Once we have a senior woman's team (watch this space) and our U18 girls have somewhere to go, this number will get even higher!

Keep an eye on the club's website and social pages and you'll see when one of the youth sides are next playing. Come along and lend some support to our future stars. Who knows, the kid you see in a Chieftains strip could go on to play for Scotland one day—it worked for Matt Scott and Luke Crosbie!"

# Pentland's Perfect Performances




JO KING
PENTLAND GYMNASTICS

Pentland Gymnastics is going from strength to strength after a busy September for their display teams.

Only a month after the start of the new term the artistic and rhythmic teams set off to Blackpool to compete in the Ministrada competition at the Blackpool Tower Ballroom. This was the first time the club has taken part in the event and on Saturday 12 September the gymnasts and their coaches arrived on the promenade to show their skills on the beautiful ballroom floor.

The artistic team performed a themed routine to The Lion King while the rhythmic squad's routine was called "Stars". Both teams delivered amazing performances in the iconic venue with the rhythmic team taking two prizes for best variety and technique and best entertainment.

The sparkling illuminations and trips to the pleasure beach added to a weekend of wonderful memories for the team and their families.

Another engagement was beckoning for Pentland before the end of the month. The Netball World Cup Qualifiers were taking place at the Playsport arena in East Kilbride and Pentland were invited to provide half time entertainment for the Scottish Thistles match against the Northern Ireland Warriers on Saturday 26 September.

The Pentland artistic and rhythmic teams united for this display with a spectacular, flag waving routine to "Show the World We are One". Sophie Ramsay and Nia King also acted as flag bearers for the match which Scotland won 67 - 43.

The gymnasts enjoyed trying out all that Scottish Netball had to offer in the fanzone, testing their shooting and jumping skills ahead of performing their routine.

The Pentland display teams are made up of 40 gymnasts ranging from age 7 - 20, supported by an amazing team of coaches including choreographer Eilidh Sills who created all three routines.

They will be back in action again at Scottish Gymnastics Gymfest in November but for now it's back to the gym to continue the training.

• *Pentland has weekly classes running in Currie and Balerno for preschool to high school age groups. More information can be found at www.pentlandgymnastics.com*

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A VERY MERCHISTON CHRISTMAS FAIR

Merchiston Castle School

Saturday 5th December
10am - 1pm

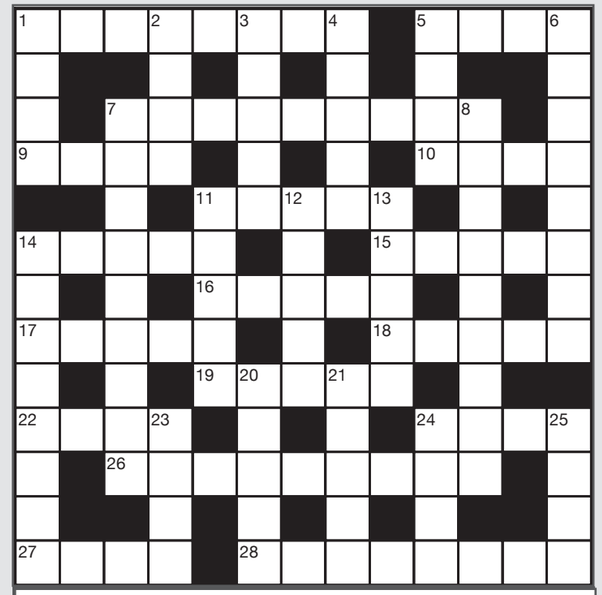
Festive Stalls • Christmas Shopping • Seasonal Cheer



# £25 PRIZE CROSSWORD BY PUZZLESALES.COM

To enter, please scan or photograph the completed puzzle and email it to: **editor@candbnews.com** before noon, Friday 13 (Oooh!) November 2026. The winner is picked at random from all correct entries received.

Good luck everyone!



