

Ben Ledi View

Apr/May 2023

Issue 328

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Callander Amateur
Operatic Society

In association with
Music Theatre International
Callander Amateur Operatic Society
PRESENTS



Callander Amateur
Operatic Society

CALAMITY JANET



Wednesday 15th to Saturday 18th March 2023

From the stage play by CHARLES K FREEMAN
after WARNER BROS film written by JAMES O'HANLON

Adapted by
Ronald Hamer & Phil Park

Lyrics by PAUL FRANCIS WEBSTER Music by SAMMY FAIN

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The *Ben Ledi View* is a community newspaper produced and distributed bi-monthly by volunteers free of charge to approx. 2,000 households and businesses in the Callander area. Letters and articles published in the newspaper do not necessarily reflect the views, beliefs or opinions of the Editorial Committee, who also reserve the right to shorten, edit or not publish any particular letter or article. Contributions will only be published if accompanied by a contact name and address; these will be withheld at the author's request. Articles and advertisements are accepted and printed in good faith.

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Cover by Caos



Hello Readers

We have some very good news on page three of this edition. The construction of the new Bracklinn Falls Bridge has begun and will, weather permitting, be complete in March. I've certainly missed being able to walk/run the loop over the bridge north through the forest to reach the Bracklinn Road further north. The many visitors who come to Callander and enjoy the falls will particularly welcome this.

Callander has always been a challenging place to live weather wise, so it's good that the Callander Resilience Group has been set up, see page 8. Please return their questionnaire, community involvement is so important with such an issue. They also need more people to join their group, so if you are interested get in touch.

An issue that my fellow trustees and I at the Ben Ledi View feel strongly about is the planned removal of NHS dental services from Callander, see page 17. For a town the size of Callander not to have an NHS dentist is an unacceptable situation given that many residents of the town cannot afford to pay for private treatment and are not able to make round trips of 40/50 miles to see a dentist. We must also be aware that the present dental practice in Callander also served as a vital resource for the many rural

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villages and settlements that surround it. It's great to see that Ray Watkins, a Callander resident, is playing a leading role in organising the petition that asks Forth Valley Health Board and the Scottish Government to support a new NHS dental practice in Callander. Ray was a dentist himself and previously worked as Chief Dental Officer for the Scottish Government. Please express your views and sign the petition as detailed on page 17.

On page 21 we give coverage of a notable anniversary in the town. It's 25 years since McLaren Leisure centre opened. We are, given the small size of our town, very lucky to have such a well-equipped sports and leisure centre. Not only does the centre provide great leisure activities for the town, but is a super resource for the High School and their sports curriculum. Look out for their 25th birthday celebration events later this year.

Finally, I'd like to thank all the volunteers who work hard to ensure that the Ben Ledi View is received, free of charge, by every home in Callander. However, we do need a couple more people to help us out, specifically as a team secretary and someone to help in our advertising section. If you want an informal chat about either of these options, please contact me on: - convenor@benlediview.org

Steven McGowan

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National Park

An update to the planning guidance for the Callander South Master Plan is being developed by the National Park Authority and Stirling Council in consultation with local landowners and the Callander Community. The Masterplan is a long-term strategic plan for the development of land in Callander to the south of the River Teith. It was first promoted during the 2011 Callander Charette when the community agreed that future controlled development in Callander was necessary for the long-term sustainability of the town. It was also agreed that future development should not see further linear development along the A84 but it should instead encourage development on land to the south of the River Teith.

The key piece of infrastructure identified to facilitate this development is a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Teith. A new bridge would connect the whole town, create safe routes to school and enable further future development of a network of footpaths and cycleways.

In December 2022, the National Park Board approved a six-week public consultation for the updated draft Callander Masterplan Planning Guidance.

The consultation will be launched in early 2023 and the Callander community will be encouraged to provide feedback on the draft Planning Guidance. Please watch out for further details.

