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C&B News

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522 • DECEMBER 2026/JANUARY 2027

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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Cover photo: Shona Moyes.

DEADLINES FOR NEXT ISSUE

ADVERTISING/LISTINGS: 12 JANUARY
EDITORIAL: 17 JANUARY
IN THE SHOPS: 29 JANUARY

Picture News



Above: The Balerno Gala Christmas Tree Festival returns to the Ogston Hall, Balerno Parish Church, on Saturday 12 December, 9am - 1pm. Last year the trees were bigger, brighter and more imaginative than ever, filling the hall with lights, decorations and plenty of festive spirit. Pentland Scouts Beavers Group took the honours with the winning tree, but who will win this year? It's up to you! Entry to the Christmas Tree Festival is £1 for adults, children free!

Below: Santa will also be making a special appearance at the Christmas Tree Festival between 10am and noon, along with his team of elves. Santa's Grotto is completely free to visit, although donations are always very gratefully received if you are able to give. Last year, Santa and his elves welcomed more than 100 children to the Grotto!



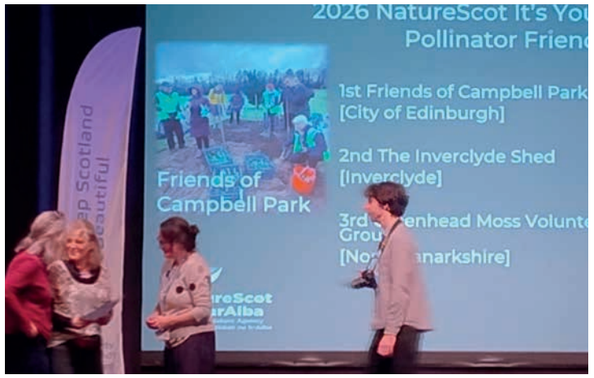




Above left and right: Pupils on the Rights Respecting Schools group at Balerno Community High School swapped the classroom for the streets of London as they were recognised with the first-ever UK special recognition award at the head offices of UNICEF, which praised an outstanding letter the pupils had written to the UK Government encouraging them to renege on planned cuts to international aid; a letter which unexpectedly also reached the Head Office of UNICEF in New York.



The staff from Co-op on Corslet Place got all dressed up this Halloween, writes Kerry Hanlon, making customers smile and raising £200 for Barnardo's. Thanks to the very generous customers for helping raise this amount.





Above: Once again the skies above King George V Park in Currie exploded with colour on Thursday 5 November, thanks to the annual fireworks display organised by CBDRT. Photo: Margaret Dane..

Left: Congratulations to the Friends of Campbell Park, who recently won first prize in the 2026 NatureScot Pollinator Friendly Award organised by Keep Scotland Beautiful.

Picture News





Above: Harmeny Education Trust in Balerno has successfully replaced their adventure playground (fondly known as "The Venchie", creating a welcoming and inclusive playground where children and young people can challenge themselves through positive risk-taking. See page 17 for more.

Left: Base sax Martin Foster performed at the Juniper Green Note in June 2026. The popular jazz club, held at Babertoon Golf Club, recently marked its first anniversary.

Below: Balerno Ramblers observed the two minute silence marking the Armistice at the Eleventh Hour of the Eleventh Day of the Eleventh Month. Photo: Gail Cousins.























This page: Well, that was 2026. Here's to 2027! Another year, another 10 issues of *C&B News*, including two genuinely "bumper" 56-page editions. As we take our traditional winter break during December, the *C&B News* team would like to once again thank all our contributors, advertisers and (of course!) readers for supporting us through our remarkable 50th anniversary year. We genuinely couldn't do all this without you! Merry Christmas!

The "hired help" admits that we didn't end up celebrating the publication's half-century quite as much as he originally planned, but the simple fact is that there is too much of interest happening NOW across our communities to get too retrospective! Anyway... We'll be back soon enough with our February edition, available from Friday 29 January 2027—see you then!

BRIEFLY

NEWS...

• **CAR PARK:** Pentland Hills ward Councillor Fiona Glasgow has confirmed that the car park at Curriehill Railway Station – which some local residents believe needs to be extended to reduce parking on nearby residential streets – is operated by Scotrail, not The City of Edinburgh Council. A spokesperson told *C&B News*: "We have no current plans to increase parking at the station. We are supporting the City of Edinburgh Council on plans they have for improving accessibility/active travel at the station."

• **MP AWARD:** In November, Edinburgh South West MP Dr Scott Arthur was named Labour MP of the Year by the democracy charity Patchwork Foundation: according to *The Edinburgh Reporter*, this was in recognition of his work engaging with underrepresented communities across his constituency and ensuring their voices are heard in Parliament.

• **MOVING PLACES:** CEC Pentland Hills Ward Councillor Stephen Jenkinson has been selected as the Scottish Labour candidate for the neighbouring Colinton/Fairmilehead at next May's local council election. He explains his reasons on page 39.

• **BRIDGE:** The City of Edinburgh Council are, we're told, taking "immediate steps" to repair the Kinauld Tan Works footbridge on the Water of Leith walkway near Waulkmill Loan. The bridge – initially closed in June 2026 due to a hole, then reopened in late September, and officially "closed" again in October following further detailed safety checks – still appears to be in use by local residents. Councillors on the Transport and Environment Committee signed off the £25,000 repair bill at their November meeting, but no dates for the work have yet been confirmed.

• **BUS SHELTER:** Why was the bus shelter outside the shops at Pentland View removed by CEC? While it wasn't in tip top condition, the shelter was

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Dr Scott Arthur MP
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139 Dundee Street, EH11 1BP



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

10:30-11:30:
Carrickvale Comm. Centre

12:00-13:00:
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.

Promoted by Simita Kumar, 3 Jackson's Entry, Edinburgh, EH8 8PJ. The costs of publication have been met through parliamentary resources

Representing: Baberton, Balerno, Bankhead, Bonaly, Broomhouse, Chesser, Colinton, Clovenstone, Craiglockhart, Currie, Gorgie, Juniper Green, Murrayburn, Oxgangs, Parkhead, Pentland Hills, Saughton Mains, Sighthill, Slateford, Stenhouse, The Calders and Westerhailes.

To get in touch or arrange an appointment, please contact me via email and phone.
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Christingle is Coming to Currie, *writes Heather Thomson, of the Communication Committee, Currie Kirk.* At 6.30pm on Christmas Eve, Currie Kirk will be celebrating the Nativity at Gibson Craig Halls, 156 Lanark Road West, and will bring the opportunity to make a Christingle of your own. Children can take part in a telling of the story of the Nativity (adults be prepared to dress up), plus there will be a chance to make a Christingle of your own!

What's a Christingle? As the song goes "It's rounded like an Orange, this earth on which we stand" and represents Christ and light around the world at this important time of the year. Why not make one and take it home.

The short service is being hosted by Currie Kirk's Mission, Outreach, and Fellowship group, and a warm welcome is extended to the children and families of Currie and Balerno.



• For more details about church services being held during the festive season in Balerno, Currie, Juniper Green and Colinton, please check our special section on Church Christmas Services in our What's On listings, on page 54.

Colinton's Village Hub: Fit-out underway!

LORRAINE O'SHEA
COLINTON VILLAGE ENTERPRISE SCIO

Exciting milestones are being ticked off in Spylaw Park as the transformation of Colinton Village Hub moves out of heavy construction and into the final interior fit-out ahead of our planned opening in early 2027.

Over the past few months, Colinton Village Enterprise has been bowled over by the energy, creativity and generosity of both our local and extended communities. Residents, families and local organisations have stepped up with brilliant ideas and support to help us reach this final stage. Thanks to that incredible backing – including several generous direct donations inspired by our Crowdfunder campaign – our recent appeal has brought in an amazing £60,000! We were also delighted to receive a £30,000 grant from the Garfield Weston Foundation, alongside welcome support from the Colinton Amenity Association, giving our final push a massive boost.

A huge highlight was the Colinton Lego Building Challenge, conceived by our Hub architect David Moore of MDA Studio. Children from across Colinton and neighbouring areas rose to the brief of designing a "brilliant building for their community", leaving our judges with some genuinely tough decisions!

A massive congratulations to our category winners: Max (1st, P1–P3) for his Colinton Friendship Centre; Isla (1st, P4–P7) for her Friends Pitstop; and Aaryn, who scooped the Friendly Planet Sustainability Prize with Colinton Community Centre. Huge "well done" also to our brilliant runners-up: Jemma, Levi, Callum, and Daniel. Thank you to every young builder who entered, and to the families who sponsored bricks. Some of the winning models are on display at MDA Studio in Colinton Village, so keep an eye out if you're passing!



Meanwhile, on site in Spylaw Park, all major construction milestones have now been met and our contractors, Rollo Developments Ltd, are working hard on the interior fit-out. We are also working towards our lift installation—a vital milestone that will seamlessly connect both floors and ensure the Hub is fully accessible for everyone in our community.

MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE...

Outside the building, we are hoping to soon start a mini-project to complete the paving at the front entrance. We are hugely grateful to Jewson Edinburgh, who have generously donated the paving stone via Rollo Developments Ltd. Now, we are raising the funds needed to cover the installation work—and we've come up with a fun, simple way for you to be a permanent part of it!

As each stone is laid, we'll label it and snap a photo so you can pick out and sponsor your very own piece of Colinton Village Hub. There won't be any engraved names or plaques—just the pure satisfaction of knowing that exact stone at the heart of our entrance is yours forever! Keep an eye on our social media and Crowdfunder pages to see which stones are available and claim yours.

LOOKING AHEAD

We are happily looking ahead to life inside the Hub and want to fill the building with local energy. We are currently finalising the legal details on a licence to occupy with a charity/social enterprise to operate our ground-floor café space. Alongside this, we have two bright, first-floor studio/office spaces waiting to be filled.

We are also keen to hear from the brilliant independent teachers, practitioners, and small businesses who bring communities together. Whether you run weekly yoga, pilates or wellbeing sessions, music and dance classes, or art, craft, and hobby workshops, our flexible activity room will be ideal for regular weekly hires. If you are a community group, creative, or small business looking for a wonderful new base or regular room in the heart of Colinton, our charity would love to hear from you!

• *Get in touch: colintonvillage@gmail.com; sponsor a stone and support us: crowdfunder.co.uk/p/colintonvillagehub*

• *From small bricks to paving stones—thank you for helping us bring Colinton Village Hub to life.*

BRIEFLY...

p5>>>

sturdy enough and even provided a modicum of protection from the rain—if it was falling at the right angle.

• **DOG ATTACKS UPDATE:** Sentencing of the owner of a dog that had carried out several attacks in Currie, during the last year, has been deferred yet again; the owner is due to appear in court in December.

• **"YOUR VOICE: VISITOR LEVY":** There's still time to have your say in the City of Edinburgh Council survey on how Visitor Levy money should be spent across the city. Although everything funded through this scheme needs to primarily benefit visitors, this doesn't mean projects can't also benefit local communities too—such as public art, cultural and sporting events, and heritage projects. There will be 17 community funds, one for each of CEC's electoral wards, sharing £1.7 million over three years. Submit your ideas online before Sunday 6 December: https://tinyurl.com/y4bhxe89

• **SHARE OFFER:** Edinburgh Community Solar Co-op's third share offer is open until Tuesday 15 December. City residents are invited to support the installing of solar panels on rooftops across the city (including five schools and the Royal Commonwealth Pool), supporting practical climate action, expanding community ownership of renewable energy, and helping generate more funding for local projects through the co-op's Community Benefit Fund. Details: https://www.edinburghsolar.coop/

• **LIBRARIES:** The opening hours for Balerno, Currie and Colinton libraries were revised from Monday 30 November: 10am - 7pm, Mondays and Wednesdays; 10am - 5pm, Tuesdays and Fridays; 10am - 5pm, Thursdays (Currie only); 10am - 4pm, Saturdays. More details: edinburgh.gov.uk/libraryopeninghourschanges

• **SPEEDING:** Healthy and Sustainable Places Data Service (HSPDS) has updated their online tool showing roads in mainland Britain where speed limits are most

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Call for Memories as Compass Playgroup Turns 50

KIRSTY DEAN
COMPASS PLAYGROUP

Next April marks the 50th birthday of Compass Playgroup situated next to Balerno Library.

We want to mark this special occasion with your stories and memories! Whether you attended the playgroup as a child, utilised Compass as a parent, were employed as a staff member or volunteered on the Committee, we'd love to hear from you.

• *If you have memories or photographs you'd like to share, please email: compass.chairperson@gmail.com by Sunday 7 February 2027.*

Roundabout Work

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
C&B NEWS

Work to improve the Riccarton Mains roundabout was due to begin from Monday 30 November.

The work by The City of Edinburgh Council will include resurfacing and the installation of dropped kerbs and zebra crossings around the roundabout, "making it better and safer for the local community," according to Gert Rijsdijk, CEC's Senior Project Manager, Active Travel.

There will still be a crossing patrol guide to help children get to and from school.

Work will begin with improving and renewing kerbs, drainage and pavement surfaces. There will be a break from Monday 21 December until Monday 4 January, with road resurfacing expected early in the new year. Work should be completed by the end of January.

"All work will be carried out during the day, Monday to Friday," Gert explained. "We will use temporary traffic lights to complete the kerb, drainage and pavement work. For the road resurfacing, we will use temporary traffic lights as far as we can but may need temporary road closures to complete the work safely."

• *If you have any specific queries, contact the Active Travel Team at: ActiveTravel@edinburgh.gov.uk*



Santa Sleigh Timetable 2026

PAM MALONEY
CBDRT

Santa is getting his sleigh ready to visit all the boys and girls, helped by CBDRT, Rudolph and his elves, so look out for him during December, and remember—be good!

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 or using the QR code below.

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

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



A Helping Hand from Community for Food

CAROLINE BROWN
COMMUNITY FOR FOOD

Community for Food, a charity based in Juniper Green, is here to help families who are struggling to buy food or need support for a one-off food parcel or ongoing support.

If you have a child at any of the local schools (Balerno High, Currie Community High, Dean Park Primary, Ratho Primary, Currie Primary, Nether Currie Primary, and Juniper Green Primary), you can use our anonymous service, which includes delivery to your home if needed.

Thanks to all our supporters, donors and volunteers for keeping our services going for the last six years.

• *If you are not sure who to contact please email us at: hello@communityforfood.com*

BRIEFLY...

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frequently ignored by drivers. Although the data is only up to April 2024, it remains indicative of speeding "hot spots": visit https://speeding.hasp.ac.uk/ and then update the local authority tab to "City of Edinburgh".

• **HOUSE PRICES:** In October, ESPC's Q3 2026 Property Market Intelligence Report showed a 3.5% increase (year on year) in the average selling prices for properties in Currie, Balerno and Juniper Green, which "continued to attract buyers seeking spacious homes in attractive west Edinburgh surroundings" and was "a house-driven market, with properties in Currie proving particularly sought after". Meantime, one of the fastest selling properties in Edinburgh during the third quarter of the year was a ground floor flat in Colinton, which was "under offer" after just two days.

• **CITY DEBT:** The City of Edinburgh Council had just over £2 billion of debt as of the end of March 2026, which is projected to rise to £5 billion by March 2031, according to accounts analysed by Audit Scotland. Councillors – though sadly not residents – will be offered special training to help them understand the complexities of the financial situation. CEC is apparently the fifth highest borrower in the UK from the Public Works Loan Board (a statutory body of the UK Government) behind Leeds, Woking Borough Council, Birmingham City councils and (top borrower) Transport for London.

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 the land and buildings—such as adherence to City Plan

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St Mungo's Church: Gateway Project Update

DAVID LYONS
ASSISTANT MINISTER, ST MUNGO'S

In 1942, the then church organist left St Mungo's the field opposite Balerno High School in her will, "with a view to a new church being erected thereon".

St Mungo's currently holds three services each Sunday in various locations around Balerno: a more traditional communion service in St Mungo's Church, Ladycroft (8.45am); a family service with kids and youth groups at Balerno High School (10.30am); and, at either St Mungo's, Ladycroft or Balerno Parish Church, an evening service twice a month and a sung worship and praise evening once a month (all at 6.30pm).

In addition, our Livingston congregation meets at St Margaret's Academy, Livingston, each Sunday and we have recently celebrated our 10th anniversary there. We are looking forward to many more years ahead.

As previously communicated in *C&B News*, we are currently exploring the possibility of building a new home for the church on the field. This would enable us to have a home large enough to hold our 10.30am Balerno congregation on a Sunday, support our various existing mid-week activities and consider new ways to serve both the church and the wider community.

Design work is continuing and we are now at the stage of looking at the grounds around the proposed new building. Local community groups have been invited to attend a workshop to explore thoughts and ideas that will help inform this stage of the process and the developing design.

These workshops are separate from the open information sessions that St Mungo's will hold for the wider community before any planning application is submitted. The earliest that an application will be submitted is March 2027, and we will provide a further update in the February edition of *C&B News*.