## ACROSS

**1** Spread throughout (8)
**5** Sword handle (4)
**7** Rime (9)
**9** Scheme (4)
**10** Urban area (4)
**11** Italian staple food (5)
**14** Accounts (5)
**15** Push gently (5)
**16** Oak fruit (5)
**17** Former South African province (5)
**18** Reproductive organ (5)
**19** Masculine (5)
**22** Very short skirt (4)
**24** Profound (4)
**26** Moving staircase (9)
**27** Theatre box (4)
**28** Continent (8)

## DOWN

**1** Splendour (4)
**2** Earth's satellite (4)
**3** Main artery (5)
**4** White heron (5)
**5** Vast multitude (4)
**6** Stormy (8)
**7** Frozen raindrop (9)
**8** Highest level (3, 6)
**11** Biblical poem (5)
**12** Faint (5)
**13** Irritate (5)
**14** Organic fertiliser (8)
**20** Be of use (5)
**21** Memorise (5)
**23** ---- of Skye (4)
**24** Fate (4)
**25** Elapse (4)

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

POST CODE ..... PHONE .....

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

## EASY

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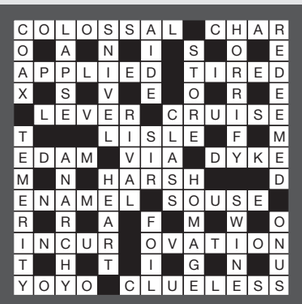
## LAST ISSUE'S SOLUTIONS

Last issue's prize crossword was won by Jenny McDonald from Currie. Congratulations!



### EASY

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

### MEDIUM

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### HARD

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

Small Ads

November 2026

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# What's on...

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

## WEEKLY

### MONDAYS

• **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

• **MONDAY MAHJONG: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 10am - noon.** The group is almost full, please get in touch if you'd like to join or pop along to our relaxed monthly sessions on Wednesday afternoon instead. Please get in touch if you'd like to join: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

• **MONDAY MORNING POP IN CAFÉ: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 10.30am - noon.** Community Cafe. Come for a cuppa every Monday morning, our volunteers will welcome you for a cuppa, a chat and an optional game of scrabble.

• **COFFEE, CAKE & COMPANY: Redeemer Church Edinburgh, 64 Bridge Road, Colinton; 10.30am - noon.** Drop in for free coffee, tea, a cake and a chat every Monday morning. All welcome. For further information see: www.redeemeredinburgh.org/ccc/

• **LUNCHTIME RELAXATION: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 12.15pm - 1pm.** 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. Drop in to meet other parents/carers for friendship, peer support and share a cuppa. Lovely warm and welcoming space.

• **COMMUNITY CRAFT CLUB: Currie Community Centre, 280 Lanark Road West; 7pm - 9pm.** Bring along your latest craft project and enjoy some good company, friendly support, and a cuppa while you craft. No booking required: just come along! £2 for contribution towards room, tea, coffee, and biscuits. Please email info@curriecommunitycentre.org if you would like more information.

• **MONTHLY BOOK GROUP: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 7pm - 9pm. Please email to enquire, as we** may have an opening for this group: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

### TUESDAYS

• **KNITTING GROUP: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 10.30am - noon.** Our knitting group is so popular, we've opened a waiting list for newcomers! Please email Anne: colinanne7@aol.com

• **ACE IT DIGITAL SKILLS: Currie Library, 210 Lanark Road West; 10am - noon.** Digital Skills Coaching for Over-50s. Free, friendly one-to-one sessions help people over 50 gain confidence online.

• **COMMUNITY YOGA CLASS: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 1pm - 2pm.** Spaces may be available for this popular lunchtime class with Monica from Karma Tree yoga. Cost £6. Please enquire by email: karmatreeyoga@gmail.com

• **PENTLAND JUNIOR SINGERS: Balerno Parish Church; 6pm - 7pm.** Children's Choir, singing together for 8 - 14 year olds. For more information, visit: https://pentlandjuniors.org/

• **PENTLAND SINGERS COMMUNITY CHOIR: Balerno Parish Church; 7.30pm - 9.30pm. September-June.** A no-audition choir performing at least two concerts a year. For further information visit: https://www.pentlandsingers.org

### WEDNESDAYS

• **BALERNO RAMBLERS MIDWEEK GROUP:** Meet for walks in the Lothians, Fife, the Borders and further afield. For walk details contact P. Harper 07738486416. Follow Balerno Ramblers on Facebook.