Dr Richard Johnson Callander Board Member

Callander Seniors' Christmas Party

The 2022 Seniors' Christmas party was held at CYP, Bridgend on 15th December. Some 75 guests came to the party and had a full Christmas dinner with mince pies, wine, and entertainment from Squeeze and Teeze. Transport was available to and from the party and the night was another great success with dancing, games, a raffle, and a visit from Santa. This is an event supported by people and businesses in Callander and we would like to thank the following:

- Jimmy Campbell for funding the dinner and entertainment;
- Campbells butchers for the turkey;
- Trish and staff at CYP for providing the function room, decorations, kitchen and helpers;
- Mark Nicols and staff for cooking the food;
- Callander and District 41 Club for the wine;
- Stirling family for donating the raffle prizes;
- Calum Menzies and staff at the Post Office for taking bookings;

And the many people who helped with transport, serving and providing entertainment.

Please put next year's party in your diary:

Thursday 14th December 2023 – open to anyone aged 65+ in Callander.

Mary and Richard Johnson

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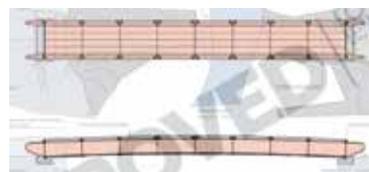


New Bracklinn Bridge

Construction work is underway to install the new Bracklinn Bridge in Callander, with contractors on site from 9th January to begin erecting the bridge.

The work is due to last until early March 2023 and there will be no access to Bracklinn Falls until it is complete.

The new bridge is built to last, using a simple and robust steel structure that fits well with the landscape at the Falls. It will provide a safe place to view the spectacular Bracklinn Falls and will allow walkers to complete the full Bracklinn Circuit route once again.

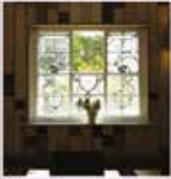


Top and Side View



Cross section

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Buchlyvie	Gargunnoch	Kippen	Tyndrum
Callander	Gartmore	Locheamhead	
Deanston	Killearn	Strathblane	

Further new build developments are being planned for Killearn, Balmaha, Croftamie, Strathblane and Drymen. Please let us know if you want to live in a village that is not listed above. Information on local housing need and demand helps us plan for the future. For further information about us and a downloadable application pack please visit our website www.rsha.org.uk.

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Callander Community Council (CCC) – Into 2023

Several major topics from the last few meetings continue into this new year.

NHS Dental Services in Callander

The progress on finding a solution for the projected loss of these is described in detail in Ray Watkins' article (see P 17). The reactions to its discussion at the November and December meetings were very positive, and the presence of the printed petition at various locations in the town as well as in affected places outside Callander, is ensuring that local voices will be heard. An online version will be available during January, and we will keep you updated on developments.

Bracklinn Falls Bridge

Construction began in early January, as scheduled, and should be completed during March, weather permitting. Murray McKellar, LLTNP Project Officer, is keeping us updated, and this developing information will be posted on the CCC website and social media, including details about any closed paths and safety notices.

Stirling Council Flooding Report and Engagement Plan updates

Following the concerns about the lack of information expressed by members of the public at the November meeting, a formal request for an open update meeting with the relevant Officers was sent to Stirling Council in early December, requesting a date in late January or early February. It was felt the topic needed more time for discussion than is possible in a regular meeting with a full agenda.

CCC New co-opted member: David Shearer

We were delighted to vote on David Shearer's re-joining of the CCC at the December meeting. As you will know, David has contributed detailed and precise information on problems relating to roads and pavements in the past, through his monthly reports, and we welcome the opportunity to benefit from this again.

These detailed, constantly updated reports illustrate the complexity of many of the problems involving, as they often do, a range of overlapping organisations: Stirling Council, Scottish Water, BEAR, Transport Scotland. As well as describing and documenting each problem, the reports also show the follow up action to be taken, and the relentless 'chasing' when there are delays. This is where the personal knowledge and communication is so essential.

We plan to post the full monthly reports on the CCC website and David will welcome any comments or queries on them.

Thus, this ongoing stream of information - and action - will be widely available.

Two examples from the December report:

42] Callander, A84 through Callander, Pavements, Dangerous due to icing.

Authority – Bear Scotland.

Background – Complaints from attendees at Callander Community Council re the dangerous condition of the pavements at the above locus - new snow falls over already frozen snow.

Present Position – 20th December 2022 email to Bear seeking works to alleviate the problem.