• You can also view the Gateway pages on our website below for further information.

All readers of C&B News are warmly invited to join us for worship at any of our services. Please also see this issue's What's On section or our website for a full list of Christmas events and activities that may be of interest.

https://www.stmungos.org/

Pentlands Book Festival Needs You!

RUSSELL SALTON
PENTLANDS BOOK FESTIVAL

Pentlands Book Festival (PBF) has just wrapped up another successful year with many highlights, and we are already working on 2027. However, we need your help.

As you probably know, the Festival takes place around November each year. Normally we have 12 - 15 events spread over the whole month, usually in the early evening. We have been running for 12 years now and have attracted a broad range of authors, musicians, and artists.

Our sound engineer is stepping down at the end of this festival and we have a desperate need to replace him, otherwise we will be unable to continue. The events themselves



usually last an hour but we set up 45 minutes to an hour beforehand in order to do a soundcheck. Equipment is available and our needs for events are minimal: basically we use two head mics, two roving mics, an amplifier/mixer, and speakers. There is no need to participate in any of the meetings or author selection discussions, but the sound person would be welcome to do so.

We also need new committee members, ideally with website, graphic design, or marketing skills. We'd also like to get younger people on the committee: some new members joined us this year and have enjoyed the experience, but we do still need specific skills.

It doesn't take a lot of your time so, if you wish to see PBF continue, please seriously consider if you can join us.

While all of our volunteers are unpaid, we will reimburse expenses.

• If interested please email russell.salton@outlook.com or you can contact us via our website https://pentlandsbookfestival.org/

BRIEFLY...

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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.*

BABERTON MAINS

• Proposed new section of fence and relocation of side gate; 220 Baberton Mains Drive. (26/04393/FUL) Comments by Wednesday 2 December.

COLINTON

• Proposed garden room; 73 Redford Loan, Redford. (26/04337/FUL) Comments by Tuesday 1 December.

• Remove conifer: 14 Gillespie Road, Hailes. (26/0990/TCO) Registered on Wednesday 11 November.

PLANNING DECISIONS

Information provided by The City of Edinburgh Council.

• NEW: Single-storey pitched roof extension to side of existing dwelling to form playroom, shower room and utility room, and new porch to front; 15 Baberton Mains Crescent. (26/03836/FUL) Granted, Friday 13 November.

SCHEDULED ROADWORKS & ROAD CLOSURES UPDATE

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

C&B News now regularly publishes lists of scheduled roadworks and road closure updates on our Facebook .page every Wednesday.

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Residents Welcomed to Green Gateway Community Planning Information Sessions

AMANDA PATERSON
GREEN GATEWAY COMMUNITY GROUP



Green Gateway Community Group held two community information sessions at Ogston Hall, Balerno, on Thursday 19 and Saturday 21 November, providing local residents with an opportunity to learn more about Woodcroft Field and the proposed St Mungo's Gateway Project.

The resident-led group organised the sessions to share information about the field, its history, environmental importance and the potential implications of development on Balerno's green belt.

A wide range of displays covered topics including wildlife and biodiversity, road safety, drainage, the Balerno Conservation Area, local heritage and national and local planning policies. Visitors were able to explore the results of the group's community survey, with detailed reports available to read. The history display also attracted considerable interest, with old photographs, maps and local history books offering a fascinating glimpse into Balerno's past.

Information from Planning Aid Scotland was available to help residents better understand the planning process and how to make their views known when a planning application is submitted.

The sessions encouraged open discussion, with residents taking time to study the information, ask questions and share their thoughts and concerns about the future of Woodcroft Field.

Green Gateway Community Group would like to thank everyone who attended, contributed to the discussions and supported the events. Thanks also go to the volunteers who gave their time to help organise and run the sessions.

The group remains committed to protecting Balerno's green belt, providing factual information and encouraging residents to make their own informed decisions about the future of the area.

• Email: greengatewayadmin@gmail.com or visit our Facebook page: Green Gateway Community Group



Thank you: Elise, Eva, Laura & Callie

FANETTE GENAIS
FRESH START

At Fresh Start, we believe everyone deserves a safe and comfortable place to call home. So it means a lot that four 14-year-old friends from Balerno High School chose to support our work when deciding to do the Kiltwalk earlier this year.

Elise, Eva, Laura and Callie completed the 11.2 mile (18 km) "Big Stroll" on Sunday 13 September, raising £772 for Fresh Start (with a further £170 in Gift Aid).

The girls told us: "We wanted to do something positive together and show that young people can make a difference too."

They certainly have. Their effort and generosity will help us support people in Edinburgh as they move on from homelessness and make a home.

We're also delighted that the girls were recognised by their school on Thursday 12 November for their wider school achievement. It was lovely to see their contribution celebrated, and a reminder that young people have an important part to play in making our communities better.

From all of us at Fresh Start: thank you, Elise, Eva, Laura and Callie.

• If you would like to support our work, contact: maisie@freshstartweb.org.uk

BRIEFLY...

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CURRIE

• RICCARTON MAINS ROAD, Roundabout at Riccarton Avenue/Bryce Road: phase one, preparatory works for carriageway reconstruction under temporary traffic lights until Friday 18 December; phase two, from Tuesday 5 January - February 2027, combination of road closures and temporary traffic lights, final details to be confirmed.

• WATER OF LEITH WALKWAY at Kinauld Flats (between Waulkmill Loan and Kirkgate): walkway "closed" by unsafe bridge; until further notice.

JUNIPER GREEN:

• LANARK ROAD at Juniper Avenue: off-peak three-way temporary traffic lights for network maintenance (Openreach); Original dates: Tuesday 10 - Wednesday 11 November. To Be Rescheduled.

OTHER

• OXGANGS ROAD at New Swanston: three-way temporary traffic lights for ironwork repair (Scottish Water); Monday 7 December.

• FAIRMILEHEAD CROSSROADS: four-way temporary traffic lights and closure of Frogston Avenue, for manhole repair on Frogston Road West (Scottish Water); 7am Sunday 20 December - 7am Monday 21 December.

• OXGANGS FARM AVENUE between Oxgangs Farm Avenue and Oxgangs Farm Terrace; road closed to provide new service (Scottish Power) Monday 11 January - Friday 15 January 2027.

• HAILESLAND ROAD at Dumbryden Drive: temporary traffic lights for ironwork repair (Scottish Water); delayed until March 2027.

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LOCAL UPDATES•LOCAL UPDATES

Remembering Christopher Cowe—Still!

ROSS COWE
CARDIAC RISK IN THE YOUNG (CRY) FUNDRAISER



The fifth annual Christopher Cowe Community shield football match took place on Sunday 15 November at Oriam, Heriot-Watt University, in memory of Christopher Cowe. The event gives Christopher's class mates from his school days the opportunity to come together and remember Christopher and to take part in a pastime which Christopher loved so much—football.

As always the game was a wonderful occasion with lots of happy faces and friendly banter. Balerno took the spoils this year, regaining the shield in a 6-3 win in a thoroughly enjoyable, competitive but good natured contest. The match also raised £550 for Christopher's fund; other important local charities and donations have now been made to Christopher's fund and also to Blood Cancer UK in memory of Ally Donaldson and Harmeny Education Trust who very kindly donated the prize for this year's match prize draw.

I am also delighted to announce that Christopher's memorial fund has now passed £80,000 raised after the donation from the match. This is a phenomenal achievement and we are now more than halfway towards funding a sixth weekend of cardiac screening in 2029.

Our fundraising events and activity will now take a break over Christmas and the New Year but in 2027 we have a number of activities planned including further prize draws—keep an eye out to be in with a chance of winning signed Hearts and Hibs items. We also have a couple of golf four-ball vouchers to give away at our first sporting prize draw event in February.

The annual Kiltwalk and Football events will remain a staple of our event and fundraising calendar; for 2027 we are also looking at entering fundraising teams at the Strathclyde Park Zipline in August and at the Forth Road Bridge 5 km Supernova in November.

There are also further and rescheduled events at The Grey Horse, Balerno, during the course of the year. Look out too for activity around our fourth screening weekend (Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 May) at Oriam at Heriot-Watt University.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us during 2026. From the abseil and Ladies Day through to the firewalk, quiz night, Edinburgh Half and Full Marathons, Kiltwalk and Christopher Cowe Community Shield it has been another amazing year and we cannot do it without our amazing friends, family, community and army of supporters who continue to remember and celebrate Christopher Cowe and his legacy.

Much Love and thanks to you all and our best wishes for a Happy, Merry and Peaceful Christmas.

Fair Trade Group at Balerno Farmers' Market

KAREN DOWNARD
BALERNO VILLAGE FAIR TRADE GROUP



Members of Balerno Village Fair Trade Group ran a stall at November's Farmers' Market in Balerno. Crafts and foods from the One World Shop in Edinburgh were on offer. Sales were good with chocolate, tea, decorations, cards and toys being the most popular items. All fair trade means is that people receive fair pay, decent working conditions and benefits for their communities.

It's great to have an annual opportunity to sell fair trade goods at the market. However, we (as campaigners for fair trade) want to encourage people to make fair trade part of their normal shopping. Many supermarkets, and particularly Scotmid Co-op in the village, stock Fairtrade tea, coffee, chocolate, sugar, bananas, wine and flowers. And the One World Shop, located under St. John's Church in the West End, is always good for gifts as well as a variety of food.

Some Fairtrade products are produced in the West Bank, Palestine. Exporting their products is even more difficult now for Palestinian farmers, but vital for their livelihoods. Buying these products, some of which were available on the stall, is one way we can support Palestinian families.

'Horti' Show's Winter Projects

SHEILA MASON
SHOW SECRETARY

The weather so far this autumn has been quite wintry and the committee of the Currie Horticultural Society have selected the items all the "crafty" people in our catchment area might just like to make while the evenings are dark, as entries for the Show next August.

In course of time they will be listed on our website (www.currieshow.weebly.com) and paper copies of the whole Schedule will be available to collect from some of the local stores around Easter time.

So – residents of Currie, Balerno, Juniper Green, Colinton, Ratho and Kirknewton – here are your challenges! A hot water bottle cover (any craft); sewn article from a pair of old jeans; cross-stitch item from a kit (max 8 square inches/52 square cm); crotchet cushion cover (max 16.5 square inches/103 square cm); knitted novelty tea cosy; knitted scarf; tote bag; an article from 7 ounces (200 grams) maxim of leftover yarn; a draft excluder (any craft); water colour painting (A4); greeting card; jewellery (any craft); an item from air-dried clay; a photograph, 7 inches by 5 inches (17.8 cm by 12.7 cm) titled "Door"; an item in stained glass (maximum size A4).

Perhaps during the coming the months you could also be thinking of what you could grow when Spring comes around, so that you will have some ideas of how to proceed when the weather is suitable. There have been no significant changes to the listings from this year's Show with the classes being available on the website.

Best Wishes to all.



LOCAL UPDATES•LOCAL UPDATES

Supporting Communities and Charitable Causes

STEVE MCKENZIE
LODGE COLINTON & CURRIE NO. 1029



Left to right: Front: Right Worshipful master Kenneth Paterson and Blood Bike volunteer rider Jim Cairney. Back: Stewart Walls (past Master of Lodge 1029 and President of Widows Sons Solomons Guard), Blood Bike volunteer John Donaldson, and also a Blood Bike Volunteer and Steve McKenzie (Junior Deacon at 1029 and Vice President of WSSG).

Lodge Colinton & Currie No. 1029 continues to demonstrate its commitment to supporting the local community through charitable donations and involvement in worthwhile causes.

Having been part of the area since 1907, the Lodge has a longstanding tradition of charitable giving, supporting local football teams, scout groups and individuals within the community who have needed a helping hand.

These contributions reflect an important aspect of Freemasonry that is perhaps not always widely recognised—its commitment to supporting others and making a positive difference beyond the Lodge room.

One recent example was a £500 donation to Blood Bikes Scotland, made in support of an 800-mile charity motorcycle ride undertaken by members of Widows Sons Solomon's Guard Scotland, a Masonic motorcycle riding group.

The Lodge subsequently received a letter of appreciation from Blood Bikes Scotland Chairman Tim Bartlett, thanking the members for their generosity and acknowledging the importance of such donations in helping the charity continue its valuable work.

While pleased to have supported this particular cause, the Lodge recognises that even modest contributions can make a meaningful difference, whether helping a local organisation, supporting a community initiative or assisting someone facing difficult circumstances.

Looking ahead, the Lodge's Right Worshipful Master, Kenneth Paterson, and its members hope to build stronger connections with local groups, organisations and residents, identifying further opportunities to support community projects and individuals over the coming year.

For Lodge Colinton & Currie, charitable giving is not simply about making donations. It is about being an active and supportive part of the community, something the Lodge hopes to continue for many years to come.

Brightening Juniper Green – Our Community Flower Tubs

SUSAN PURNELL
BABERTON MAINS RESIDENT





The "top tub team" of Juniper Green have been busy planting up our winter tubs to help brighten the streets of the village. Do look out for them on your travels.

We are hoping to expand our collection of tubs and replace some that are looking a little worse for wear. We are therefore extremely grateful to Juniper Green Village Hall for their generous donation of £500 towards our purchases.

We would also like to thank Pentlands Men's Shed for making us a lovely bespoke planter, which now sits beneath the Juniper Green Community Council noticeboard. The Hub has also been a great support, allowing us to collect water from their premises. It really is a lovely community project.

Our thanks also go to the Parks and Green Spaces team at the City of Edinburgh Council, which helps us out by providing some of the plants.

As well as looking after the tubs, our volunteers often take the opportunity to weed the pavements around them, helping to keep the whole area looking neat and tidy.

We even have a little secret ingredient to help our flowers flourish! One of our volunteers is a former gardener at Edinburgh Zoo and has access to "zoo poo" compost. We've mixed this into our tubs and are hoping it will make our displays a roaring success!

I really enjoy being involved in this project. It's a great wee gang of people who give their time and enthusiasm to make Juniper Green a brighter and more welcoming place.

However, we would love to welcome a few more people to join our ranks. You don't need any great gardening experience, just a little enthusiasm and a willingness to get involved.

• *To find out more, email: michael.muirhead1@gmail.com*

LOCAL UPDATES•LOCAL UPDATES

New Adventure Playground for Harmeny

ELISE REINES
HARMENY COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER



Thanks to the incredible support of Harmeny's Play Appeal, we were thrilled to complete the first major project—a full replacement of our adventure playground (fondly known as "The Venchie") on Friday 13 November.

For more than 30 years, The Venchie has been an important part of life at Harmeny, giving children and young people a place to play, explore, build friendships, and enjoy outdoor adventures. Earlier this year, however, we identified that the play equipment was nearing the end of its life and desperately needed replaced.

In March we launched the Play Appeal to help fund this and other play-related projects. Thanks to a fantastic response from funders and donors, including a significant donation from the Nancie Massey Charitable Trust, we were able to start installing the new equipment this autumn.

The new play equipment was designed by CAP.CO (the team behind Fort Douglas at Dalkeith Country Park) and was created in consultation with our young people who shaped how the space looks, feels, and can be used.

The design retains the area's distinctive woodland character while offering a brighter, safer, and more accessible environment for adventurous play. The different sections are named after our school classes, and we now have a bridge linking the Venchie to our front lawn play equipment which enables a new adventurous element and a traffic free way to move between play areas.

The result is a welcoming and inclusive playground where children and young people can be active, use their imaginations and challenge themselves through positive risk-taking. It also provides opportunities to build confidence, regulate emotions, strengthen relationships, and experience the freedom and joy of play—all of which are central to Harmeny's therapeutic approach.

The new equipment is a huge hit with the children, who are making sure that every piece is thoroughly "tested" as they play and explore!

The fundraising continues to improve our cottage garden play areas and create social areas for our older young people.

With young people now able to live and learn at Harmeny until age 18 we are also planning the renovation of one of our buildings within the estate, "The Lodge", into three self-contained flats. These will provide semi-independent living spaces where young people aged 15 and over can prepare for life beyond Harmeny.

• *You can find out more about this project and other ways we are investing in our young people's futures on the news page of our website: https://harmeny.org.uk*

Balerno SWI Report

EDINGELL THOMSON
BALERNO SWI

Firstly we held our AGM and our Office Bearers gave their reports. The existing committee members are continuing for another year and one additional member is joining the committee.

After the business was concluded we had an excellent demonstration of cake decorating from one of our own members, Maggie Cumpstey. Maggie demonstrated how to cover a marzipanned cake with icing and then moved on to decorating.

Maggie kept it simple for us! She used a special cutter called a Garrett cutter to make a frill brought along an album of some of the cakes she has made and decorated over the years, an impressive collection.