• **UKULELE GET-TOGETHER: St Cuthbert's Church Hall, Westgarth Avenue, Colinton; 1.15pm - 2.15pm.** Players, both experienced and beginners are welcome to this weekly get-together. For more details of this fun strum, please contact Brian Milhouse: 07775 564441.

• **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. The group is popular. Anyone interested in joining, please contact Donna Mackey on 07340 560306 before coming along.

• **BOOKBUG SESSION: Balerno Library, 1 Main Street; 3.30pm - 4pm.** Songs, stories and rhyme time fun for babies, toddlers and their grown-ups. Call: (0131) 529 5500.

• **THE OCTAGON CLUB for Adults with learning disabilities: Gibson Craig Halls, 156 Lanark Road West; 7pm - 9pm.** Contact Claire Maloney: 07999 410721

### THURSDAYS

• **BOOKBUG SESSION: Currie Library, 120 Lanark Road West; 10.30am - 11am.** Songs, stories and rhyme time fun for babies, toddlers and their grown-ups. Call: (0131) 529 5609.

• **ACCESSIBLE YOGA COMMUNITY CLASS: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green, 2.45pm - 3.45pm.** Accessible Yoga community class (free, donation welcome) Join experienced yoga teacher Bijam who offers a fully accessible class, suitable to anyone including wheelchair users or those with chronic health conditions who may find benefit from gentle exercise, breathwork and meditation. Class now full but please contact us to join the waiting list: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

• **PENTLAND BRIDGE CLUB: St Margaret's Court, Juniper Green; 6.45pm.** We play competitive bridge in a friendly atmosphere. Less experienced players welcome. For further information visit: www.bridgewebs.com/pentland/ or email: mthkjb@gmail.com

### FRIDAYS

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

• **CHILDREN'S LIBRARY BUS: Currie Library Car Park, 210 Lanark Road West; 1pm - 4pm.** With access to Currie's children's library currently limited, catch the bus and explore a lovely selection of children's books for all ages—including picture books, stories for early readers and much more.

### SATURDAYS

• **BOOKBUG SESSION: Colinton Library, 14 Thorburn Road; 11am - 11.30am.** Songs, stories and rhyme time fun for babies, toddlers and their grown-ups. Call: (0131) 529 5603.

### 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

### MONDAYS 2 & 16 NOVEMBER

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

### FRIDAYS 13 & 27 NOVEMBER

• **FRENCH CONVERSATION GROUP: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; noon - 1pm.** Meeting fortnightly at the Hub for people who would like to practise and improve their French. Newcomers are welcome. For more information see our Facebook Page @ The Hub at 531 or email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

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

## DAY BY DAY

### SATURDAY 31 OCTOBER & SUNDAY 1 NOVEMBER

• **"AE FOND KISS": JW1 auditorium, Heriot-Watt University; 2pm (Saturday), 2pm and 7pm (Sunday).** Heriot-Watt Musical Theatre group presents the story of Robert Burns: Rabbie is your guide with quirky commentary, amusing and poignant interactions with key characters along the way, and renditions of famous poems and songs including "Ae Fond Kiss", "Red Red Rose", "Auld Lang Syne" and many more. The show is a great way to get to know more about the life and loves of Scotland's Bard, either as a refresher to his work or as a newcomer to his genius. Tickets available from: www.ticketsource.com/heriot-watt-university

### SUNDAY 1 NOVEMBER

• **CHILDREN'S BOOK EVENT the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; all day.** Join us for some wonderful events! We're excited to have two fabulous authors of children's books, Vivian French and Emily Mackenzie, coming to the Hub to offer sessions for younger children. We will also have our own Book Bug session and a book swap cafe. Check out all the information online on Facebook or our booking site, and please book to avoid disappointment. Online booking is available: https://hub531.appointedd.com/ or by email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

• **DOCUMENTARY FILM CLUB: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 5pm - 7pm.** Dark Skies event to be confirmed. Check out all the information online on Facebook or our booking site, and please book to avoid disappointment. Online booking is available at https://hub531.appointedd.com/ or by email hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