22nd December 2022 email from Bear passed relevant department for action. B/f January 2023

43] Callander, South Church St, street lighting not functioning.

Authority – Stirling Council.

Background – Complaint from attendee at Callander Community Council that street lighting in the area of open shelter not functioning.

Present Position – 20th November 2022 email to Stirling Council seeking repair to street lighting. B/f Jan 2023.

Finally: the Local Place Plan

After much hard work from the Coordinator and input from across the community, the final version of the LPP has been submitted to Stirling Council and the National Park. An online version is available on the LPP website, with print versions available in the Library.

It looks good, reads well, and is full of important recommendations for us all to follow up on. The next stage now begins!

Susan Holden, Chair, Callander Community Council

Start Up Stirling Community Hub

The Community Hub will be open Wednesdays 12.30pm to 2.30pm at Callander Kirk Hall , South Church Street, Callander, FK17 8BN. Complimentary refreshments will be served. This is an opportunity to meet with others and find out more about Start Up Stirling services. Team members from Citizens Advice will also be on hand to provide information and advice on benefits, housing and energy.

For more information contact Gail MacDonald, Start Up Stirling Rural Support Worker on [07951 013470](tel:07951013470) or via email gail@startupstirling.org.uk

Gail MacDonald, Start Up Stirling Rural Support Worker



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Obesity is not just a human problem

Obesity in pets has become more common in recent years. Approximately 30 to 40 percent of dogs and cats are overweight or obese. This growing problem is directly related to a combination of excessive dietary intake and inadequate energy utilisation, meaning pets are eating too much and exercising too little.

As in humans, if your cat or dog has put on some extra pounds, the excess weight may be affecting their physical and emotional health.

Compared to cats and dogs of an ideal weight, pets diagnosed as overweight or obese are at a higher risk of suffering from chronic inflammation, osteoarthritis, liver disease, high blood pressure, cancer, respiratory disease, kidney disease, bladder problems, diabetes and have a reduced life expectancy. Illness can contribute to further weight gain, making matters worse.

Pets enjoy a life of running, climbing and playing. Maintaining an ideal body weight enables dogs and cats to achieve optimal speed, energy, agility and therefore improves their emotional wellbeing.

Is Your Pet Overweight or Obese?



Some pet owners are not aware of their pet's weight problem or may not believe that their pet is obese. Although it can look cute to have an extra-squishy cat or a few additional rolls on a dog, obesity can cause or exacerbate serious

diseases that impact your pet's wellbeing.

Here are some signs that may indicate that your pet is obese. Stand over your pet from above. Does your pet have a defined waist? Run your hands along the animal's sides. Can you easily feel the ribs, or do you have to push hard to feel them? Does your pet have a sagging stomach? These are signs that your pet may be obese.

If in doubt, speak to your local veterinary practice. They will assess your pet's weight and body condition in relation to your pet's breed, age and health status, then give you advice and support you as you tackle your pet's individual problem with weight. Just ask us.

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Translocation of Beavers to Argaty

Tom Bowser is recognised as a strong advocate of rewilding to reverse the decline in our depleted natural world. Argaty is probably best known for red kites but habitat restoration has also encouraged red squirrels, other mammals and many raptors, including osprey, kestrel, goshawk and owls. He is now also the first landowner in Scotland to gain permission to re-home beavers from problem areas as an alternative to culling. Working with the Beaver Trust, 5 were moved in November '21 with another 5 in February '22, including a family with kits.



should be allowed to expand their range naturally. This supports the return of a native species that was hunted to extinction in mid-16th century for food, pelts and castoreum oil.

In September 2022, the Scottish Government issued its future beaver strategy for 2022-2045. NatureScot was tasked to identify and actively expand the population to new catchments, alongside appropriate management and mitigation. An application has been submitted by RSPB for their Loch Lomond reserve.

In 2001, beavers escaped from a wildlife park just north of Callander, possibly by felling a tree across their high-voltage security fence. It is believed that up to 1000 beavers may now be living in the Tay catchment area including Loch Tay, Strathyre and Callander.