The Rotary Tree of Life Returns

MIKE ROWE
CURRIE BALERNO ROTARY

Every year Currie Balerno Rotary invites local people to sponsor lights on the Tree of Life in memory of loved ones or to mark special events. Last year your generosity raised £3,500 for Motor Neurone Disease—My Name'5 Doddie Foundation.

This year the main beneficiary will be Alzheimer Scotland.

• *The lights on the Tree of Life, located within the grounds of Balerno Parish Church, will be switched on at 6pm on Thursday 3 December. We shall be entertained by the Balerno and District Schools Pipe Band and Santa will be there to switch on the lights. Please join us.*

• *Please help us and Alzheimer Scotland by making a dedication, which you should send to Ian Campbell, either by email (ianpcampbell44@gmail.com) or by post (18 Crosswood Crescent, Balerno, EH14 7HS). Include your name, address, amount of donation and, if a UK taxpayer, agreement to Gift Aid your donation.*

• *To donate, with or without dedication, you can do so by scanning this QR Code, by sending a cheque to Ian, payable to Currie Balerno Rotary Club or by contacting Ian to make a bank transfer.*



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SJP Approved 08/07/2026 SJP13984_DS BI (02/23)



Balerno Bank Mill—Memories

CHRIS WARD
BALERNO RESIDENT

I always like the articles on local history by Douglas Lowe. The most recent, in the November 2026 issue, was about the Balerno Bank Mill, which I found very interesting and informative.

I am a fifth generation inhabitant of Balerno so, of course, the Mill played a large part in my family's lives, as it did to many local people.

My father Raymond Ward was employed in the Mill as an industrial chemist; his older brother Jim also worked in the labs before moving to a Mill in Duns, ending up as the managing director of a mill in Bolton.

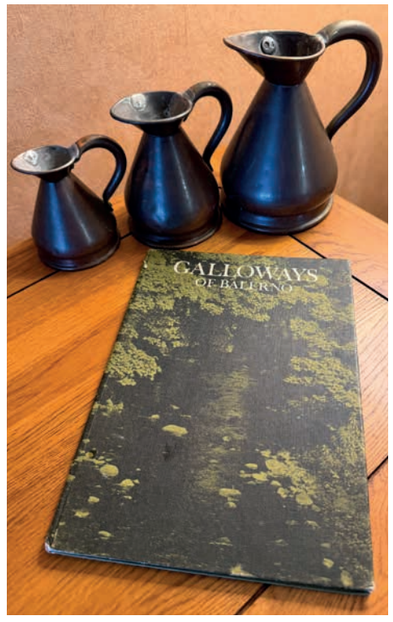
Dad also worked in Balerno Bank Mill as a beater man, who processed the raw materials, and when he decided it was the right mix would send the ingredients to the paper making machine. My dad's job mainly consisted of testing the water quality from intake to make sure pH levels etc were correct for use in the paper-making process and also to monitor, sample and report on the water after it had been through the mill process to make sure it was fit to return to the Bavelaw Burn.

I remember the water treatment plant as it used to be situated where Harlaw Gait is now; it ceased to be used in 1970s, although the derelict buildings remained until it was redeveloped and we used to play there as kids in the late 1970s and early 1980s. My dad lost his job in the Mill when it closed down but he went off to Algeria with others to set up a mill there; he was gone for the first 11 months of my life. As Douglas stated the mill limped on as a coating plant for several years; at this time I was a wee boy and I liked nothing better than sitting on the wall at the junction of Harlaw Road (we stayed up there) and Bavelaw Road, watching the Pollock's lorry's reversing into the warehouse then pulling out to load the paper reels .

My Dad, who passed away in 2025 very suddenly, was a font of local knowledge, as were other locals now gone .I'd always told him he needed to write a book to get down all the information so that it could be kept. He kept saying "Yeah, yeah" and never did. So when I read Douglas's article on the Mill it sparked me into doing something.

I posted a picture in the I live/lived in Balerno Currie Juniper Green page on Facebook and received a great response from lots of well kent families I grew up knowing. I also included a picture of three jugs my dad "rescued" from Balerno Bank Mill when it closed, along with a copy of the book "Galloways of Balerno" that Douglas talked about in his article.

The jugs – which my dad and his colleagues would have used in their daily work – came into my possession after my dad died and were stamped with certifying marks for a gill, 1/2 pint and a pint. I'd just like to share it with the community so that it can spark some memories and help keep the history of our village alive. The post I shared on the Facebook page received lots of attention from many locals who used to work there, or have memories of the Mill and I'd just like it to be remembered for being the huge part of so many families' lives in the area.



Above: The three jugs the author's dad "rescued" from Balerno Bank Mill when it closed, along with the book "Galloways of Balerno" mentioned in last issue's article.

Inspired by any of the articles published in C&B News? Why not let us know, and add to everyone's shared knowledge of the history of our communities! Check our "Write for us!" page on our website (https://candbnews.com/writeforus) or email: editor@candbnews.com



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C&B NEWS • DECEMBER 2026/JANUARY 2027



Snapshots of the Past

Seasonal Musings...

DOUGLAS LOWE
CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

At the "back end" of the year you will hopefully forgive me for relapsing into a more melancholy, reminiscent tone. Although I hear some of you muttering "but he does that all the time"! Never mind, here goes...

I remember a time when walking up Mansefield /Harlaw Road to the reservoirs was indeed a walk in the country. Fields on each side "festooned" with rosehips and other berries and, as for traffic, there might be the odd speeding cyclist coming downhill (that might be me!) or a tractor moving between fields. It was all quite quiet and peaceful, although I do remember us being ejected from one of the fields when collecting rosehips! The photo I have attached shows two lads walking, the one on the left looks like he is delivering groceries or something. Hawkfield House is prominent on the left of the picture.

I had carried out a survey of shops and buildings on Balerno Main Street for both the history society and the Community Council. Much of this was used in a fold- out leaflet by Balerno Community Council. It starts, unsurprisingly at the top of the village (1) Samuel's Close. These residential flats was where the butchers' slaughterhouse was (unsurprisingly, next door to Gillons The Butchers). I have attached an interesting photo. There is a horse and cart parked outside the butchers. The corner of building on the right was the original co-operative store, dating from 1866.

So here we are in Autumn, or almost winter, as I heard the gritter making it's way up my street. I remember a poem that was read to us in Balerno Primary School, probably by Miss Dagg, on shuffling through the fallen autumn leaves. I think the poem was by Mrs Kate Y.A. Bone a poet from Colinton. We were marched off from the classroom to the old public park which was in the bend of the Water of Leith across from where it was joined by the Bavelaw Burn. This corner of the park had many large deciduous trees so we were guaranteed good carpet of leaves to shuffle through, having fun. I did this subsequently many times with my children until, of course, the new Community High School was built in 1983. As I mentioned previously this park was given to the villagers "in perpetuity" by landowner Lord Rosebery in 1896. We used it constantly "bounce games of football" or just guddling in the adjacent Water of Leith for minnows, sticklebacks or other monsters of the shallows. It was our park.

I have attached another photo of the park, with my father Jim and eldest daughter Shelagh, deep in contemplation about something.

Anyway closing on a more upbeat note we have the Christmas lights and festivities to look forward to. With spring not far behind, I can then turn my attention to more historical research in Balerno and in our other neighbouring villages: Currie, where I attended high school; Juniper Green, where I had relatives; and Colinton, where I worked for almost 10 years.





Above: Two men walking up Mansfield/Harlaw Road, c1900 before all of houses were built. Below left: Is the picture with the horse and cart outside Gillons the Butchers? Below right: My late father and eldest daughter in contemplation at the Old Park. Photos: Douglas Lowe/CDLHS

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

THIS MONTH IN... 1976 | Local History as Reported by *C&B News*

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
C&B NEWS


CURRIE & BALERNO NEWS
No. 11 December 1976
6p
BALERNO SURGERY PLAN STILL ALIVE
Sleighride
REGION TAKEOVER

Eleven issues in, the increasingly confident team behind *Currie & Balerno News* were still (knowingly or not) establishing new traditions for the paper, not least the prominent listing of Santa's impending visit to local streets with the help of his fund-raising Round Table "elves". Half a century on, *C&B News* still reports this annual tour, although these days it comes with a QR code—but doesn't everything?

Given the paper's titular geographical focus at this point, it shouldn't be that surprising that all three big front page stories are Balerno-focused. The main story concerns the then-ongoing demands for some kind of new medical surgery in the village; there were also assurances that the community centre "should now be safe from any economy measures made by the [City of Edinburgh] District Council", as responsibility for its management and upkeep shifted to Lothian Regional Council. (Spoilers: a new medical centre would eventually be built, but in Currie – the Pentlands Medical Centre next to Pentland View Park – while management of the community centre would, decades later, shift to the local community in the form of Balerno Village Trust.) Meantime, this issue's front page "picture story" concerned the Stirlingshire and Linlithgow Hunt, which had met the previous month at Westacres, Balerno: consisting of 33 riders, numerous dogs and "many more people [following] the hunt by car", the paper rather matter-of-fact-ly reported that "at the end of the day two foxes had been killed"—though how many readers would now consider that "a successful day as far as the Hunt was concerned"?

Years before the arrival of local community councils, much of what was happening on the ground was reported in the paper via local residents associations: not least growing concerns about proposed changes to local primary school catchment areas. (Whether these were connected to central government-mandated cuts to education budgets across Scotland is unclear.) There were worries too about the relatively heavy vehicles finding it hard to enter or exit "the road leading to the former Kinleith Mill, now used for warehousing and various light industries" without damaging the wall at the junction with Lanark Road West. There were also fears that the weight of the vehicles was contributing to subsidence on Mill Brae: "those who live in [the] immediate vicinity are faced with the daily hazards of heavy traffic on unsuitable roads".

Also reporting for the paper, albeit more specifically about the goings on at Currie High School, were pupils Paul Mackey (16) and Christopher Nickerson (17). This issue they reported on a "giant fund-raising day" at the school in September (raising £2,400—or nearly £17,000 in today's money), a forthcoming expedition for 37 biology and geography pupils to the Benmore Outdoor Education Centre, and mixed fortunes for the school's hockey and football teams. We're guessing that both "boys" (fingers crossed) will now be in their mid-sixties: did either go on to enjoy major careers in journalism?

Meantime, it's worth noting that *C&B News* has been around long enough to actually report on a Mill on the Water of Leith that was still functioning at the time. "As you approach Juniper Green from Balerno or Currie you will see a steel chimney and clouds of steam vapour rising," an article began. "That is the Inveresk Group operation at Woodhall Mill." By 1976 the business was focused on producing "base cartonboard which is used by the packaging industry for a wide variety of work", with the article suggesting that every household "will have Woodhall products in one form or other"—after all, your Tunnock's caramel logs had to come in some packaging!

Finally, something of a curiosity: nationally-speaking 1976 is remembered for a prolonged drought between May and August, which may be why one John Webster contributed a list of monthly rainfall totals in Balerno during the year, compared to generally lower figures for Blackford Hill. While the Balerno figures ranged from 74.3 mm (2.9 inches) in January to just 26.7 mm (1 inch) in August, the outlier was the October total of 159.5 mm (6.3 inches). "When one remembers that a fall of about 25 mm corresponds to over 100 tons of water per acre, then the quantity of rain falling in October is better appreciated," Webster wrote.

The current editor is not considering re-introducing such regular reports of local rainfall. Well, not unless a lot of readers ask for it!

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The History of Davidson House

DEREK DOUGLAS
ARCHIVIST, COLINTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

It's slightly ironic that in the apparent rush to demolish Davidson House, the Salvation Army-run Care Home in Colinton, the one thing not immediately removed from the site was the sign by the entrance. With plans currently being considered by the City of Edinburgh Council for a new 50-bedroom care home on the site, is this an indication that the new facilities will likely retain the name? If so, it would ensure the site's late 19th century origins are remembered well into the 21st century.

Davidson House was named after Miss Williamina Saida Davidson, from Banchory, Aberdeenshire. Back in 1899, while waving off the Royal Scots Greys heading to fight in the Second Boer War, she vowed to their commanding officer (one Lt Col W P Alexander) that "Whenever and wherever Barracks were built for the Scottish Cavalry, I would endeavour to build a 'Soldiers' Home' for them."

By 1908 she had already had such a "Home" – somewhere soldiers could relax and socialise away from the barracks – built in Maryhill, Glasgow; another at Barry Buddon near Carnoustie, would open in 1910. Aware that the War Office were planning to build Redford Cavalry Barracks in Colinton, she set about obtaining land for another "Home" there. She fued land from Lt Col Trotter of Colinton House, opposite what was to be the main Barracks entrance; this, coincidentally, had a small cottage on it. By 1913 her plans for the new "Home" were in place and, with public contributions rolling in, building work started. Having done a lot of the planning and documentation herself to save money Miss Davidson sought tenders for the building works, settling on one at £15,000—

And then the First World War broke out.

Although building work on the Barracks was finished, there was no heating or recreational facilities on site and the stables were being used for accommodation, so an urgent call was put out to Miss Davidson, who was still chiefly the Superintendant at Maryhill: "For God's sake can you please help". She immediately rose to the occasion and, within just over a week, she had plans made to build a temporary wooden "Home" in Colinton. The only building on her feu was Oriel Cottage, which was extended to the rear and westwards towards Colinton, to form the temporary "Home".

The "Home" consisted of a Recreation Room, Temperance Dining Room and Reading Room, together with a kitchen. There were also three bedrooms, enabling three permanent staff to stay on the premises. (Five invaluable volunteer ladies, in contrast, had to travel a mile to and from the "Home", which they all did for the next six years!)

The main part of the "Home" was completed within less than four months, opening by Christmas 1914. It proved very popular with numbers of troops using it; on occasions, this would be in excess of 1000 soldiers a day! The facilities gave troops a great "out of Barracks" venue in which to meet, read, chat and play games in a more relaxed atmosphere. Every Sunday there was a Bible Class followed by tea and cakes (for which the troops paid 6d), followed at 7 pm by a short service. Both of these activities were apparently very well attended.

Immediately after the Armistice in 1918, knowing that building costs would have shot up, Miss Davidson again did much of the planning and documentation for a proper "Home" in order to save money. She ultimately awarded the contract to Cowiesons of Glasgow, which had built both the Maryhill and Barry Buddon Homes for her, at a cost of £43,000 (more than £2.2 million today). The first sod of grass was cut on the Wednesday 6 August 1919; Miss Davidson's new "Soldiers' Home" was officially opened by the Duke of Atholl on 26 May 1920, also a Wednesday.

As soon as the Home opened many old soldiers became residents. To everyone's delight HM King George V and Queen Mary, accompanied by their daughter Princess Mary, visited the Home on Friday 9 July 1920. When they returned to London the King granted the Colinton "Home" permission to use the prefix "Royal", the first time that this had been granted to a "Soldiers Home".

In 1923, after running the "Home" for nine years, Miss Davidson formally retired due to family problems in Banchory. She left her close friend and long time assistant Mrs Ellis to continue her good work.

Although still a good facility for the greatly reduced number of troops at the Barracks across the road, the next few years saw fewer pass through the Home's doors—sometimes fewer than 50 a day. Consequently, the building became more of a residential Home, initially for ex military personnel. With the emphasis increasingly being put on rehabilitating old soldiers, the Home's finances were put under increasing pressure: in 1937, the Salvation Army came to the rescue by taking over the running of the Home.

Although she had more than fulfilled the promise that she made to the Commanding Officer of The Scots Greys back in 1899, Miss Davidson continued to take a great interest in her Homes through her regular contacts with Mrs Ellis. Miss Davidson died peacefully at her home in Banchory on Monday 20 December 1937, knowing that her legacy would continue thanks to the Salvation Army.

The final chapter of the Home that she built came in 1950 when the Edinburgh Welfare Committee approved the registration of Davidson House under the National Assistance Act, becoming a Care Home housing 40 residents.

Here's hoping the new Home will be named Davidson House, in memory of a remarkable woman.



The entrance to the former site of Davidson House.


The Royal visist in 1920 by King George V and Queen Mary.


The Recreation Room in the finished Soldiers' Home.


The Soldiers' Home, officially opened in 1920.





STEF LYONS



Normally by now I've planned everything I'm going to eat in December over the festive period. Also in January, when I look forward to citrus fruits, winter greens and tonnes of root veggies.

For some reason, this year, I've not quite got into gear and have been feeling whimsical and silly. I know I need to create a menu for the coming weeks, but that's Future Stef's Problem™. Right now I've been finding joy in a cookbook I found in a charity shop. It's the *St Michael All Colour Cookery Book* by Jeni Wright. If you're old enough to get the reference to St. Michael, then yes, you understand this is old branding for Marks And Spencer and the book hails from 1976. On the cover is a bottle of Beaujolais in a basket, there is a lurid pink prawn cocktail, and a huge slab of (slightly grey) looking meat. I think it's lamb.