### TUESDAY 3 NOVEMBER

• **WALK FROM THE HUB: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; meeting 9.15am.** Join our volunteer walk leaders Liz and Jeanette as they venture from the Hub for two-to-three hours, exploring local paths in different directions. They will be heading to Balerno, enjoying a coffee at the Mill Cafe before catching the bus back. Booking essential please. Online booking is available at https://hub531.appointedd.com/ or by email hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

• **CURRIE GUILD: Gibson Craig Hall, 156 Lanark Road West; 10am.** Sue Webber will be giving a talk on what it was like "Being an MSP". All Welcome

### .WEDNESDAY 4 NOVEMBER

• **PENTLAND MEN'S PROBUS CLUB: Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church Hall, Juniper Green; 10am.** "The Day that Changed the World," an illustrated talk by Pamela McConnell. New members welcome. Further enquiries from Club Secretary John Muir on (0131) 259 0560 or email: jandjmuir17@gmail.com

• **BALERNO PARISH CHURCH GUILD: Ogston Hall, Balerno; 7.30pm.** Childhood memories: sharing stories. For further information contact Kay Coull on 07415506947 or coullkay@hotmail.com

• **THE SECRET BOOK SWAP: WellNest Creative Spaces, 350B Lanark Road West, Currie; 7pm - 9pm.** Author Alex Brown, creator of the Hit Me series, joins us this month. Regularly sold out – book via Eventbrite: thesecretbookswap.com

• **"THE LIT" (COLINTON LITERARY SOCIETY): Dreghorn Loan Hall, Dreghorn Loan; 7.30pm.** "The Bombing of Edinburgh." Tom Wood, retired detective and best-selling author, tells the little known story of the almost forgotten German bombing raids on Edinburgh. For more information visit www.colintonhistory.org.uk

### FRIDAY 6 NOVEMBER

• **GARDENING GROUP: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 11.30am - 1pm.** All welcome— experienced or novice, pot planters or allotments. A friendly group that welcomes enthusiasts to share common love of gardens and gardening. Please email for details and to join us. hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

## LOCAL COMMUNITY CAFES

### SATURDAYS

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

### TUESDAYS - FRIDAYS (& SATURDAY 8 NOVEMBER)

• **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. Last orders: 1.30pm.

### TUESDAYS - SATURDAYS

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

## SATURDAY 7 NOVEMBER

• **CHARITY CRAFTERS SALE: The Welcome Station, Bridge Road, Balerno; 10am - 1pm.** Please come along to get your handmade craft, gifts and Christmas decorations.

## MONDAY 9 NOVEMBER

• **CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY: Gibson Craig Hall, Currie, (back hall); 7.30 pm prompt.** A talk, "Yer Tea's Oot" The Introduction of Tea in Scotland, The speaker is Mr James Waugh. For further details see https://www.curriehistory.org/

## WEDNESDAY 11 NOVEMBER

• **"THE LIT" (COLINTON LITERARY SOCIETY): Dreghorn Loan Hall, Dreghorn Load; 7.30pm.** "Harvie's Dyke: The People, Their Liberty and the Banks of the Clyde." Professor Christopher Whatley tells the story of 19th century struggle for public rights of way. For more information visit https://edinburghpentlands.church/church-life/church-and-community-groups/colinton-literary-society/

## SATURDAY 14 NOVEMBER

**BALERNO FARMERS' MARKET: Main Street; 9am - 1pm.** Selection of local and independent producers, groups and street food. More information: https://balernovt.org.uk/farmers-market or https://www.facebook.com/balernofarmersmarket?

• **WRITING FOR WINTER WELL-BEING: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 2pm - 3.30pm.** "Writing for Winter Wellbeing" with Helen Boden. Join Helen for a nourishing opportunity to immerse yourself in trying creative writing. No previous experience is required, all welcome whether to dabble in writing for the first time since school, or looking for space and support to work on something you have started. Online booking is available at https://hub531.appointedd.com/ or by email hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

• **"THE FIRST GOSPEL & FESTIVE OVERTURE": Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh; 7.30pm.** Join the Heriot-Watt Choir & Orchestra, and young singers from Clifton Hall School, for a programme featuring David Brown's The First Gospel, Shostakovich's Festive Overture, Verdi's Grand March from Aida, Shirley Thompson's Semplice Sempre and Jacob Narverud's Ad Astra. Tickets available from www.ticketsource.com/heriot-watt-university

## TUESDAY 17 NOVEMBER

• **CURRIE GUILD: Gibson Craig Hall, 156 Lanark Road West; 2pm.** Graeme Hawley will be giving a talk on "The Joy of Spines". All Welcome.