Beavers are referred to as 'ecosystem engineers'; their activities can create wetland habitats, improve habitat structure and diversity and enhance biodiversity. They can also alleviate flooding, improve water quality and bring socio-economic benefits. However, they can have

negative impacts on other interests such as farms, gardens or other land. A compensation scheme aims to alleviate such problems. However, whilst beavers were granted legal protection as a European Protected Species in May 2019, making it illegal to kill them or destroy their habitat, it contained a caveat that if beavers lead to an 'unmanageable impact' the landowner may apply to NatureScot for a license to cull them. In Scotland more than 200 have been culled under license but around 1000 beavers may have been killed in total since 2019.

Argaty's ponds and forested areas have proved ideal, with canals, dams and mud re distributed to retain water throughout summer's dry spell and noticeable increases in insects, birds and mammals. A deserved reward for the hard work needed to get permission. Without a process in place, the legally required consultation took stamina and determination over 9 months, followed by a stressful 4 months awaiting the decision. In recognition of its success, Tom has been nominated for the 2022 Nature of Scotland Innovation Award.

If you want to keep track of their progress, then Tom regularly posts news on the Argaty Red Kites Facebook page or watch videos of happy beavers on facebook -Argaty Red Kites

Lesley Hawkins

Please return your Callander Resilience questionnaire

Many thanks to the Ben Ledi Volunteers who kindly distributed a resilience leaflet to all households in Callander in the December edition of the BLV. We hope you found it useful to start thinking about preparing your household for weather and other related emergencies. It turned out to be quite timely given the stormy weather and the threat of power outages this winter. If you didn't receive a leaflet, please contact the library who has some spare copies, or email the address below.

The leaflet contained a short questionnaire and if you haven't done so already, please use the QR code to return your answers online, or tear out the slip in the leaflet and return to the library. Thank you to those who have already volunteered to support resilience planning. We'll shortly be back in touch with you, if you left us your contact details. But there's still time for more people to join the Resilience Group, offering a particular skill, or sharing their views on what

we ought to be doing. The QR code will take you directly to the questionnaire or you can access the leaflet from the InCallander webpage <https://incallander.co.uk/climateaction> We will share the outcomes and next actions in the next edition of the BLV.

Carol McGowan



To contact us, either email callanderclimatefringe@gmail.com or return the tear-out slip in the leaflet to the library.



Golden Eagles - Update on Research

The speaker at our December SWT meeting was Dave Anderson, ex-FCS/FLS and now Dave Anderson Ecology. Dave recently won the RSPB Nature of Scotland Species Champion Award in recognition of over 40 years at the forefront of conservation of birds of prey in Scotland, particularly in developing field study techniques.

Dave has pioneered tracking of golden eagles (GEs) in Scotland to understand their feeding, breeding and territorial behaviour. Originally chicks on the nest were identified with numbered BTO metal leg rings requiring recapture. Later, coloured plastic leg rings allowed numbers to be identified from a distance. Today military-grade satellite trackers provide live data at approximately 300 locations per day but at a cost of £3000 each.

A different methodology was needed for adults, since catching them at a nest site often causes them to desert it. A site on an accessible open hillside which can be monitored by trail cameras and from a hide 2-3 kms away is baited, usually with a lead-free deer carcass. Patience is needed: an eagle may see the bait but sit at a distance for 5 hours, so 13 hour days, arriving and leaving in the dark, are not uncommon! The bird is captured in an 8ft diameter bow net with a large mesh size to exclude small birds and not harm the eagle. It is folded in half on the ground then triggered to close over the bird. A message can now be sent to a smart phone when the trap is sprung. A hood over the bird's head calms it ('like taking out its batteries') but they still need careful handling by at least 2 people.

Parents encourage chicks to leave the nest at the start of the next year's breeding season. Tracking shows that they then spend 3-4 years drifting over wide areas but often return to establish a territory neighbouring their birth site. Territorial battles are the most common natural cause of death, with talons easily able to pierce a



photo Lesley Hawkins

skull. Eagles pair for life (approx 14 years) but if one dies then the survivor will readily accept a new mate. They are strongly territorial but new data around Loch Katrine shows that although one pair was displaced, others hunted across overlapping territories at different times, so traditional predictions of boundaries underestimate the number of territories.

Since 2004, 170 golden eagles have been monitored, giving over 80 million records. These show a 98% natural survival rate of juveniles but also a 'Bermuda Triangle' in Central Scotland where 50 have unaccountably and suddenly disappeared, pointing to illegal persecution. This removal of a generation leaves a senescent population and vacant territories.