This book is a time capsule of fashionable and delectable dishes while we got used to new things like avocados, but were also stuck shaping food, which had no business being that structure, into a ring. For example, the recipe for Brussels sprouts in a mould. Yum? I'll let you decide. There's also a Chicken Maryland recipe, named for the American state, which involves frying bread-crumbed chicken, and serving with a garnish of lemon, banana and streaky bacon. Yum? Again, I'll let you decide.

I do have a fondness for these older recipes. I grew up on a number of them as staples: spag bol, steak and kidney pudding and the like. One I saw in this book and couldn't resist making for old time's sake was Coq Au Vin. Although the version I know from childhood was quite watery and unimpressive. I made this for my kids and me, and my goodness it was delicious. Streaky bacon, shallots, chicken, red wine, with mushrooms cooked in butter and added at the end while the sauce thickens? *Magnifique*.

I also tried the Boeuf En Daube, something I've eaten on holidays in Provence, but have never seen this particular version. It's brisket, tomatoes and olives. It was slow cooked to perfection and went down a treat with some beautifully steamed green vegetables.

Also taking me back in time were the stuffed peppers. Blanched green peppers filled with rice, beef, tomatoes, parsley and basil. A brilliant weeknight supper. There's a reason the oldies are the goldies. This is one of them.

Of course, some of the instructions and ingredients are dated. It's been a long time since I threw garlic in to cook with onions; I learned as a student that garlic burns quickly and should be added later on once the onions have got to their desired stage. This book really seems to want us to do the opposite and have burnt garlic. I ignored that and went with my gut. Also, everything is cooked in butter, lard or dripping, with an occasional nod to "vegetable oil" from time to time. I followed the instructions and cooked in all that saturated fat, knowing this was a short-term project. But my god, everything cooked in butter and dripping? Bloomin' gorgeous.



I haven't tried the desserts yet. They were all heavy-looking and served with piped rosettes of cream and I just haven't been in the mood for that. I must say, all this nostalgia has been a wonderful distraction from the stuffing, cakes, puddings and potatoes I'm going to have to sort in a few weeks time. And who knows, maybe I'll decide to have those sprouts in a mould to spice things up this Christmas. Probably not. *Bon appetit!*



LUCIE NOVOVESKA

Cursive Cards

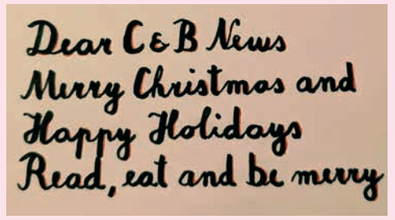
I recently attended a calligraphy course where a skilful instructor called Natasha taught us calligraphy for beginners. I learnt several important points: firstly, you need a brush pen that allows you to write thin and thick lines; secondly, you use a thin line when going up and a thick line when going down; thirdly, calligraphy is a little more complicated than I had hoped.

It requires lots of practice and patience and you can lose yourself in discussions about types of paper, various nibs and charismatic alphabets. Nevertheless, it does look fabulous when it is done by an experienced person.

Since I consider calligraphy out of my league, I thought I would return to my humble roots of cursive writing. In this digital age, I am embarrassed to admit that I don't use cursive very much (perhaps an occasional scribble to myself and even that is difficult to read). I realise that many of *C&B News* readers are quite skilful in using cursive and post lots of hand-written cards during the holidays, but if you are in the same boat as I am (and have the time and patience), why not consider cursive writing to make your card even more personal and special?

As I was testing my cursive writing on the course, I realised that it is not good and I make the same mistakes as I did 40 years ago when I was learning how to write. At one point, I couldn't even tell if the text was upside down. If you are starting at a similar point, I recommend lots of practice, using tracing paper to refresh your style (or learn a new style) and definitely pencil in some lines to keep you on track. There are also many free resources available online to help you.

My top tip would be to write slowly. Give it a go!





URARA DONOHOE

Cranberry

Cranberry (Vaccinium macrocarpon or oxycoccus), a Christmas favourite, is a herb in its own right. It is classically used to treat urinary tract infections (UTI). D-mannose, along with other constituents of this amazing berry, stop bacteria from adhering to and multiplying inside your bladder. But don't go running to the nearest supermarket to get yourself commercial cranberry juice. Even though they are delicious, they contain either sugar or artificial sweeteners, which both exacerbate UTIs. The best way to use cranberry for those pesky bladder infections is to find yourself cranberry tablets from your local health food shops with as few additives as possible.

But that's not the only use for cranberries. Eclectic herbalists from the 1800s used crushed berries in a poultice to soothe inflamed tonsils and other glands, and even to reduce painful gouty swellings, which can become a problem due to holiday excess. Growing in the autumn as frosts begin to descend, it is believed to wick away heat from the body, reducing all kinds of inflammation. In traditional healing systems, it is also known to 'move damp' which can be interpreted as helping produce and move bodily fluids. Eaten, the sourness induces saliva production and helps move bile from liver through the gall bladder into the intestines, aiding digestion. Applied as a poultice, it is believed to help move lymph fluids, reducing swelling and helping the immune and bodily repair function to activate in that area.

It is well worth adding cranberry to your Christmas dinner, with its high vitamin C as well as essential trace-minerals like potassium and copper. Homemade cranberry sauce beats store-bought ones any day. And adding it to your pies and stuffing will add a welcome tang. Visit my website for some seasonal recipes. Merry Christmas and see you again in the new year!

• *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

Resolutions

How do you feel about resolutions? Making vows or renewing oaths are ancient customs at New Year, and for many people the change of calendar year can feel like a good time to both reflect on the recent past and look forward with good intention to the coming months. For others, it might just feel like too much in the middle of winter with dark nights, coughs and colds, heating bills...!

How many times have we set off into a new year feeling determined that things will be different? Only to feel like a failure when the plans don't come to fruition!

Or maybe you have successfully set a goal and gone on to achieve it?

Is it just that some people are better at this than others?

As a coach, I don't believe that!

Setting achievable goals in relation to health and wellbeing can be a really helpful way to make changes but you need to feel invested in the outcome. Here are some tips:

- Be realistic. Is this the right time for you to make a change? Is it achievable right now, or might there be a better time in the future?
- Imagine how it will feel to achieve your goal. Ask yourself : "How will I feel and what will my life be like?"
- Tell people about what you are going to do. It's amazing how much more motivated we feel when we are accountable to others!
- Record your journey, take photos or make notes—and celebrate every small win!
- Allow it be difficult sometimes, change takes time and perseverance: keep going. Two steps forward and one back is still moving in the right direction.

But if there is one piece of advice I can offer it would be to bring more kindness to yourself. Whether new year is the right time to make changes or not, treat yourself with the same friendly support you might give someone you care about. Be a loving cheerleader to yourself whether you decide to run a marathon in 2027, eat less cheese, or allow yourself to rest more.

Happy New Year!

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



JO DOUGLAS

Vitamin D

Should you supplement Vitamin D in Winter? In simple terms, yes! With shorter days and less sunshine during the winter months, it's important to think about how we're getting enough Vitamin D.

The current NHS guidance is that everyone should consider taking a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms (400 IU) of Vitamin D during autumn and winter.

For those at higher risk of deficiency, guidance is that supplementation should be year-round. This includes pregnant and breastfeeding women, young children, people with limited sun exposure and those with darker skin.

You can get a small amount from food sources, namely mushrooms (which have been grown outdoors and exposed to sunlight), oily fish, red meat, fortified foods and egg yolks.

Vitamin D has several important roles in the body. It helps the body absorb calcium, supporting healthy bones and teeth. It also supports normal muscle function, plays an important role in supporting our immune system and helps maintain bone health, which is particularly important for women moving through the menopause.

Some signs of Vitamin D deficiency can include bone pain or tenderness, muscle weakness and tiredness. Severe or prolonged deficiency can lead to conditions such as rickets in children and osteomalacia (softening of the bones) in adults.

If you are purchasing Vitamin D, make sure you look for a supplement which includes Vitamin K2, which is needed alongside Vitamin D for calcium absorption.

It's also worth remembering that taking too much Vitamin D over time can be harmful, so stick to recommended doses unless advised otherwise by your healthcare professional.

Small, consistent steps can make a difference to our health, and Vitamin D is one worth thinking about as we head into winter.

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

Physiotherapy Matters



CHARLOTTE BROWN

Stronger Before, Recover Better

Preparing for surgery and recovering afterwards can be challenging, both physically and mentally. Physiotherapy plays a vital role in helping patients build strength, improve mobility and regain confidence throughout their surgical journey.

Pre-operative physiotherapy, also known as prehabilitation, prepares the body before an operation. Through tailored exercises, patients can improve muscle strength, joint mobility and overall fitness. For example, strengthening the muscles around the hip before a hip replacement may help support rehabilitation afterwards. Pre-operative physiotherapy also introduces patients to exercises they may perform following surgery, helping them feel better prepared and more confident.

Post-operative physiotherapy focuses on restoring movement, strength and function after surgery, when medically appropriate. Treatment may include gentle mobility exercises, progressive strengthening, balance training and guidance on returning to everyday activities. Whether recovering from a knee replacement, shoulder operation or another orthopaedic procedure, rehabilitation is adapted to each patient's needs, surgical restrictions and progress.

Pre- and post-operative physiotherapy can make a valuable difference to the surgical journey. By improving physical readiness before surgery and supporting gradual rehabilitation afterwards, patients can work towards greater mobility, independence and confidence.



Photo: Charlotte Brown via Canva.com

Charlotte Brown is Senior Physiotherapist at Edinburgh Sports Injury Clinic, providing personalised rehabilitation before and after surgery. https://esic.co.uk/



Winter is Coming: Be Prepared

GAIL COUSINS
BALERNO RAMBLERS

The Autumnal colours this year have been spectacular. Carpets of golden leaves under our feet as well as spotting the fruiting bodies of fungi spreading their spores before winter sets in.

The recent freezing overnight temperatures remind us all to take care when walking on woodland paths with fallen leaves covering trip hazards, or when walking on icy paths.

Slips, trips and falls are the common accidents when on foot. Walking poles aid balance; so do walking boots, providing ankle support and reducing the risk of sprains on uneven ground.

Whether dog walking or rambling around Harlaw reservoir (or further afield) in the Pentland Hills you have to be prepared. If you trip or fall, break your wrist, or collar bone you can walk, albeit painfully back to the car park.

However, twist a knee, dislocate a hip replacement, or break an ankle, and you will be in pain and immobile and may have to wait many, many hours in the cold until an ambulance crew or mountain rescue volunteers come to your aid.

Would you be prepared to survive those hours in the outdoors? Insulate underneath, keep warm and dry.

Someone in our walking groups carries a group first aid kit and another a two- or four-person shelter.

A minor mishap on a walk could cause delay and you may be overtaken by darkness.

Individually wearing warm, waterproof clothing, woolly hat, lightweight inner gloves and waterproof over gloves or mittens is important. Any casualty needs to be kept warm as well as the rest of the group. If one person shows signs of hypothermia then check the rest of the group for signs too.

Individuals should carry: an emergency foil blanket (it's small, lightweight but effective), a sit mat, hot drink, and emergency rations of high calorific value, such as dried fruit, chocolate, fruit cake or kendal mint cake.

You should also have a fully charged mobile phone and a power bank, a head torch with spare batteries plus a whistle, a spare fleece jumper and spare socks for feet (or can be worn as mittens). A scarf could be used as an improvised sling.

Relying on your mobile phone for a torch or online maps is not a good idea as the battery drains fast.

Yes, it is more gear to carry and your rucksack will be heavier, but it is better to be prepared, warm and dry, rather than being immobile, cold and wet!

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: Cammo Golden Carpet. Photo: Linda Campbell.

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A 'Transformational' Year for Ravelrig RDA

REBECCA CHALMERS
CHAIRPERSON, RAVELRIG RDA

There was plenty to celebrate this year at Ravelrig RDA as the charity marked its 40th anniversary.

Founded in 1986 by a dedicated group of local volunteers, the organisation has become a valued part of the community, supporting hundreds of participants over the years. Its success is built on the commitment and kindness of generations of volunteers who continue to give their time to enable disabled children and adults to enjoy riding and being with horses.

A year ago we welcomed HRH the Princess Royal to open our indoor arena. This development has transformed our services and now our participants know that the risk of sessions being cancelled due to bad weather is largely a thing of the past. It is also a valuable space for indoor fundraising events such as our dog show, car boot sales and our upcoming Christmas Fair on Sunday 6 December.



We were very fortunate to acquire the fields adjacent to the Ravelrig site in the summer, thanks to the generosity of Kate de Haan and her family, as well as from members of the group. The horses are enjoying the extra space and the bountiful grazing and we have created a trekking route around the perimeter for riding. We were pleased to be able to honour our commitment to maintaining access to this beautiful space for members of the local community as we prepared to use it for our horses.

The impact of Ravelrig RDA can be seen in the lives of its participants. Rachel, who was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, joined in 2018 needing support from three helpers while riding. Today, thanks to her determination and the encouragement of coaches and volunteers, she rides independently and has even competed at the RDA National Championships (right). She says her time at Ravelrig has improved both her physical fitness and mental wellbeing.

As we look to the future, Ravelrig RDA is inviting more people from the local community to get involved, whether through volunteering, fundraising or supporting events, helping to ensure its life-changing work continues for many years to come. Finally, we would like to give a special thank you to Citigroup, our charity partners who have supported us for the last two years. Merry Christmas from Ravelrig RDA!





Campbell Park Volunteer Day

SHONA HARROWER
FRIENDS OF CAMPBELL PARK

We had a very successful volunteer day on Campbell Park on 29 October. We planted 5000 bulbs, 600 plug plants and sowed half a kilogram of wildflower seeds in a new 240sqm wildflower meadow.

Above: For six months prior to the sowing event, local volunteers worked hard to keep the new wildflower meadow clear of weeds. Clockwise, from middle left: Three of our youngest volunteers surveyed the wildflower meadow earthworm population and found approximately 20 big fat juicy ones within a space of just three square metres. Volunteers of all ages came to help and were rewarded with a delicious lunch of home made soup followed by choc chip cookies–and a bag of red skinned Java tatties from the fresh harvest! The weather couldn't have been more delightful–surprisingly warm for late October! The south-facing semi circular sandbank at one end is a 7 metre x 5 metre pollinator palace where butterflies and bees can hibernate over winter: if all grows according to plan, pollinators should emerge to a succession of colourful nectar rich plants including snowdrops, hyacinths, crocus, birds foot trefoil and many more.









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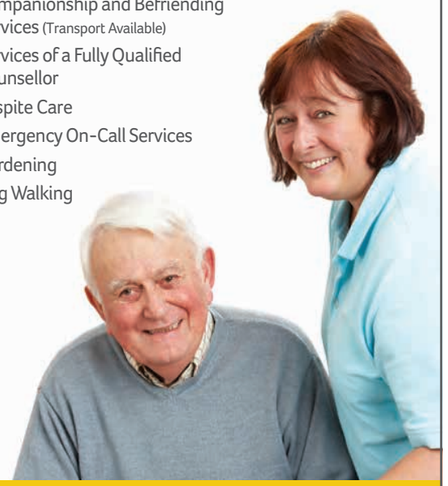

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Crisp Frosty Mornings at Malleny Garden

JAMES BELL
HEAD GARDENER, MALLENY GARDEN

As we move into winter, we start preparing our more tender plant collections to protect them from the cold. At the same time, we enjoy and appreciate the changes in the colours of the garden. With the sun lower in the sky, it backlights the garden, shining through the oranges, reds and browns of the autumn foliage. It looks particularly spectacular on a cold crisp morning with frost on the ground.

In mid-November we held our annual Volunteers Tea Party at Ps & Gs (formerly St Paul's & St George's) Church Hall in Edinburgh. More than 130 volunteers from all of Edinburgh's Trust properties came together for tea, coffee and cake to celebrate and reflect on the immense work everyone has achieved in the last year. From gardening, tour guiding, visitor welcoming, event support and research—our volunteers make much of the work we do possible. Thank you for their support and to everyone who made it along. It was great to see everyone.

As part of our winter prep, we have lifted, cleaned and dried our Dahlia tubers and stored them in a frost-free shed. (We lost count after 100 tubers.) We also start to prepare the greenhouses. The benches are cleaned and sanitised before we move the tender plants from the large unheated greenhouse to the small frost-free greenhouse for overwintering. All the Pelargoniums move into the warm wee greenhouse, while we are opting to test some of our Salvia collection in the large greenhouse to see how they cope in the protected cold. While hardy to minus 5 Celsius, it's still a risk, but we do have backup plants in case it does not go well. Elsewhere around the estate, leaf clearance continues. We leave as much on the ground as we can – the decaying leaves help improve the soil beneath, but we clear leaves from paths, driveways and a selection of borders, to keep everything safe and neat.





• *Volunteers make an enormous difference to the National Trust for Scotland and there are many benefits to volunteering with the Trust. If you, or someone you know, would like to volunteer with us, please get in touch at mallenygarden@nts.org.uk. https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/malleny-garden*

Pumpkin Result

But what of our prospective champion pumpkin which featured in the November *C&B News*?