• **OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Grey Horse, Main Street, Balerno; 7pm - 10pm.** A monthly open mic night dedicated to giving local songwriters and musicians a space to share their music with a supportive and welcoming audience. Sign up from 7pm.

## WEDNESDAY 18 NOVEMBER

• **PENTLAND MEN'S PROBUS CLUB: Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church Hall, Juniper Green; 10am.** "The Role of Scotland's Patients' Safety Commissioner," an illustrated talk by Moira Manson. New members welcome. Further enquiries from Club Secretary John Muir on (0131) 259 0560 or email: jandjmuir17@gmail.com

• **"ALL EARS" BOOK CLUB": the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green, 7pm - 9pm.** Calling all audiobook and podcast lovers we have a group who meet monthly to discuss latest favourites. For more information see our Facebook Page @The Hub at 531 or email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

• **BALERNO PARISH CHURCH GUILD: Ogston Hall; 7.30pm. Bear Necessities:** A National Guild Project. For further information contact Kay Coull on 07415506947 or coullkay@hotmail.com

• **"THE LIT" (COLINTON LITERARY SOCIETY): Dreghorn Loan Hall, Dreghorn Loan; 7.30pm.** *HMS Pinafore*: David Lyle and friends present the much-loved Gilbert & Sullivan comic opera. For more information visit https://edinburghpentlands.church/church-life/church-and-community-groups/colinton-literary-society/

## THURSDAY 19 NOVEMBER

• **COSY CRAFTING: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green, 7.30pm - 9.30pm.** Join Kirsty at the Hub for a cosy and social craft evening, making Christmas decorations. All materials will be provided as well as some guidance. Tea, coffee and nibbles will be provided, and as we like to provide a chance to enjoy a child free evening, please feel free to bring your own tipple to enjoy! Online booking is available at https://hub531.appointedd.com/ or by email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

## FRIDAY 20 NOVEMBER

• **"FROM SPAIN TO SCOTLAND": the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green, 7pm - 9pm.** A cosy evening of chat, stories and poetry with Charlie Roy, starting with some tapas and sherry tasting. Online booking is available at https://hub531.appointedd.com/ or by email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

• **BALERNO VILLAGE SCREEN: SENTIMENTAL VALUE (15): St Joseph's Hall, Main Street; 7pm (doors open) for 7.30pm screening.** Tickets free to order online: www.balernovillagescreen.com Please only order a ticket if you can attend.

## SUNDAY 22 NOVEMBER

• **JUNIPER GREEN CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING: Juniper Green Village Hall, 1A Juniper Park Road; 4pm.** Annual event for all the family, including carols performed by the local primary school choir.

## MONDAY 23 NOVEMBER

• **CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY: Gibson Craig Hall, Currie, (back hall); 7.30pm prompt.** A talk, "Images of Japan, with some history and an interesting Scottish connection." The speaker is Mr Eric Melvin. For further details see https://www.curriehistory.org/

• **COLINTON GARDEN CLUB: Dreghorn Loan Hall, Dreghorn Loan; 8pm. CGC** "Gardener's Question Time." More information on the website: colintongardens.org.uk

## TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER

• **BALERNO FOLK CLUB: Balerno Bowling Club, 5 Ladycroft; 7.30pm for an 8.15pm start.** We welcome back BROG: expect fiery tunes and beautiful songs from the Scots tradition by three of Scotland's finest musicians. Members and guests welcome.