Since 2014 more than 400 eagles have been colour-ringed and 50 satellite tagged from the Central region, Borders and Western Isles. Their weight and biometrics are recorded, including length of body, leg, wing, head, beak and talons. Results show average weights of 5.4 kg for males and 7.2 kg for females, more akin to those in the Middle East than the lighter weight ones in western Palearctic regions. An observed lightening of eye colour from dark brown to golden with age,

may allow an easy distant assessment.

A project in the Borders has released 7 of a planned 15 sub-adults which had been raised by parents, so taught to be self-sufficient. While previous hand-reared juveniles stayed where they were released, these sub-adults spread as far south as the Peak District and travelled up to the mainland opposite the Western Isles, although none made the sea crossing.

Studies are underway on Harris & Lewis where more wind farms are planned. GEs fly round wind farms or over them at 2-3000 ft but killed White Tailed Eagles (WTEs) are appearing. Without mammalian predators, populations here are high with 70 pairs of golden and 30 pairs of white-tailed eagles although 2022 was a very poor breeding year. WTEs have been tracked flying to Norway and regularly cross The Minch 'for the fun of it' but GEs very rarely cross to the mainland, which could lead to having smaller territories and fewer chicks.

In the Central region and Argyll, Forestry and Land Scotland is funding tagging of more GEs and WTEs to assess the effect on food sources of increased planting, including at higher altitudes, and the associated culling of deer. One recommendation could be to provide supplementary feeding. Latest surveys show 500 pairs of Golden Eagles and increasing, but similar areas in Norway have 3000 GEs and 7000 WTEs supported by a greater food supply.

We have a promise that Dave will come back next year to give the advertised talk on vultures and eagles!

Lesley Hawkins



photo Lesley Hawkins

Ripple Retreat

Thankfully, the weather was on our side as we welcomed our last family of 2022 to the Ripple Retreat on 30th December to see in the New Year.

We closed in January and February, partly due to the weather conditions, but mainly to allow us to undertake maintenance work ready for opening in March. The retreat opened its doors in May 2017 so is ready for a new lick of paint throughout and our blinds (over 140 of them!) need replacing as they are either faded, worn, or have a mind of their own when it comes to opening and closing them- something we don't want families to have to worry about during their stay. We are thankful to the B&Q Foundation who awarded us a grant to help with our maintenance costs.

In other news, we are delighted to welcome a new member to the team, Ripple Retreat Manager, Susan Milligan. Susan is from the local community and will be a familiar name to many. More about Susan and her new role in the next edition. In the meantime, Susan is busy learning all about the retreat and how families book a stay with us.

We were thrilled to receive £3000 through the Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) at McLaren High School. The winning team, Kyle, Skye, Charlie, and Lorcan, clearly impressed the judges with their outstanding presentation about the Ripple Retreat.



Callander 10k will soon be upon us! We welcome your support with donations of items for our Tombola stall or volunteering for us on the day. Please contact sarah@itsgood2give.co.uk if you can help with donations of items - or your time!

Tesco Bags of Help – Look out for us in the Tesco Callander store from mid-January to the end of March. Please pop your blue token in our box to vote for the Ripple Retreat and help us win up to £1500.

Charity Partnerships – If you are a local business wondering how you can support a local charity in 2023, we'd love you to choose the Ripple Retreat. You'll help give young cancer patients and their families a short break together during the most challenging time of their lives. Please contact lynne@itsgood2give.co.uk to discuss how you can help. You are most welcome to have a tour of the retreat (by prior arrangement) any Thursday- the only day families aren't there - to see for yourself the difference the retreat makes.

Thank you to everybody who supports us, we really appreciate it.

Lynne McNicoll – Co-Founder and Chair, It's Good 2 Give

Messy Church, Callander

Messy Church will be meeting on Saturday 25th February and Saturday 25th March at 10.30 am in Callander Kirk Hall, South Church Street



Please come and join us for fun, food and family worship.

We look forward to seeing you there.