In case you haven't managed to see the competition results on the National Trust for Scotland social media channels, it was a close-run battle with just 200 grams (7oz) between the top two. Our Malleny pumpkin weighed in at a hefty 31kg (68.3 lbs) while Newhailes House & Gardens (in the much more favourable growing conditions of sunny Musselburgh) weighed in at an impressive 31.2kg (68.8 lbs).

Congratulations to the winners. It sets a benchmark for next year's "friendly" competition.

However, we are some ways short of the US-based world record holder which currently stands at 1,431.5 kg (3,155 lbs, more than 225 stones). There is always next year!



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LETTERS etc!

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

Toilet Facilities

I was delighted to read in the recent *C&B News* that there are public toilets at the new Welcome Station in Balerno. Welcome indeed—perhaps my garden need no longer serve in that capacity. This year, as in many previous years, half a dozen times I have had to clear up soiled tissues, and the rest, from a path in my garden. I don't know how often it has been used for purposes that leave a less obvious trace, but I know that it happens.

At dusk one day in the last week I was emptying a vegetable waste bin onto my compost heap beside that garden path when a man came off a 44 bus at the stop near my gate and walked straight into my garden, probably not for the first time. He had not seen me about six yards (5.5 metres) away, but when I spoke to tell him that he was in my garden, he explained that he had just come off the bus and needed a **** (it rhymed with "kiss" but that was not what he wanted). He then proceeded to relieve himself in front of me; the fact that he then said "Thank you" did nothing to reduce my irritation.

I realise that having an open gate to my driveway beside a bus stop makes my wooded garden vulnerable but, as I no longer have to clear up dog mess from the gateway, is it too much to expect that I now won't have to clear up after humans? I am thinking of placing a trail camera in one of the trees so that I can identify anyone who continues this unpleasant abuse of my garden.

Adrian Dyer
Balerno Resident

A Tragedy Waiting to Happen

I want to flag a terrifying incident that occurred at the junction of Curriehill Road and the A71, to help raise community awareness and pressure the City of Edinburgh Council for urgent change.

While trying to turn right onto the A71, an oncoming vehicle was turning left into Curriehill Road. A heavily speeding car behind it did not see the slowdown, swerved violently to avoid hitting the turning car, and missed us by inches before smashing into the junction sign.

Curriehill Road is one of our only main links to the A71, yet at night it is an absolute death trap. Because of the heavy crowding, cars turning left create a total blind spot, leaving turning traffic vulnerable to fast-moving vehicles oncoming on the A71. My family and I were incredibly lucky not to be killed, and we will completely avoid this junction until traffic lights are installed.

I have formally contacted the Council's Transport Safety department to demand traffic lights. I am sharing this with C&B News so we can collectively gather support from fellow Currie residents. If we can highlight this risk, warn other residents and back the call for traffic signals, it could help prevent a tragedy.

Mohammad Reza Eslami
Currie Resident

Ooops!



Due to what can only be described as an editorial "brain-fart", the "hired help" wrongly captioned the main photograph in last issue's Balerno Ramblers article. Rather than detailing "Weekend group members on the Fife Coastal Path", the photo in fact showed members taking on the strenuous Cleveland Way coastal path. Thankfully, both photographs were taken by Liz Robertson, so at least we got that right. (Fingers crossed!)



PLANNING, ETC BY ARCHIE CLARK

Planning and Climate Change–17: Make Bureaucracy Proportionate

After the Second World War, the 1947 Town & Country Planning Act was introduced "to make fresh provision for planning the development and use of land". Its 206 pages were replaced, along with other planning legislation, in 1990. Heaven knows how many volumes of planning law now govern our lives.

The original objective, to enable essential works, saw the construction of very large projects: schools, universities, hospitals, power stations, multi-storey housing, etc. By the 1960s many jobs were available designing and building them, involving the creation of numerous factories for a substantial skilled workforce. People became better off to the point where they weren't driving exhausted pre-war cars but new four-door Ford Prefects with their strange vacuum-operated windscreen wipers, and later the BMC range of Minis. Development had become the driver of prosperity. By 1957, war-time rationing had almost ceased allowing people to agree with Prime Minister Harold Macmillan that "most of our people have never had it so good". While many were engaged in physical labour, I think it safe to say that, since then, the majority of workers have "clean" employment behind a desk. One only has to compare the conditions of the driver and fireman on the footplate of The Flying Scotsman, rattling to London at over 100mph, with the smoothness of an LNER 125 express where the driver sits comfortably at his "desk" all the way.

While we may welcome the disappearance of many dirty jobs, the legislation that has piled up on all aspects of life has become overwhelming, shackling progress. We now need certificates for many things, "planning" included.

Take the Muir Wood Field Path, for example. In the past, a planning application might have required about five documents, as much as for a house extension nowadays. While one might question why an application was needed for an existing path, we should ask why an application lodged in July 2025 was not approved till 24 December—after 79 documents had been processed, with more (back protection?) added later. No wonder we need enormous resource-hungry Data Centres to store the stuff. Making bureaucracy proportionate and applying common sense should save fuel, improve productivity and provide more money for employment in construction.

Shouldn't we prioritise people's needs over development bureaucracy?

MORE PLANNING ON PAGE 35

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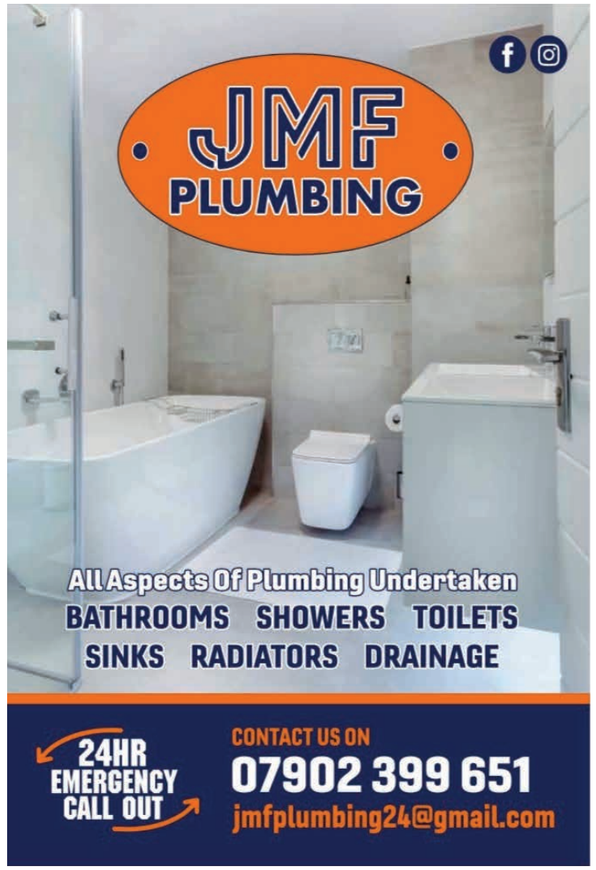

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MORE PLANNING, ETC BY ARCHIE CLARK



572 Lanark Road West, Hannahfield, Balerno

This site has history. From 1997 to today, the planning portal records 15 applications: seven granted, four refused, one withdrawn, two unknown and one pending. The DPEA website mentions three appeals, the last (in 2021) permitting a six-house development.

In the October 1999 issue of *C&B News* (issue 250), Tom McCall, Balerno CC's then planning convenor reported that an application to build four houses on the plateau above the bad bends at the western entrance to Balerno had been refused by the City of Edinburgh Council. The applicant subsequently lodged a proposal to demolish three houses and build six dwellings.

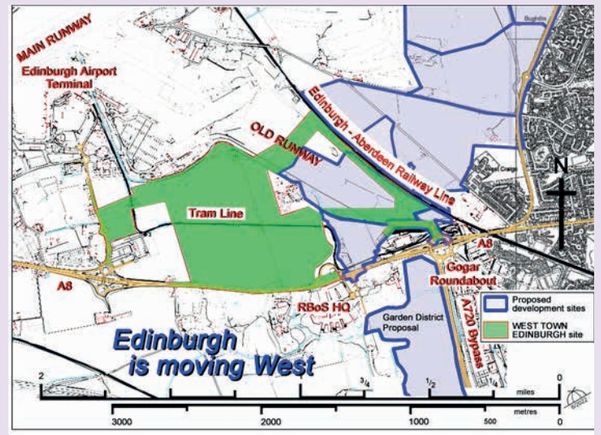
In February 2000, while explaining what community councillors actually do(!), Tom revealed that before these applications there had been one for 10 houses.

In July 2000, Ken Stephen stated that, despite Balerno and Currie being "areas of restraint", 700 houses were proposed and that an appeal had been lodged respecting this site. In October 2000, Caroline McManus, in her leading article "Hannahfield Expansion Plans Thwarted", noted that the Reporter, in dismissing an appeal to develop this site, had observed that "improvement of the site appearance could come with just a replacement of the existing building". Her closing remark that "the community must remain vigilant if we are to protect the landscape setting of Balerno" is as valid now as it was 26 years ago.

The next proposal appeared in July 2010: to "Demolish unfinished building and replace with new house". By October 2012, the site was described as "derelict", and for sale with permission for a four-bedroom house and a two-bedroom cottage. In May 2021, Councillor Gardiner reported that this "green belt" development had been turned down by CEC officials—but the Reporter saw differently.

Currently application 25/02841/AMC seeks approval for six houses. From the air, these closely-built 1/2 storey, four-to-six bedroom flat-roofed box-like structures in the green belt (see CityPlan 2030) would be accessed by a new entrance from the south, with parking as defined in "Edinburgh Design Guidance"* at "one space per unit". As each house has a two-car garage, it is puzzling how this is interpreted. Without a regular city bus service and extended routes to the centre of Balerno, the allowable provision seems uncertain.

*Edinburgh Design Guidance - September 2025 (p65 et seq.)



Edinburgh Is Creeping West

In June 2022 (*C&B News* 447) I outlined a proposal (with a drawing) to develop farmland either side of the tram line between the Gogar Roundabout and the southern boundary of Edinburgh Airport. Much of this land is now included in planning application in principle 24/00132/PPP, approved by City of Edinburgh Council on 24 October 2026. There were 58 objections with no support.

You can imagine how big this application is and the additional traffic that will be generated from this proposal alone at the Gogar Roundabout from its description: "Residential-led mixed use development including residential (Class 9) and sui generis flatted development (including student housing, build to rent, co-living and affordable housing), business and employment uses (Class 4), storage or distribution uses (Class 6), hotels (Class 7), residential institutions (Class 8), non-residential institution uses /education (Class 10), shops, financial, professional and other services (Class 1A), food and drink uses (Class 3), assembly and leisure uses (Class 11), other sui generis uses (which could include public house, hot food take-away, launderette & taxi business) and other related infrastructure and associated works including car parking, servicing, access arrangements, formation of new roads and active travel networks, sustainable urban drainage and open space /public realm." The east end of the site is opposite the somewhat smaller 1,350 housing site abutting the Gogar Roundabout and bypass described in April 2025 (*C&B News* 505) under "More housing on former Green Belt land at Gogar?"

While detailed planning permission has still to be obtained to allow parcels of land to be developed, the question raised at the 2015 Public Inquiry preceding the 2016 Local Development Plan about the ability of the road system there to cope with the additional traffic remains unanswered. It's a question that affects us as a blockage thereabouts impacts on us too.



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DR SCOTT ARTHUR MP
EDINBURGH SOUTH WEST

STAYING OPTIMISTIC

As 2026 draws to a close, I want to use this month's column to reflect on the year that's been. One thing I'm pleased about is to have kept my New Year's resolution: to stay optimistic.

That hasn't always been easy. Like many people, I've experienced moments when optimism felt in short supply. Yet focusing on what we can achieve, both as individuals and as a community, has reminded me that there is still much to be hopeful about.

Without doubt, the greatest source of that hope has been the young people I've met across Edinburgh South West.

I've seen first-hand the contribution they make to our communities and the passion they have for building a better future. That was clear in the five young people who took part in the Alistair Darling Internship Programme run through my office. It was equally evident when I visited Balerno High School to celebrate the Rights Respecting Schools group's Gold Award.

I was also proud to welcome some of those young people to Parliament to discuss their ambitions for our country's future. Their ideas, focus on community, confidence and determination left a lasting impression. I was equally proud to see young people from Tynecastle High School, Balerno High School and George Watson's College playing an important role in Remembrance Sunday commemorations.

Too often, public debate focuses on the challenges facing young people. Those issues deserve attention, but they are only part of the story. The young people I have met this year deserve not only our support but also our admiration.

I shall end by saying that as Christmas approaches, whether you have faith or not, my prayer is that the hope, peace and love we associate with the birth of Jesus Christ reaches every home in our community this Christmas.



SIMITA KUMAR MSP
EDINBURGH SOUTH WESTERN

COMMUNITY @ XMAS

Households across Edinburgh South Western will soon receive a Christmas postcard from me, sharing my MSP contact details. My team and I have been hand-delivering postcards in Currie, Wester Hailes, Saughton and Oxgangs. It has been a welcome opportunity to meet residents and hear what matters to you.

One of the most rewarding parts of being your MSP is meeting people across the constituency. Hearing about the challenges facing families, the services people rely on and local projects making a difference helps shape my work. I want to remain visible, accessible, and connected to the communities I represent.

This will be my first Christmas as your MSP, and I am looking forward to joining festivities across Edinburgh South Western. I am particularly excited to host my Christmas Card Competition for local primary schools, continuing a tradition established by my predecessor, Gordon MacDonald. I look forward to seeing our young people's creativity.

For many, Christmas is a time of celebration and togetherness. But it can also bring pressure for people facing financial difficulties, loneliness, or uncertainty. Food banks, warm spaces, and community organisations provide vital support throughout the year. The volunteers and staff behind these efforts demonstrate the best of community spirit.

If you are able to help, please consider supporting Community for Food, Oxgangs Neighbourhood Centre, or the Community One Stop Shop in Broomhouse. A donation, volunteering or simply spreading the word can make a difference.

As the year draws to a close, thank you to everyone who has contacted my office, shared a concern or spoken with me. It has been a privilege to represent Edinburgh South Western during these first six months. I look forward to continuing to listen and work alongside you in the year ahead. I wish you a peaceful Christmas and a happy New Year.



MILES BRIGGS MSP
EDINBURGH AND LOTHIANS EAST

WINTER IS COMING

Where did the summer go? I can't be the only one who feels that the last four months have flown by. It seems like only yesterday that I was introducing my column on these pages and looking forward to the new Parliament ahead.

This is always the busiest period of the year for us in Holyrood, especially with major public service reforms looming. Adding to the usual rush have been a few key issues. Mental health, NHS waiting times, homelessness, and anti-social behaviour have shown no signs of improving in our region since the summer and will continue to be among my top priorities in the new year.

A growing concern locally has been childcare. Recently, North Edinburgh Childcare, which provided services to Juniper Green and the surrounding area, suddenly became insolvent and closed all services. Parents and staff were understandably alarmed as alternative options are few. This situation is reflected across our region, and I will continue to engage with the community and Edinburgh council to mitigate the effects.

As the nights draw in, I'd like to acknowledge what a difficult time of year this can be for many. For those who are lonely or affected by the gloomy weather, the coming months can be daunting. I urge readers to make use of the excellent services from charities such as Vintage Vibes and Edinburgh City Mission, and to go along to the Community Centre Friday Club or Parish Church Monday Club in Currie and Balerno respectively.

I'd like to thank all the young people at local schools submitting wonderful Christmas card designs to my annual competition. Looking through these is a highlight of every year and I can't wait to see what you come up with this time.

Can I take this opportunity to wish you and your loved ones a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year when it comes.



CLLR GRAEME BRUCE
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

LOCAL UPDATES

Some good news to start with this month: the broken wall on Balerno's Main Street is finally being repaired. A contractor is scheduled to start these works on Monday 23 November and it will take four days to complete. In other words, by the time you read this is should all be back to normal!

There was major flooding on Lanark Road West recently at the junction of Ravelrig Road and, to be fair to the City of Edinburgh Council, once I called it in they were on the case within a couple of hours and quickly unblocked all the drains. However, it does show an inherent problem, not just in this location but around the city—especially at this time of year where leaves block drains. More needs to be done to sort the issue before it becomes a bigger problem.

I raised a concern with two roads in the ward that are in a very poor state (Horsburgh Grove and Muirwood Grove). They don't look as though they've been resurfaced since the housing developments were built back in the 1960s. I'm hoping CEC takes note and looks at this for next financial year, but time will tell.

After encouraging the Council several times during the past year, they have finally agreed to start works on the roundabout on Riccarton Mains Road at the junction of Bryce Road. The works will include resurfacing and installing drop kerbs and zebra crossings. They will start renewing kerbs, drainage and pavement surfaces from Monday 30 November. There will be a break from Monday 21 December to Monday 4 January inclusive. Work will be carried out during the day, Mondays to Fridays. Prepare for disruption.