## WEDNESDAY 25 NOVEMBER

• **MONTHLY MAHJONG: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 4.30pm - 6.30pm.** A new open mahjong session that welcomes newcomers as well as regulars. Come along to find out more about this ancient Chinese tile game. Please email for details and to join us: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

• **"THE LIT" (COLINTON LITERARY SOCIETY): Dreghorn Loan Hall, Dreghorn Loan; 7.30pm.** "Re-wilding the epics. Bird, beast and human in the tales of Ossian, Columba, Arthur and Merlin." Storyteller and author Donald Smith sources old stories for our very present crisis. For more information visit: https://edinburghpentlands.church/church-life/church-and-community-groups/colinton-literary-society/

## SUNDAY 29 NOVEMBER

• **WINTER FAYRE: Currie Community Centre, 280 Lanark Road West; 11am - 3pm.** Fun event for all the family with 30+ stalls from local artists, crafters, and small businesses to help you find the perfect Christmas gifts. Performances from Ahalya Dance Academy, Forth Valley Chorus , L R Highland Dance, Balerno Dance Academy and Razzamatazz. Tombola stall, face painting and our café will be open serving soup and hot drinks. Santa will also be making an appearance between noon and 2pm. Please note that some stalls and face painting will be cash only.

## MONDAY 30 NOVEMBER

• **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

## TUESDAY 1 DECEMBER

• **CURRIE GUILD: Gibson Craig Halls, 156 Lanark Road West; 10am.** Scott Irvine will be our speaker on "Harmonies in Wood". All Welcome.

## WEDNESDAY 2 DECEMBER

• **PENTLAND MEN'S PROBUS CLUB: Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church Hall, Juniper Green; 10am.** "Working in Antartica," an illustrated talk by Ali Skinner. New members welcome: email jandjmuir17@gmail.com





RAMBLERS Balerno

# UPCOMING WALKS

**More details about our Wednesday walks will be found on Balerno Ramblers website once a recce is completed.**

## SUNDAY 1 NOVEMBER

• **ALMONDELL & CALDERWOOD COUNTRY PARK CIRCULAR: moderate 11.5 miles (18.5 km).** From Oakbank Car Park take woodland track around Calderwood and follow the River Almond. On leaving Calderwood some road walking past Muirend Farm to reach the Union Canal Towpath. We cross the Almond Aqueduct then descend steps to the Union Canal feeder following along to Mandela Bridge. We pass the Visitor Centre and follow the River Almond to return to Calderwood and Oakbank Car Park.

## WEDNESDAY 4 NOVEMBER

• **LASSWADE & ROSLIN GLEN CIRCULAR: moderate/strenuous 6 miles (9.7 km).** Starting at Lasswade Cemetery (EH18 1NB) walking to Kevock then along path toward Polton, climbing up to the path to Roslin. Then descending into Roslin Glen towards the Maiden Castle. Follow the path beside the river South Esk to Roslin Chapel. There are many steps to descend and ascend in the glen, and the path can be particularly muddy in places, so poles are recommended.

## WEEKEND 7/8 NOVEMBER

• **NO WALKS POSTED YET: check website for details.**

## WEDNESDAY 11 NOVEMBER

• **LINLITHGOW WALK & MYSTERY WALK: leisurely 5 miles (8 km).** Walk along towards Linlithgow Palace and walk round the loch's edge, An early coffee break here before we continue the complete circuit. This should take approximately 1.5 hours. Lunch at picnic benches before our second short walk. Travel, mystery walk and social details for Part 2 to be given out on return to cars. Part 2 to be followed by visit to Garden Centre for tea and cake plus shop.

## SUNDAY 15 NOVEMBER

• **PENICUIK CIRCULAR: leisurely 6.5 miles (10.5 km).** From Tesco car park, Penicuik, we will follow the footpath up Cuiken Burn, cross Rullion Road and continue uphill to Lowrie's Den Road. We will take the path through woodland with views of the Pentland Hills to Carlops Road. Enter the Clerk family estate and walk around the stabilised ruins of Penicuik House to the Chinese Gates. Descend to the River North Esk and follow the downstream path to the A701 in Penicuik. Continue downstream on the Penicuik-Musselburgh pathway as far as Beeslack. Then turn left through Lady's Wood back to the start point.