If you would like to know more about Messy Church, then please feel free to speak to Lara Rawson on [01877 339324](tel:01877339324)

Gill Alexander



German-Speaking Group in Callander



Wie gewöhnlich haben wir vor, noch am Samstagnachmittag zusammenzukommen. Die Daten für unsere nächste zwei Treffen sind:

Samstag 11 Februar und Samstag 18 März, um 14.00, bei Peter (Coilhallaan House, Invertrossachs Road, FK17 8HW)

NB Wenn Sie es vorhaben, mitzumachen, sagen Sie mir bitte erst eine Woche im Voraus Bescheid, damit wir wissen, wie viele Teilnehmer zu erwarten sind.

Die Diskussionsthemen für beide Treffen werden wir im Voraus allen Mitgliedern per E-Mail schicken.

Falls jemand bis jetzt an unseren Treffen nicht teilgenommen hat, aber jetzt mitmachen möchte, schick mir bitte eine E-Mail, um die Einladungen zu unseren Treffen zu erhalten: jenshearer@gmail.com

Wir freuen uns darauf, Sie alle bei Peter wieder begrüßen zu können.

Jen Shearer

CHAS



It was a much better year for fundraising with good weather and no restrictions. We were able to hold a coffee morning again in November which we hope everyone enjoyed.

We also were allowed to do can collections at Tesco Stirling and Morrisons.

In total we have raised £14,774.45 this year and we thank everyone who has helped or contributed. Our total collected in Callander since 1998 is £335,357.28. Quite remarkable for a small town.

Thank you.

Fiona House

Callander U3A



Do something Different in 2023!

u3a gives you the opportunity

to come together and learn for fun, as well as meet and make new friends who share the same interests.

If you've always wanted to learn a particular skill or enjoy sharing your knowledge with others, u3a could be a good option for you. Discover which classes are available locally by looking at our website, www.u3asites.org.uk/callander-and-wp

There is something for everyone and for the second half of the year the membership fee is only £5.

u3a members can also join a wide range of online talks, workshops and courses for free with their membership!

Find out what's available online at www.u3a.org.uk

Joy Henderson

Callander Kirk

Callander Kirk Community Food Larder

A box of food items and toiletries is available at the entrance to the Kirk Hall in South Church Street from which anyone can help themselves at any time.

When available, there will also be garden produce of fruit, vegetables and fresh herbs. If you have any surplus garden produce which you would like to share, please leave it on the table outside the Kirk Hall.

All items are kindly donated by members of the community. Please take only what you need and can use. Thank you.

Anita Murray

Who Owns Shaun and Friends?

Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) has been searching for some time, without success, to find the keeper of some sheep on FLS land in Glen Gyle, North Katrine. Can you help him? Are you the keeper? Do you know who the keeper is? If you do know something then please let them know. The contact is Matthys Jooste and he is on [0300 067 6600](tel:0300 067 6600). If the keeper of the above mentioned sheep cannot be found then Matthys tells us that they will be removed.

Love Callander? Like talking to people?

If you enjoy chatting, perhaps you would like to join our friendly team of volunteers at Callander's community-run visitor information centre.

2022 was busy with more than 15,000 visitors dropping in. For many it is a first stop in Scotland on the way north and west, but our main requests are from people staying here for walking and cycling routes in Callander and the surrounding area, public transport links, places to visit and things to do. And, more than anything else, directions to the public toilets! We have all the information you need in the centre and you can do as many or as few shifts to suit yourself.

We will open for the 2023 season on 1 April and will be getting the centre ready during March. If you are interested, please call [07539 703806](tel:07539 703806) or email callandervic@gmail.com.

Anne & Sheila Callander VIC Managers

Rotary in Callander

The Club's final event of 2022 was the Christmas Coffee, Lunch and Crafts event on Saturday 19th November in Callander Kirk Hall.

People seem pleased to be able to meet up again after the restrictions of the past few years and this was borne out by a very good attendance. The craft and charity stalls were busy.

Rotary fund raising stalls also did well, the total funds raised for the day exceeding £1000. The profits from the event will go to the Club's charity account to support local causes.

Thanks as always go to the locals and visitors who supported us, to the many friends of Rotary who helped and to the local singing group, Song Squad, who entertained everyone with their harmonious and varied repertoire.