CEC closed the Kinauld Tan Works Footbridge on the Water of Leith Walkway due to the unsafe nature of the underside of the bridge. I created a motion for the Transport & Environment Committee to come back with costs to repair or replace the bridge. I have been told that they will repair the bridge and I await timescales for this to happen.

Lastly, can I just wish everyone a very Merry Christmas when it arrives and all the best for 2027!

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CLLR NEIL GARDINER
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

WINTER UPDATES

I'm pleased to confirm following councillors lobbying, the Water of Leith's Kinauld Bridge will have temporary repairs in the next few weeks, meaning walkers and cyclists won't need dangerous diversions onto Lanark Road / West. Work will cost £25,000. (In the next five years permanent repair required may cost ten times this amount.)

It was a pleasure to attend opening of the next new high school at Wester Hailes, like Currie built to Passivhaus environmental standard and supported with Scottish Government funding, ensuring schooling at the heart of each community.

I'm aware of mixed responses to a recent hoax, leading to evacuation of all council schools. We are asking officers to review how similar situations are communicated.

I attended celebration of Edinburgh and Munich twinning—at 72 the oldest twinning for both cities. It would be good if pupil exchange opportunities can be increased. There I met Edinburgh's Tartan Parade representatives, who asked me to share information about an Art Competition for young people aged 12-16, designing 2027's Tartan Parade Poster- a wonderful creative opportunity with £250 art voucher prize for winning design, see www.tartanparade.scot

Although CEC is installing controversial lighting columns along Muirwood Path, CEC's reviewing lighting south of Bloomiehall Park and will discuss with local residents.

Financed through Transient Visitor Levy, back in Spring 2026 SNP Group won amendment to George Street proposals to fund other destinations including developing pathways to Pentland Hills and also Princes Street pavements. Revised George Street proposals now allow incorporation of a bus diversion - should there be any future Princes Street emergency. Although currently in opposition, our useful amendments were agreed at committee in November.

With Christmas and New Year are nearly upon us, I look forward to seeing some of you at the lights turn on. Seasonal best wishes to all.



CLLR FIONA GLASGOW
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

COMMUNITY PROGRESS

As we head quickly towards the festive season I think of all the effort we put into getting organised for a yearly celebration. This should be a time to relax, enjoy meeting up with family and taking time to reflect. Please bear in mind those who struggle at this time of year because of health, money, or other issues. Please remember to support local businesses at this time of year and enjoy whatever you have planned!

During the past month I was involved in a new programme offered by SCOREscotland who focus on supporting minority ethnic communities – especially New Scots – across Southwest Edinburgh. Their work addresses poverty, racism, social isolation, language barriers, and limited access to opportunities. The programme was aimed at supporting participants to become active citizens through exploring local democracy, citizenship, community participation, critical thinking, and social connections. A terrific way to learn and feel part of the wider community!

I attended Juniper Green and Baberton Mains Community Council where the Local Place Plan was presented, a comprehensive document that takes account of residents hopes for the future of their area and feeds into the City Councils City Plan. Well done to all who took part. Meantime, Currie Community Council heard about the plans to upgrade the Riccarton Mains Round from the City Councils Active Travel team. The aim is to make it better and safer for the community.

An opportunity is available to local residents to be involved in deciding how the Edinburgh's Visitor Levy can be used to benefit local communities and visitors, ideas about events and projects are encouraged and a vote will take place to decide how the money is spent. Check out www.yourvoice.edinburgh.gov.uk to take part.

All the best for the season, here's to a happy New Year!



CLLR STEPHEN JENKINSON
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

After representing the Pentland Hills ward on the City of Edinburgh Council since 2022, I wanted to share some news with readers of *C&B News*.

I've recently been selected as Labour's candidate for Colinton and Fairmilehead ward at next May's council elections.

Having lived in this part of Edinburgh for most of my life, it's an opportunity that means a great deal to me. My wife Jane and I raised our family here, and we continue to enjoy being part of the local community.

Over the past four years, it's been a privilege to represent the Pentland Hills ward. During that time, I've worked with residents, community councils and local organisations on everything from roads and transport to the everyday issues that affect our neighbourhoods.

One thing I've learned is just how much good work goes on within our communities, often thanks to volunteers and local groups who give up their time to make a difference. Their contribution deserves recognition and support.

In my role as CEC's Transport and Environment Convener, I've also seen the importance of ensuring that decisions taken at the City Chambers reflect the needs of local communities. Whether it's maintaining our roads, improving public transport or looking after our public spaces, these are issues that affect us all.

I'll continue to represent the people of Pentland Hills until next May's elections, with the same commitment I've shown over the past four years.

Looking ahead, I'm keen to spend more time listening to residents and community organisations across Colinton and Fairmilehead, understanding their priorities and the challenges they face.

This is a community I care deeply about, and the opportunity to play a part in protecting what makes it special, while helping it thrive in the years ahead, is something I'm very much looking forward to.



CLLR JASON RUST
COLINTON/FAIRMILEHEAD WARD

PENTLAND HILLS

The Pentland Hills are one of our greatest local assets, enjoyed daily by walkers, runners, families, and dog owners across Colinton, Bonaly and other local communities. However, as visitor numbers have grown in recent years, so too have the pressures on our local infrastructure—from overflowing parking at Bonaly to path erosion, litter, and wildfire risks.

I would therefore encourage local residents to take part in an important consultation currently shaping how our hills are managed. The Pentland Hills Regional Park team has launched an early public survey to help shape its next 10-year Strategic Management Plan, covering 2028 to 2037. Before formal proposals are drawn up, the Park wants to hear directly from local communities about how they use the hills and what priorities should come first. Whether your concern is better parking enforcement, maintaining footpaths, protecting farming and wildlife, or improving public transport links to the foothills, this is your chance to set the agenda. The survey remains open until January 2027: https://tinyurl.com/5ahmufxd

Living on the doorstep of the Pentlands gives us a unique stake in getting these decisions right. Please take a few minutes to share your views, and as always, if you live in Ward 8 (Colinton/Fairmilehead) and have local parking, road safety, or council issues you would like me to raise on your behalf, do not hesitate to get in touch.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to wish all readers a Merry Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Our "Views" pages are not just for politicians and community councillors—if you have an opinion you'd like to share on any subject with *C&B News* readers, why not do so? We're looking for around 300 - 400 words. For more details, email: editor@candbnews.com

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RICHARD M HENDERSON
BALERNO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

CONTINGENCY PLANNING

The City Bypass was closed for most of Thursday 12 November following a tragic accident in which a woman lost her life, and full closure was necessary to enable the police investigation. It is not the role of this column to speculate about the circumstances of the accident, but it is legitimate to ask whether contingency planning to address the consequences of prolonged closure was adequate.

Part of the problem may relate to the design of the bypass. There are no removable central reservation barriers that might allow contraflows. Whether that might have made a difference in this case is a matter for the professionals: the A720 near Baberton has fixed barriers and those no longer meet the design standards.

Away from the bypass itself, the design of the A70 does not assist where there is closure of the bypass. There is probably no way that the single-carriageway suburban A70 running through the Upper Water of Leith communities with bus lanes, pedestrian crossings, and parked cars could possibly absorb even a third of the 75,000+ daily bypass vehicles without gridlock. The theoretical maximum capacity of the A70 between Balerno and Colinton is roughly 1,200 to 1,500 vehicles per hour in each direction; at the upper limit that gives capacity at 25,000 during the 17 hour closure period.

The cost of closure of a four lane highway like the bypass for 17 hours is said to be around £500k and £1M in terms of traffic delays, wasted fuel, and lost productivity. Of course that may not cover the impact of missed appointments, effect on emergency services, consequences for general services, or the general inconvenience.

We cannot possibly plan for every eventuality, but just as with a fire closing Princes Street, so also an accident closing the bypass may have figured somewhere on someone's risk register; or if it didn't then one would hope that it might now.



Christmas is Coming with Pentland Singers

ROWENA STEWART, ALISON MARR
PENTLAND SINGERS

In October, Pentland Singers hosted a happy afternoon of singing. Members of choirs and people not singing regularly with any choir came together to belt out all the twiddly bits of choruses from the latter parts of Handel's Messiah. As the photograph shows, participants were still smiling at the end of an uplifting afternoon and our audience enjoyed a free performance.

Since then, Christmas classics and carols have formed the basis of our Tuesday evening rehearsals in preparation for An Even Greater British Christmas Concert. Arrangements of traditional carols are being polished, lovely new Christmas songs being learned and medleys of carols are weaving festive patterns. As in 2024's Christmas concert, all the music has been written or arranged by British composers.

Pentland Junior Singers will be adding their own magic to the programme led by their new musical director Laura Mackie. Tinsel and jingle bells all included to get you in the Christmas spirit! We will also have our usual raffle, baking stall and some lovely mince pies and refreshments.

• *An Even Greater British Christmas Concert takes place in Balerno High School on Tuesday 8 December from 7.30pm. Tickets (£12) are on sale via our website (https://www.pentlandsingers.org.uk) or on the door on the night. Entry is free for audience members under 13 years of age.*

• *Both the Pentland Junior Singers and Pentland Singers will start their 2027 singing on Tuesday 12 January in Balerno Parish Church at 6pm and 7.30pm respectively. The music for the adult choir will be a little jazzy!*

• *New members always welcome. Turn up to sample a rehearsal or, for more information, emailPentland Singers: pentland_singers@yahoo.co.uk or Pentland Junior Singers: pentlandjuniors@gmail.com*



What an amazing storytelling session with storytelling experts "It's in the bag", Currie Nursery, and members of The Meeting Place, *writes Allister McKillop.* Everyone had an amazing time with much commotion general chaos and laughter. Thanks to our main storyteller Lorna as well as the very well-behaved nursery children who enjoyed a mystical trip to the Highlands via bus, train, boat and... a horse!



Christmas Concert and New Year Open Rehearsals

MARGARET KIERAN
COLINTON & MERCHISTON COMMUNITY CHOIR

Please do join us for our Christmas Concert on Monday 7 December, starting at 8pm in the Memorial Hall at Merchiston Castle School. As previously announced, we will be singing Mendelssohn's Cantata: *Vom Himmel Hoch*, "The Shepherds" by Rheinberger, *In Terra Pax* by Finzi, and a delightful selection of Christmas Carols, some with audience participation.

• *Doors open at 7.30pm. Tickets £10 (£5 for under 18s) available in advance from choir members or at the door—cash only.*

We are a very friendly, non-auditioning choir, with a mixed range of ages and sight reading abilities. If you would like to sing with us, please join us for either or both of our Open Rehearsals. There will be no charge or commitment unless you decide to join. We will be rehearsing the Faure Requiem for our Celebratory Spring Concert, when we will celebrate 100 years of the Colinton Amenity Association and 30 years since our choir was founded.

• *The Open Rehearsals begin at 7pm on Mondays 11 and 18 January, in the Memorial Hall, Merchiston Castle School. Our normal rehearsals begin at 7.15 pm and end at 9 pm.*

• *To access the Memorial Hall, come to the main school building and turn right to come into the East Quad. There will be someone at the entry door in the left hand corner to let you in. As always, we thank MCS for the use of the Memorial Hall.*

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Jazz Club Celebrates Successful First Year

JOHN ELLIOTT
JUNIPER GREEN NOTE



Juniper Green Note, the grassroots jazz club at Baberton Golf Club in Juniper Green, has completed its first year. The club presents two hours of live jazz on an evening roughly once a month, bringing professional jazz to the Pentland villages and offering real value for money.

The club was founded by pianist John Elliott. Headliners are invited to play with a local trio or quartet. Now and then the format changes to bring something different, such as a saxophone quartet or a touring piano trio. Musicians are paid a fair fee for every performance, and any surplus goes into future programming. Juniper Green Note is supported by The National Lottery through Creative Scotland.

The first season ran to 13 gigs, from Dick Lee in October 2025 to Louise Balkwill in September 2026, and no line-up appeared twice. Audiences heard Lorna Reid, Seonaid Aitken, John Settle, Frank Perowsky and Colin Steele, the Dequorum Sax 4tet and many more. Across those nights, 953 tickets were sold and eight nights sold out.

The second season opened on Thursday 29 October with the American saxophonist Greg Abate (right), former lead alto with the Ray Charles Orchestra. He played alongside Andy Mitchell (bass), Tom Gordon (drums) and John Elliott (piano). Reviewing the night for UK Jazz News, Mark McKergow praised the room, the free parking, the comfortable seats and the prompt start, and concluded that "grassroots meat-and-potatoes jazz is still alive, even thriving."

New for 2027, some of the monthly gigs move from Thursday to Saturday. Anyone routinely busy on a Thursday can now see what they have been missing.

There's no gig in December, when the lounge bar hosts Christmas parties. Our programme for the new year is:

- Thursday 21 January: Alan Barnes, one of Britain's best-known saxophonists, joins the Juniper Green Note Trio.
- Thursday 4 March: John Settle on vibraphone, the first headliner to return a year after his first appearance.
- Saturday 10 April: Dennis Rollins MBE and his funky trombone.
- Thursday 6 May: the Euan Stevenson Trio, a piano trio.
- Saturday 29 May: Simon Spillett on tenor saxophone.

There is exciting news to come. Juniper Green Note is in discussions with the Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival about co-hosting gigs during their festival in July 2027. Watch this space.

All gigs are held in the lounge bar at Baberton Golf Club, Juniper Green, where parking is free and the nearest bus stop is just a seven-minute walk away. Many nights sell out, so booking early through Eventbrite is advised.

- *Details are at https://greennote.club , where you can also join the mailing list to hear about new gigs first. Bring a friend.*
- *Our social media: @junipergreennote*

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December 2026
January 2027

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Small Ads

Remembering Ally Donaldson

SEAN SCOTT
CURRIE CHIEFTAINS

The word "legend" is often too liberally used to describe a person's contribution in any given walk of life or sport. However, with the recent and sudden passing of Ally Donaldson at the age of 60, the communities of Balerno, Scottish Rugby and specifically Currie RFC (now Currie Chieftains) have lost someone for whom that accolade is well-earned and richly deserved.

His lifelong love affair with rugby in all its guises was matched only by his commitment to his family. During his more than 40 year association with Currie Chieftains, no-one has done more for the club: as a player, coach, mentor, director, benefactor, janitor, ball washer, team mate and club mate.

Everyone who knew Ally couldn't fail to be swept along by his unwavering enthusiasm for the club and everything it stands for. And, while his highly successful 30 year tenure as a PE teacher and (latterly) Director of Rugby at George Watson's College showed Ally's dedication to his chosen profession, Currie Chieftains was his first love. There was nothing he wouldn't do for a club that has shaped the lives of countless members and players, many of whom Ally was instrumental in attracting through its doors.

Since his passing on Monday 28 September, testimonials and tributes to Ally across all forms of media have been singular in their admiration for, and acknowledgement of, the significant impact he had on Scottish Rugby. He represented both Edinburgh and Scotland as a top quality stand-off, blessed with a prodigious boot and mesmerising side-step. He coached rugby at school, youth, adult and representative levels, winning silverware wherever he plied his unsurpassed rugby nous.

As a player, he was a critical playmaker in



Currie's meteoric rise through the leagues to becoming an established First Division (now Premiership) club, gracing the black and amber no.10 jersey approximately 350 times. In winning three Scottish Premiership titles with the Currie Chieftains 1st XV, he achieved something no other Head Coach has at the top amateur level in Scotland. His four-in-a-row Scottish Cup successes with George Watson's College is unmatched. Without exception, players of all ages who were coached by him talk of their respect and how desperately they wanted to win for him. His passion for the game was infectious! Moreover, he was someone other coaches sought advice and guidance from, not only those just learning their trade but also seasoned exponents who recognised and absorbed Ally's astute insight into some of the finer elements of the game.

Ally was someone who loved music and a party, especially with his extended family and friends and, such was his desire to see all aspects of Malleny Park thrive, he invariably chose the clubrooms as the venue for family birthday celebrations and other milestone events. Not only did he care about the financial sustainability of the club, but also its future success on the field.

After his most recent Premiership title winning success alongside Mark Cairns in season 2023-2024 (see photo), no-one would have blamed him for hanging up his coach's coat and retiring. Not Ally: he took on nurturing the latest crop of U18 Colts and their existing coaching team, all of whom have thrived under his tutelage.

It was fitting that the celebration of Ally's life took place at Malleny, attended by many of the hundreds who paid their respects at Mortonhall Crematorium. Amidst the sharing of tales of Ally's rugby and social exploits, there was a palpable sense permeating the clubrooms of someone missing, a vacuum only a significant "someone" could create through their absence.

Ally's passing has left a void in the lives of his family, his extensive circle of friends and all at Currie Chieftains that will never be filled. But everyone who knew him is glad that he was part of their lives and will reflect upon those times with the fondest of memories.