## WEDNESDAY 18 NOVEMBER

• **WATER OF LEITH (CURRIE TO STOCKBRIDGE): leisurely 9.5 miles (15.2 km).** From Currie along Water of Leith Walkway with a coffee stop at the Water of Leith Visitor Centre. Comfort break at Saughton Park. Lunch at Roseburn Park, then Dean Village, finishing at Stockbridge A choice either of bus or walk to Princes Street for Lothian Service 44 home.

## WEEKEND 21/22 NOVEMBER

• **NO WALK POSTED YET: check website for details.**

## WEDNESDAY 25 NOVEMBER

• **CURRIE TO LOCHRIN BASIN via Water of Leith Walkway and the Union Canal: easy 6 miles (9.7 km).** From Currie along Water of Leith Walkway with a coffee stop at Visitors Centre. Then walk along Lanark Road/Slateford Road up some steps on the Union Canal towpath (this can be busy with cyclist and runners). Our walk finishes at Lochrin Basin, Fountainbridge. Two bus options Fountainbridge back to Currie Library, or you can join the walk leader heading down to The Caley Picture House (Weatherspoons), Lothian Road, for lunch (and catching a Service 44 bus from Shandwick Place).

## SUNDAY 29 NOVEMBER

• **PEEBLES CIRCULAR: moderate 7.8 miles (12.6 km).** Walk begins from the Kingsmeadows Car Park in Peebles. The first stage of the route follows the line of the John Buchan Way. Eventually the path swings left, gaining superb views as it leads out onto a dip in the ridge of Cademuir Hill. Bear right along the ridge; the saddle is the site of an extensive iron age settlement and fort – now appearing as grassy bumps and rocks – and the marked John Buchan Way passes around the right edge of the site. After a steep pull the bare summit is reached, with a dramatic drop on the left (south) side; little remains of the iron age fort that stood here. The views in all directions are superb. Continue along the ridge down onto the next saddle. The ridge is then followed for a brief uphill section once more to reach the next, smaller summit. This was the site of the third of the iron age forts on the ridge, and this time there is a great deal more stonework still in evidence, with the remains of a curtain wall. There are great views up the Manor Valley from here. Following lunch, we continue along a countryside road before turning left onto a track, from where we finally join the route of the old railway line. After a short distance a gate on the right gives access to a wide path leading back to the riverbank. The riverside path is now followed beneath the dramatic Neidpath Castle - this stretch is extremely popular, finally emerging back into Peebles. Option to have a coffee/drink in Peebles before our return.

• *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 details of our upcoming walks please click the link to access the Balerno Ramblers page on Ramblers Scotland website: https://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 the information on forthcoming walks. Email: balerno-ramblers+subscribe@googlegroups.com*

Above: Coffee Stop. Photo: Erna Humphry.

# COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Community councils are statutory bodies, run by local residents, which aim to represent local residents' views to The City of Edinburgh Council, the Scottish Government or any other relevant bodies. They regularly hold meetings in public – either face-to-face or online – but it should be noted that these are NOT public meetings: contributions are invited "from the floor" at the discretion of the chairperson.

## THURSDAY 5 NOVEMBER

• **BALERNO COMMUNITY COUNCIL: The Welcome Station, 13 - 15 Bridge Road; 7pm - 9pm.** Includes AGM, then normal monthly meeting. www.balerno-communitycouncil.org.uk; balernocc@gmail.com

## TUESDAY 10 NOVEMBER

• **COLINTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL: *Details Unconfirmed at Time of Going to Press.*** https://www.colintoncc.org.uk

## WEDNESDAY 11 NOVEMBER

• **CURRIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL: Gibson Craig Halls (rear), 156 - 158 Lanark Road West; 7.30pm - 9pm.** https://curriecommunitycouncil.wordpress.com

## WEDNESDAY 25 NOVEMBER

• **JUNIPER GREEN & BABERTON MAINS COMMUNITY COUNCIL: the hub@531 Lanark Road; 7.30pm - 9pm.** https://jgbmcc.org

FREE!

# C&B News

BALERNO RAMBLERS' WEEKEND GROUP ON THE FIFE COASTAL PATH. PHOTO: LIZ ROBERTSON.