The Club's programme for 2023 will start with the first post-Covid Rotary District 1010 Primary School Quiz. The heat for our local schools will take place in February with the winners going on to the Area finals in May. Sixteen schools will go on to take part in the District final in Aberdeen in June.

The second item on the programme is a Bottle Stall and Bric a Brac in Ancaster Square on Sunday 9th April. That is followed in May by the next Coffee, Lunch and Crafts sale and the date will be confirmed in the next edition of the Ben Ledi View.

Meanwhile if you would like to find out more about Rotary, please look at our website, www.callander.rotary1010.org, or on Facebook.

Derek House



THURSDAY AFTERNOON BINGO SESSIONS

By the time you are reading this, Rotary in Callander will have run our first three BINGO sessions, in November, December 2022 and January 2023. These are proving to be popular, and are open to anyone, of any age group, who would like to come along and enjoy a game with us.

The following dates have been set for the next two sessions: THURSDAY 9TH FEBRUARY - Note that there will have to be a different venue for this one, due to building work at Callander Hostel, Bridgend. Details will be confirmed on posters around town, nearer the time. THURSDAY 9TH MARCH, when we will hope to be back in Callander Hostel, our usual venue.

Doors open at 1.45pm, with Bingo running from 2.00 – 3.00pm. The entry fee is only £1, with tea or coffee available halfway through the session. Thanks to a grant from Stirling Council's 'Let's Get Together Winter Programme', there will no longer be any charge for refreshments.

With prizes to be won, and plenty of fun, we will be there, with sweeties to share! Come and join us. We can offer transport to and from the Bingo sessions, for anyone who requires it. Any enquiries about this should be directed to Jen Shearer, [01877-330446](tel:01877-330446) or [07710-232908](tel:07710-232908). We look forward to welcoming you.

Jen Shearer

Cycling Vietnam to Cambodia for The Canmore Trust

Debbie O'Hara wants to say a heartfelt thank you to all who have supported her over the last few years in helping raise over £4000 for The Canmore Trust. A familiar face in the town and a part of the team at Deli Ecosse, Debbie found that she had time on her hands when Covid hit. She made colourful face masks for a suggested donation, covering all the cost of materials herself. All the £2086.31 proceeds went to The Canmore Trust. The sense of community that she created in such a difficult time has to be commended.



Debbie recently returned from her latest fundraising effort which involved cycling from Vietnam to Cambodia over 6 days, an adventure that helped raise more money for the Trust, set up by John and Isobel Gibson in memory of their son Cameron and to honour another Cameron close to her heart.

Her fundraising effort initially began when John asked her if she would make one of her cycles with the Callander Meanderers a sponsored affair to raise money for a suicide awareness charity. After that she planned a more adventurous fundraiser for November 2020: a cycle trip from Vietnam to Cambodia with Dream Challenges. Covid restrictions meant the trip was postponed twice until November 2022.



Finally, on the 16th November 2022, Debbie met up with 55 other cyclists of all abilities for their flight from Heathrow via Singapore to their destination of Ho Chi Minh city. They were then driven to their official bike fitting where they met their tour guides and helpers. They visited war remains in the afternoon then back on the coach to their hotel and their first official meal as a group of some 60 individuals for a Vietnamese welcome with delicious authentic cuisine.



A 6am start on day one saw them transfer by coach along the Mekong Delta to their official starting point of My Tho. Their three days of cycling in Vietnam took them along river banks, on dirt roads, past coconut plantations, banana and palm tree lined tracks and through local communities, to a floating market and to temples and pagodas. It ended in them saying goodbye to their Vietnamese tour guides and Debbie volunteering to say

the farewell speech.

After a ferry journey to Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh, and a night's rest they were ready to start part two of their journey. Two border checks, and a rescue of another boat stuck in the silt later, they only had time for a packed lunch before visiting the S21 Killing Fields museum, an undoubtedly thought provoking and hard-hitting day for all. After their bike fitting next to another beautiful temple, they ended the day on the sky bar of the hotel with a well-deserved cocktail, ready to begin the Cambodian part of their cycle.