Pentland Tri-Athletes' November 'Try a Tri' Event

JIM PANTON
CHAIRMAN, PENTLAND TRIATHLETES

Despite the decreasing late autumnal temperatures on Saturday 7 November, the rain held off to help create a superb day of fun as a number of new triathletes took part in the Pentland Triathletes "Try a Tri" event in Balerno.

The event was organised in conjunction with the Scottish Triathlon Swim-Bike-Run initiative, that aims to encourage active lifestyles, break down barriers to participation and make multi-sport more accessible regardless of age, background or fitness level. An outlook that is very aligned with Pentland Triathletes club values.

The day saw 16 out of the 24 participants taking part in their first ever triathlon, supported by 26 volunteers and organisers from the Pentland Triathlete members. A short (400m) swim in the Balerno High School pool was followed by a 6.2 miles (10 km) bike ride around the Rigg and a 2.1 mile (5 km) run out and back on the Water of Leith.

We hope these newcomers will now continue their multi-sport journeys. Keep an eye on the Pentland Triathletes website for news of a repeat even in the spring of 2027.





Walking Football Wonder Women

PAUL RENDALL
ORIAM WALKING FOOTBALL

On Saturday 20 September, a goal was scored that clinched the Women's Walking Football Over-40s Championship League title for Oriam Ladies Walking Football team, in their debut season. A remarkable achievement given that, at the end of 2024, Oriam Walking Football (OWF) had just one female player.

Things changed when Emma Mickley and Annie Waterston joined the Club and set out to grow women's participation. Using their own contacts, local and social media to spread the word, 11 women attended the first social session at Oriam, back on Wednesday 30 April 2025.

In March 2026 the squad of 13 players (ages 43 to 67) played their first matches in the WFS Womens League. After three rounds and 10 games, a 100% record secured the title with four games remaining. The final League table saw 14 wins from 14, 33 goals scored and only 3 conceded, and the team presented with the Championship trophy.

To cap a remarkable season, Oriam Ladies have been shortlisted for the Scottish Women's Football award of Walking Football Team of the Year, presented on Saturday 28 November 2026.

"I wish I could have had opportunities like this years ago," says player Carol Gilbert. "To be playing football at my age as a woman is not something I could have dreamt of."

The ladies section of OWF now has 28 players, the eldest being in their 70s. All come together to play social Walking Football on a Wednesday evening. New players of all abilities are always welcome.

• *Sessions: Mondays, 12.30pm - 1.30pm; Wednesdays, noon - 1pm and 8.30pm - 9.30pm; Fridays 12.30pm - 1.30pm.*

• *Contact Paul Rendall: 07932 944252, or email: paulrendall@outlook.com*





Club Champions Crowned

JO KING
PENTLANDS GYMNASTICS

Pentland Gymnastics has had an amazing year in 2026 and the crowning glory came on Saturday 14 November when they were named "Club of the Year" at the Scottish Gymnastics 2026 Awards.

They began the week with a trip to East Kilbride to take part in Scottish Gymnastics Gymfest at the Playsport arena on Sunday 8 November. The artistic and rhythmic display teams performed their stunning routines, choreographed by Eilidh Sills, alongside other clubs from across Scotland, England and Ireland. Several gymnasts were taking part in the display teams for the first time and a wonderful day was had by everyone.

The annual club competition then took place on Saturday 14 November with gymnasts from across the club taking part to showcase their skills. Spectators were treated to amazing vault and floor performances with the gymnasts recognised with medals for participation and greatest improvement alongside the traditional first, second and third awards. The club competition always provides an opportunity to see how much the gymnasts have progressed over the year and its wonderful to see the warmth and support shown to all those taking part.

Following the club competition, the coaches had a quick turnaround to get to their own awards ceremony. This year Pentland Gymnastics was nominated in two categories at the Scottish Gymnastics awards: Club of the Year, and Community Club Coach of the Year for Claire Sills (above). Following in the footsteps (or cartwheels) of their gymnasts earlier in the day, the Pentland team were successful in both categories, bringing two highly prestigious awards to the club.

It is amazing to see the Pentland Gymnastics team acknowledged and celebrated at the national awards. The coaches give so much time and effort to supporting the families involved with the club making it a very special team to be a part of. The children and young people involved at Pentland are not only taught gymnastics skills, they also build friendships, become part of a team and support each other at every step along the way. The sounds of the gymnasts filled the Currie High sports hall on Saturday as they cheered their team mates through their routines. Those cheers should echo through the community for the whole club in winning these awards and in particular to Claire Sills for her leadership of the team.

Thank you Pentland and congratulations to you all!

• *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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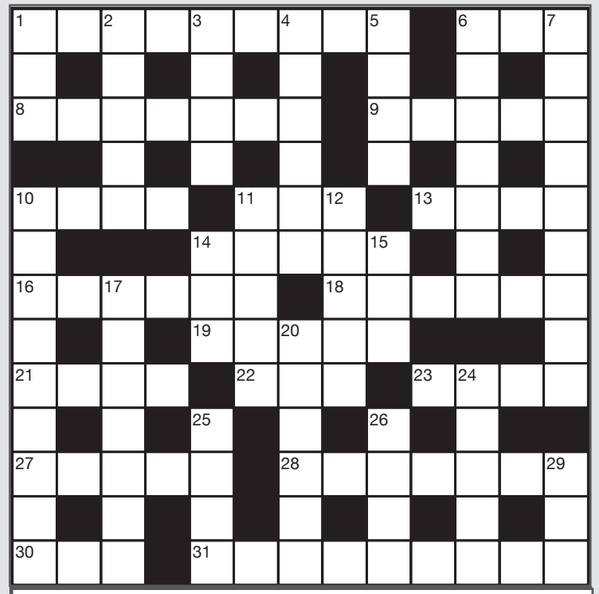
Good luck everyone!



ACROSS

1 Abducted (9)
6 Yes vote (3)
8 Root vegetable (7)
9 Small fragment (5)
10 Edible fat (4)
11 Harden (3)
13 German city (4)
14 Pulsate (5)
16 Tufted beard (6)
18 Elk (6)
19 Narrow lane (5)
21 In the middle of (4)
22 Boy (3)
23 Wind instrument (4)
27 Shelf (5)
28 Young tree (7)
30 Expected (3)
31 Mid-morning snack (9)

DOWN

1 Sleep (inf.) (3)
2 Lament (5)
3 Female relative (4)
4 Condiment (6)
5 Twilight (4)
6 Based on hypothesis (1,6)
7 Costly (9)
10 Indicated (9)
11 Hard covering (5)
12 Pulled behind (5)
14 Beverage (3)
15 Alcove (3)
17 Mythical Greek princess (7)
20 Famous film dog (6)
24 Ecstasy (5)
25 Apportion (4)
26 Church recess (4)
29 Domestic fuel (3)

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

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

EASY

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7								

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HARD

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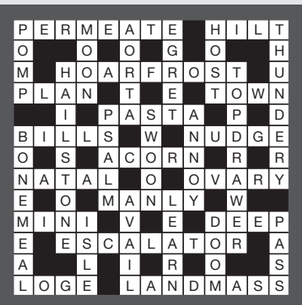
LAST ISSUE'S SOLUTIONS

Last issue's prize crossword was won by Grant McMillan from Balerno. Congratulations!



EASY

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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



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 Festive Season; 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. ***Off from Monday 21 December 2026 until Monday 11 January 2027.***

• **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. ***Off from Monday 21 December 2026 until Monday 11 January 2027.***

• **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. ***Off from Monday 21 December 2026 until Monday 11 January 2027.***

• **RUNNING GROUP: Meet at tennis courts Juniper Green, Mondays 5.30pm.** Social running group for anyone that can run 5km or further that would enjoy running with like-minded people. Run, Chat, Repeat. Contact Lesley on 07780471883: lesleymuego@gmail.com or Facebook: Lesley Muego Running and Fitness

• **COMMUNITY CRAFT CLUB: Currie Community Centre, 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.

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; 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 ***No classes on Tuesdays 22 or 29 December 2026.***

• **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

• **BOOKBUG SESSION: The Welcome Station, 13-15 Bridge Road, Balerno; 3.30pm – 4pm.** Still organised by Balerno Library: songs, stories and rhyme time fun for babies, toddlers and their grown-ups. Call: (0131) 529 5500. ***Not Wednesday 30 December 2026.***

• **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.

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

THURSDAYS

• **BOOKBUG SESSION: Children's Library Bus, Currie Library car park, 120 Lanark Road West; 1pm - 4pm.** Songs, stories and rhyme time fun for babies, toddlers and their grown-ups. Call: (0131) 529 5609. ***Usually first three Thursdays of the month: not Thursday 31 December 2026.***

• **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 waitlist: 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

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. ***Not Saturdays 26 December 2026 and 2 January 2027.***

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 7 & 21 DECEMBER, MONDAYS 4 & 18 JANUARY

• **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.

FRIDAY 11 DECEMBER

• **FRENCH CONVERSATION GROUP: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; noon - 1pm.** Normally fortnightly meeting 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

FRIDAYS 11 DECEMBER, FRIDAYS 8 & 30 JANUARY

• **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

SUNDAY 29 NOVEMBER

• **WINTER FAYRE; Currie Community Centre; 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, LR 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 – 2pm. Please note that some stalls and face painting will be ***Cash Only.***

TUESDAY 1 DECEMBER

• **CURRIE GUILD: Gibson Craig Halls, 156 Lanark Road West; 10am.** Scott Irvine will be giving a talk to the Guild on his beautiful creations in wood, "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. Further enquiries from Club Secretary John Muir on (0131) 259 0560 or email: jandjmuir17@gmail.com

• **THE SECRET BOOK SWAP: WellNest Creative Spaces, 350B Lanark Road West, Currie; 7pm – 9pm.** Book swap, bookish games, banned book reading and guest author. Regularly sold out: book via Eventbrite: thesecretbookswap.com

• **BALERNO PARISH CHURCH GUILD: Ogston Hall, Balerno; 7.30pm.** Blood Bikes with Phil Dodsworth. For further information contact Kay Coull on 07415506947 or email: coullkay@hotmail.com

• **"THE LIT" (COLINTON LITERARY SOCIETY): Dreghorn Loan Hall, 22 Dreghorn Loan; 7.30pm.** After a buffet supper the Glencairn singers will present a varied programme of song. For more information visit: https://edinburghpentlands.church/church-life/churchand-community-groups/colinton-literary-society/

THURSDAY 3 DECEMBER

• **BALERNO'S CHRISTMAS LIGHTS: Balerno Parish Church, Main Street; from 6pm.** Santa is visiting to switch on the Tree of Life lights outside the church, then Balerno and District Schools Pipe Band will lead us to Main Street for the switch on there (approx 6.15pm).

• **FESTIVE WREATH-MAKING & FIZZY FUN FUNDRAISER: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 7.30pm – 10pm.** Tickets (£25) may still be available for the Hub's annual fundraiser—a chance to enjoy an evening of wreath-making, festive treats and fun. All profits will be donated to support our ongoing programme. Email: hub351lanarkroad@gmail.com

FRIDAY 4 DECEMBER

GARDENING GROUP: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 11.30am – 1pm. All welcome – experienced or novice, pot planters or allotments – to a friendly group that welcomes enthusiasts to share common loves of gardens and gardening.

The Mill Cafe

VACANCY

BALERNO PARISH CHURCH a place to BELIEVE,

Café Supervisor Required

Balerno Parish church's initiative -The Mill Café is a thriving community café for all in the centre of Balerno which is open 4 days-a-week and on the monthly Farmers' Market Saturdays. We are run mainly by volunteers working with a small staff team.

The Mill Café is 14 years old.
Positions rarely come up making this a wonderful opportunity for someone to work locally.
If you would like more details please email Lynsey.

Café Supervisor - Tuesday 8am-3.30pm (7.5 hours) and a share of Farmers market Saturdays (2nd Saturday of the month)

Send CV with appropriate qualifications and relevant experience to:-
The Mill Café manager:- Lynsey Inglis
themillatstjosephs@gmail.com.

Applications will remain welcome until the position has been filled.

• Balerno Parish Church has been accredited as a real Living Wage Employer

LOCAL COMMUNITY CAFES

Please note dates of festive closures, as listed.

SATURDAYS

• **COMMUNITY CAFE: Currie Community Centre, 280 Lanark Road West; 9am - noon.** Barista coffee and delicious home baking by Blackwood Bakes. ***Closed Saturdays 19 & 26 December 2026 and 2 January 2027.***

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. ***Closed from Monday 21 December 2026; reopens 9am, Tuesday 5 January 2027.***

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. ***Closes 2pm, Friday 11 December 2026; reopens 10am, Tuesday 5 January 2027.***



• **WREATH MAKING: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 2pm – 4pm.** Our monthly crafting goes festive, making willow-based wreaths. All materials will be supplied and we invite a donation of £5 to help covert costs. Please check for spaces and book online: https://hub531.appointedd.com/ or email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

SATURDAY 5 DECEMBER

• **CRAFT WORKSHOP: The Pavilion, Campbell Park, Colinton; 11am - 3pm.** Decorate a Christmas wreath and help check for activity in the Campbell Park bird Boxes; hour-long sessions. All Welcome. Pre-booking essential, email for details: events.fcpark@gmail.com

• **CURRIE KIRK CHRISTMAS FAYRE: Gibson Craig Halls, 156 Lanark Road West; 1pm - 4pm.** Exciting stalls in the main hall, children's activities in the back hall and the Tinsel Tearoom in the Guide Hut. Tickets: £4 Adults, £2 children (includes refreshments).

SUNDAY 6 DECEMBER

• **COLINTON ORCHESTRA WINTER CONCERT: Polwarth Parish Church, 26 - 28 Polwarth Terrace, EH11 1LU; doors open 7pm for 7.30pm start.** The programme features Tchaikovsky (Symphony No 5, Op. 64), Borodin (Prince Igor, Overture), and Waldteufel (Les Patineurs, Op 183). Entry by donation (£8 suggested, cash or card). Accompanied children free. Complimentary refreshments will be served during the interval.

MONDAY 7 DECEMBER

• **CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY: Gibson Craig Halls, 156 Lanark Road West (back hall); 7.30pm prompt.** A talk by Mairi Mitchell "British Home Children Scheme – Crime or Charity". For further details see https://www.curriehistory.org/

• **COLINTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY: Dreghorn Loan Hall, 22 Dreghorn Loan; 8pm.** Christmas Social, Quiz, Talk and Film. For more information visit www.colintonhistory.org.uk

SATURDAY 12 DECEMBER

• **CHRISTMAS BALERNO FARMERS' MARKET: Main Street, Balerno; 9am - 1pm.** Wrap up warm for another great morning of local shopping, delicious food and unique gifts. Whether you're stocking up for the weekend, Christmas shopping or just fancy a coffee and a wander, there's something for everyone. https://www.facebook.com/balernofarmersmarket?

• **BALERNO GALA CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL: Ogston Hall, Balerno Parish Church; 9am - 1pm.** Entry just £1 for adults, children free. Choose your favourite Christmas tree among the many created by local groups, businesses and organisations. All funds raised go to support Balerno Children's Gala.

• **SILENT DISCO: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 2pm – 7pm.** Mini-fun sessions with 45 minute slots available from 2pm, suitable for primary age children, families with children who may prefer a quieter, less stimulating environment, and adults of all ages too! Book online: https://hub531.appointedd.com/ or by email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

• **CHRISTMAS TEA: St Cuthbert's Episcopal Church, Westgarth Avenue, Colinton; 3pm - 5pm.** Enjoy a delicious afternoon tea with a Christmas theme. Tickets £10, in aid of church funds, from the Event's & Fundraising Team.

• **A CONCERT FOR CHRISTMAS: Balerno Parish Church, Main Street, Balerno; 7.30pm.** The Broxburn and Livingston Brass Band present a concert for Christmas. Tickets £10 (u/16 £5) from Church Office.

TUESDAY 15 DECEMBER

• **BALERNO & CURRIE PARISH CHURCH GUILDS: Gibson Craig Halls, 156 Lanark Road West; 2pm.** The Guild's Christmas Party. For further information contact Kay Coull on 07415506947 or coullkay@hotmail.com

WEDNESDAY 16 DECEMBER

• **"ALL EARS" BOOK CLUB: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 7pm – 9pm.** Calling all audiobook and podcast lovers: we have a new group who meet monthly to discuss their latest favourites.

THURSDAY 17 DECEMBER

PUB CAROLS: The Grey Horse, 20 Main Street, Balerno; 7.30pm. Pub Carols with One Bar Rest and Friends. Donations in aid of Blood Cancer UK.

FRIDAY 18 DECEMBER

• **HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY CHRISTMAS CAROL CELEBRATION: James Watt Centre, Heriot-Watt Campus, Currie; 7.30pm - 8.45pm.** Doors open and refreshments from 6.30pm. Register here: https://tinyurl.com/mwx8hjb8

MONDAY 21 DECEMBER

• **COLLY BOOK CLUB: The Colinton Inn, 12 – 14 Bridge Road, Colinton; 7.30pm.** Friendly and welcoming book club. For more details, including future choices of books, email: louisejeffrey14@gmail.com

• **CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY: Gibson Craig Halls, 156 Lanark Road West (back hall); 7.30pm prompt.** A talk by Jackie Sangster "Whisky Galore!" For further details see https://www.curriehistory.org/

WEDNESDAY 30 DECEMBER

• **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.

MONDAY 4 JANUARY

• **COLINTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY: Dreghorn Loan Hall, 22 Dreghorn Loan; 8pm.** Jane Craxton will speak about "Religion, Romance and Social Mobility: the family of the Reverend Norman Maclean." For more information visit www.colintonhistory.org.uk

TUESDAY 5 JANUARY

• **CBDRT MEETING: Tanners, 459 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 7.30pm.** CBDRT are a group of local volunteers raising and giving away money locally to help make the community a better place to live for all. We meet monthly on the first Tuesday of the month. If you would like to join us, please come along. For more details visit our website: https://cbdrt.com/

WEDNESDAY 6 JANUARY

• **PENTLAND MEN'S PROBUS CLUB: Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church Hall, Juniper Green; 10am.** "Mini Talks": three club members will each give a short talk. New members welcome. Further enquiries from Club Secretary John Muir on (0131) 259 0560 or email: jandjmuir17@gmail.com

FRIDAY 8 JANUARY

• **GARDENING GROUP: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 11.30am – 1pm.** All welcome – experienced or novice, pot planters or allotments – to a friendly group that welcomes enthusiasts to share common loves of gardens and gardening.

MONDAY 11 JANUARY

• **CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY: Gibson Craig Halls, 156 Lanark Road West (back hall); 7.30pm prompt.** A talk by Alastair Learmont: "Edinburgh, Old and New; Painting Steam and Photography" For further details see https://www.curriehistory.org/

WEDNESDAY 13 JANUARY

• **"ALL EARS" BOOK CLUB: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 7pm – 9pm.** Calling all audiobook and podcast lovers: we have a new group who meet monthly to discuss their latest favourites.

• **"THE LIT" (COLINTON LITERARY SOCIETY): Dreghorn Loan Hall, Colinton; 7.30pm.** "Impact-based Weather Warnings": With 40 years Met Office experience, Graeme Forrester discusses weather warnings. For more information visit https://edinburghpentlands.church/church-life/churchand-community-groups/colinton-literary-society/

MONDAY 18 JANUARY

• **COLINTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY: Dreghorn Loan Hall, 22 Dreghorn Loan; 8pm.** Stewart Stevenson will speak about "Bigamy, Adultery and Murder in Scottish Genealogy". For more information visit www.colintonhistory.org.uk

TUESDAY 19 JANUARY

• **CURRIE GUILD: Gibson Craig Halls, 156 Lanark Road West; 2pm.** Ed Bethune is giving the Guild a talk on Tranent – Cockenzie Wagonway. All Welcome.

• **THE PAUSE: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 8pm – 9pm.** An evening gathering for anyone interested in menopause, coming together with others to find out more,

listen and share. A supportive small group environment facilitated by Annett from Pond Wellness.

WEDNESDAY 20 JANUARY

• **PENTLAND MEN'S PROBUS CLUB: Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church Hall, Juniper Green; 10am.** "Founding The Lost Shore, Ratho," an illustrated talk by Andy Hadden. 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.** Quiz night and Bring and Buy sale. For further information contact Kay Coull on 07415506947 or email: coullkay@hotmail.com

• **"THE LIT" (COLINTON LITERARY SOCIETY): Dreghorn Loan Hall, Colinton; 7.30pm.** "Bletchley Park Revealed": Derek Douglas explains the background to Bletchley Park and the role it played in World War Two. For more information visit https://edinburghpentlands.church/church-life/churchand-community-groups/colinton-literary-society/

THURSDAY 21 JANUARY

• **COSY CRAFTING: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 7.30pm - 9.30pm. A winter evening of sociab**le craft with Kirsty. Come along to try something new and meet with others.

SATURDAY 23 JANUARY

• **SEWING BASICS & SEWING MACHINE SKILLS: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 1pm – 4pm.** With Dianne Miller. Booking essential: https://hub531.appointedd.com/ or by email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

MONDAY 25 JANUARY

• **CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY: Gibson Craig Hall, 156 Lanark Road West (back hall); 7.30pm prompt.** Speaker to be advised. For further details see https://www.curriehistory.org/

• **COLINTON GARDEN CLUB: Dreghorn Loan Hall, 22 Dreghorn Loan; 8pm.** Dr Penny Watson will be speaking about "The Medicinal Gardens of Salerno". More information on the website: colintongardens.org.uk.

WEDNESDAY 27 JANUARY

• **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.

• **"THE LIT" (COLINTON LITERARY SOCIETY): Dreghorn Loan Hall, Colinton; 7.30pm. "The Bright Mountain":** Drawing on myths embedded in the landscape, Dougie Strang explores Scotland's natural and cultural heritage. For more information visit https://edinburghpentlands.church/church-life/churchand-community-groups/colinton-literary-society/

FRIDAY 29 JANUARY

• **FILM: *THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY BRIEFING*: The National Robotarium, Boundary Road North, Heriot-Watt University; 3.15pm – 5pm.** A free screening of this film on the climate and nature crisis, providing important information on what it means for our lives, our economy and our future. Followed by discussions about what this means in Edinburgh West and what our local community can do. Open to all. Tickets available via Eventbrite or email: a.e.clark@hw.ac.uk

SUNDAY 31 JANUARY

• **FILM SCREENING AND DISCUSSION: *IT'LL NEVER WORK*: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 4pm – 6pm.** This month we're screening a Scottish film that tells the tale of how a local fisherman sets out to create the world's first all-electric fishing boat. We'll be joined by researchers from the Lyell Centre at Heriot-Watt University. With popcorn and drinks.

WEDNESDAY 3 FEBRUARY

• **PENTLAND MEN'S PROBUS CLUB: Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church Hall, Juniper Green; 10am.** "Life in The Fast Lane," an illustrated talk by Bob Kemp. New members welcome. Further enquiries from Club Secretary John Muir on (0131) 259 0560 or email: jandjmuir17@gmail.com

CHURCH CHRISTMAS SERVICES

FRIDAY 4 DECEMBER

• **CHRISTMAS CRAFT NIGHT: Redeemer Church Edinburgh, 64 Bridge Road, Colinton; 7pm.** More details: https://redeemeredinburgh.org/christmas26/

SATURDAY 5 DECEMBER

• **WREATH MAKING: Redeemer Church Edinburgh, 64 Bridge Road, Colinton; 4pm.** More details: https://redeemeredinburgh.org/christmas26/

SUNDAY 6 DECEMBER

• **GIFT SERVICE: Balerno Parish Church, 1 Main Street, Balerno; 9.45am.** Holy Trinity Crisis Foodbank are looking for donations of small Christmas or sponge puddings (non-alcoholic), custard, hats, gloves, scarves and men's toiletries for gifts. https://www.balernochurch.org.uk

• **SERVICE: Currie Kirk, Kirkgate; 11am.** https://www.curriekirk.org

• **ST MUNGO'S ADVENT WORSHIP NIGHT: Balerno Parish Church, 1 Main Street, Balerno; 6.30pm - 8pm.** Join us for a night of worship where we sing modern songs and traditional carols which draw our attention towards the coming of Jesus.

• **CAROL SERVICE IN CURRIE: Gibson Craig Halls, 156 Lanark Road West; 6.30pm.** Organised by Redeemer Church Edinburgh. More details: https://redeemeredinburgh.org/christmas26/

THURSDAY 10 DECEMBER

• **ECUMENICAL CAROL SERVICE: Our Lady's Church, 1 Curriehill Road; 7pm.** This will be followed by tea/coffee and mince pies in the church hall. https://ourladyscurrie.co.uk/

SATURDAY 12 DECEMBER

• **QUIET DAY: Currie Kirk, Kirkgate; 10am - 2pm.** Short bereavement service at noon. https://www.curriekirk.org

SUNDAY 13 DECEMBER

• **MORNING SERVICE: Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church, Dell Road, Colinton; 9.45am.** https://edinburghpentlands.church

• **CURRIE & BALERNO JOINT SERVICE: Balerno Parish Church, 1 Main Street, Balerno; 10.30am.** "Sing me a Song of Christmas will be sung by the Joint Choir during this service.

• **MORNING SERVICE: Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church, 496a Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 11.15am.** https://edinburghpentlands.church

• **SUNDAY MASS & NATIVITY PLAY: Our Lady's Currie, 1 Curriehill Road; 11.30am.** The Nativity Play will be performed, during the usual mass service, by children from the congregation. https://ourladyscurrie.co.uk/

• **CAROL SERVICE IN COLINTON: 64 Bridge Road, Colinton; 6.30pm.** More details: https://redeemeredinburgh.org/christmas26/

THURSDAY 17 DECEMBER

• **ST MUNGO'S BEER & CAROLS: Currie Rugby Club, Malleny; 7.30pm - 10pm.** Beer. Carols. Food. Live band. What more do you need to get in the Christmas spirit? Join us for the ultimate Christmas pub sing-a-long: beer and carols. Book at: https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/st-mungos-christmas-4882324/

SATURDAY 19 DECEMBER

• **ST MUNGO'S CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE: Balerno High School, Bridge Road; 7pm - 8pm.** Come join us for a festive evening filled with carols, readings form the Bible and a short talk about the meaning of Christmas.

SUNDAY 20 DECEMBER

• **CHURCH SERVICE: Balerno Parish Church, 1 Main Street; 9.45am.** https://www.balernochurch.org.uk

• **ST MUNGO'S CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION: Balerno High School, Bridge Road; 10.30am - noon.** Come join us for a festive celebration filled with carols, readings, interactive games and a short talk.

• **JOINT SERVICE: Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church, 496a Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 10.30am.** https://edinburghpentlands.church

• **CHURCH SERVICE: Currie Kirk, Kirkgate; 11am.** https://www.curriekirk.org

• **CHRISTINGLE SERVICE: Redeemer Church Edinburgh, 64 Bridge Road; 4pm.** More details: https://redeemeredinburgh.org/christmas26/

• **CAROL SERVICE: Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church, Dell Road, Colinton; 6.30pm.** https://edinburghpentlands.church

THURSDAY 24 DECEMBER

• **ST MUNGO'S NATIVITY WALK: The Mill Café, Main Street, Balerno.** Start times: 3pm - 4.30pm, walk duration one hour. Join our magical lantern-lit walk, meet live actors retelling the Christmas story, and finish with hot chocolate at St Mungo's church. Balerno Nativity Walk - Step into the story! Book at https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/st-mungos-christmas-4882324/

• **FAMILY SERVICE: Balerno Parish Church, 1 Main Street; 6.30pm.** https://www.balernochurch.org.uk

• **CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY SERVICE: Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church, 496a Lanark Road, Juniper Green & Dell Road, Colinton; 6.30pm.** https://edinburghpentlands.church

• **CHRISTINGLE AND THE NATIVITY: Gibson Craig Halls, 156 Lanark Road West; 6.30pm.** Children can take part in the telling of the Nativity (adults be prepared to dress up), plus a chance to make a Christingle of your own. More details: www.curriekirk.org and Facebook @CurrieKirk

• **WATCHNIGHT SERVICE: St Mungo's Church Building, Ladycroft; 11pm - 12.15am.** A liturgical service with carols, a short talk, and Holy Communion. https://www.stmungos.org/

• **WATCHNIGHT SERVICE: Currie Kirk, Kirkgate; 11.30pm. Joint service with Balerno Parish Church.** More details: https://www.curriekirk.org, https://www.balernochurch.org.uk

• **WATCHNIGHT SERVICE: Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church, Dell Road, Colinton; 11.30pm.** https://edinburghpentlands.church

FRIDAY 25 DECEMBER

• **ALL AGE CHRISTMAS SERVICE: Redeemer Church Edinburgh, 64 Bridge Road; 10.30am.** More details: https://redeemeredinburgh.org/christmas26/

• **JOINT SERVICE: Balerno Parish Church, 1 Main Street; 10.30am.** With Currie Kirk. https://www.balernochurch.org.uk, https://www.curriekirk.org

• **CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE: Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church, 496a Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 11.15am.** https://edinburghpentlands.church

SUNDAY 27 DECEMBER

• **JOINT SERVICE: Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church, Dell Road, Colinton; 10.30am.** https://edinburghpentlands.church

BALERNO RAMBLERS: UPCOMING WALKS

WEDNESDAY 2 DECEMBER

• **MIDWEEK GROUP CHRISTMAS LUNCH: Merchants Golf Club.** No Midweek walk.

SATURDAY 6/SUNDAY 7 DECEMBER

• Check website for details once walk recce is completed.

WEDNESDAY 9 DECEMBER

• **CURRIE TO HERIOT-WATT CAMPUS CIRCULAR:** an easy 6 mile (9.7 km) walk with some pavement walking at the start to reach the campus, then on woodland paths. (It may be muddy in the woodland area if it has been raining; gaiters and walking poles useful.)

SATURDAY 12 DECEMBER

• **TORPHIN TO HOWDEN GLEN: 6.5 mile (10.5 km) walk.** Low level paths towards Torduff reservoir and on to Bonaly Country Park with great views of Edinburgh (and Alpacas) where we start a gentle ascent towards Dreghorn and then increasing steepness towards Howden Glen. Lengthy steady ascent to the top of the Glen offering lovely views to the south before descending towards Phantom Cleugh on grassy paths. We return passing by Bonaly and Torduff reservoirs.

WEDNESDAY 16 DECEMBER

• **FESTIVE PICNIC AT HARLAW WILDLIFE GARDEN: 3 - 4 miles (4.8 - 6.4 km).** Red Moss car park to start walking at 10am: route to Threipmuir Reservoir, Black Springs (coffee stop) Harlaw Wildlife Garden, Harlaw Reservoir, Threipmuir Reservoir back to car park. Bring Festive fair to share, a plate and cup/mug. Please wear Festive attire.

SATURDAY 19 DECEMBER

• **COLINTON CIRCULAR: 7 miles (11.3 km)** from Colinton Bridge Car Park, walk to Bonaly (Brae, Burn & Woods), Torphin Quarry, Warklaw Hill, Clubbiedean, Easter Kinleith, Poet's Glen, Blinkbonny, Woodhall House, Campbell Park, Spylaw Park and return to car park.

Balerno Rambler's group walks will take a 2 week break over the festive period.

MONDAY 4 JANUARY

• **NEW YEAR WALK AND LUNCH:** from Currie Library via Water of Leith to Blinkbonny, passing the Riding Stables to Campbell Park. Then back to Currie, passing St. Margaret's Church, walk round/across to Bloomiehall Park, along Muir Wood Field path and Donkey Lane to Courtyard Hotel (Heriot-Watt) for "Soup & Sandwich" lunch (£12 per person.)

WEDNESDAY 6 JANUARY

• **WINCHBURGH TO LINLITHGOW: 6 miles (9.7 km) linear walk.** Winchburgh to Linlithgow via the Union Canal (mainly along the towpath). Bring bus pass.

SATURDAY 9/SUNDAY 10 JANUARY

• Check website for details once recce is completed.

WEDNESDAY 13 JANUARY

• **ROSEBURN PATH TO NEWHAVEN:** 6 miles (9.7 km) linear walk along multi-use trail, easy flat route. Bring bus pass.

SATURDAY 16/SUNDAY 17 JANUARY

• Check website for details.

WEDNESDAY 20 JANUARY

• Check website for details.

WEDNESDAY 27 JANUARY

• **PENTLANDS:** Check website for details once recce is completed.

SATURDAY 30/SUNDAY 31 JANUARY

• Check website for details once recce is completed

WEDNESDAY 3 FEBRUARY

• **WATER OF LEITH: 6 miles (9.7 km)** from WoL Centre via Saughton Gardens, Roseburn, Dalry Community Park and return via Union Canal.

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.

Note: Currie Community Council does not normally meet during December; Colinton Community Council does not usually meet in January.

THURSDAY 7 JANUARY

• **BALERNO COMMUNITY COUNCIL: The Welcome Station, 13 - 15 Bridge Road; 7pm - 9pm.**

TUESDAY 8 DECEMBER

• **COLINTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL: Colinton Bowling Club, 49A Redford Road; 7.30pm - 9pm.** https://www.colintoncc.org.uk

WEDNESDAY 13 JANUARY

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

WEDNESDAY 27 JANUARY

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

FREE!

C&B News



BALERNO RAMBLERS IN ROLEY'S WOOD, CURRIE. PHOTO: GAIL COUSINS.