With average temperatures of 30 degrees Celsius and 95% humidity levels, their first day of cycling in Cambodia saw more stops being required than usual to ensure the safe health of the group. The next day saw them set off from Phnom Penh on their bikes alongside the Mekong River and through villages before being transferred by coach to Kampong Thom. They arrived at the Japanese bridge, one of the oldest bridges that only cyclists and mopeds are allowed to cross .

The only traffic jam they came across was one of water buffalo which nearly knocked Debbie off her bike! They visited a local school where they donated gifts brought from the UK and ended the day by reaching Siem Reap.



The final day's cycling took them from Siem Reap to Angkor Wat, travelling through the jungle before taking in the mesmerising sights at their finishing point at the temple complex, the largest religious monument in the world.



In total the group clocked up 250 miles over six days of cycling. Debbie says the best parts of her adventure were the making of so many friends in the group and meeting and receiving such warm welcomes from the locals. The high fives from the local children were literally the highlight of her trip. She'd rather forget the

prickly heat and the puncture along the way but this was definitely a journey she will never forget.

I think I can speak for several of us when I say how proud I am of her for taking on this epic adventure which was completely self-funded to raise money for The Canmore Trust

Debbie's current fundraising total for her cycle stands at £2100 but is still open until the end of February 22 to those who wish to donate and can be found on <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/deborah-o-hara2>

Charlotte Middleton and Deborah O'Hara

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Pilates

You have probably heard this phrase many times before: 'The best medicine is exercise.' When we review the work of academic journals worldwide regarding how one should manage menopause or musculoskeletal issues such as low back pain, neck pain, shoulder pain, and osteoarthritis, restorative and therapeutic exercise methods such as Pilates are frequently considered first before other forms of intervention. Approximately 85% of low back pain is unspecific; that means we don't know what's causing the pain and there's no X-ray finding.

For example, while traditional crunches strengthen the outer layers of the abdominal musculature, they bypass the deep support structures of your back. This can place the lumbar spine in too much flexion and may even contribute to future back pain. By training the deep stabilisers of the lumbar spine, you are providing the preventative protection your back needs. Reformer-based Pilates exercises can help take care of the back. They are especially beneficial for those with limited flexion. In these exercises, pressure is taken off the lower spine, allowing for abdominal and upper body strengthening without placing stress on the lower back.

Menopausal women can experience a wide range of complications due to hormonal changes in the body. There's a time and place for low impact cardio workouts that elevate their heart rate and so too their spirit. Pilates reformer allows us to increase activity level and deal with the menopause in positive way.

Pilates reformer workouts assess movement and offer recommendations on how we can get on track for an active lifestyle or manage hormonal changes without aggravating aches and pains.

When we don't activate the right muscles, or they're not being fired at the right time or in the right way when we move, this will lead to neuromuscular control imbalances, which are a leading cause of injury and poor performance in day to day life.

Pilates is a great way for longevity. LiveWire Pilates invites you to join us and try private pilates reformer sessions. Learn how to use breath, find value in precise movement and allow your body to work in harmony. Explore Pilates principles and exercises tailored to your needs. Change the way you move with grace and ease, feel revitalized and fit. Gain new energy and zest for life each time you leave the studio. LiveWire Pilates is here for you. www.livewirepilates.co.uk, tel: 07896360085.



COOK'S CORNER by Audrey Corrieri

• Mini Bacon and Cheese Muffins

• Makes 24

• INGREDIENTS

- 3 smoked streaky bacon rashers, finely chopped
- 150g self-raising flour
- 50g mature cheddar finely grated
- 1tsp mustard powder
- 1 large egg
- 125 ml milk

• METHOD

Preheat oven to 180°C, 160°C Fan, Gas No 4.

Line a 24 hole muffin tin with paper cases.

Heat a frying pan over a medium heat and fry the bacon until crisp and golden. Drain on some kitchen paper.

In a medium bowl, mix together the flour, most of the cheese, the mustard powder and some seasoning. In a separate jug mix together the egg, milk and cooked bacon. Add the wet ingredients to the dry bowl and mix until just combined. Do not over-mix or the muffins will be tough.

Divide the mixture among the cases and sprinkle over the remaining cheese.

Bake for 12 mins or until golden and springy to the touch.

Serve warm or at room temperature.



Yummy!

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If things are getting to you

Talk to us any time you like, in your own way, and off the record – about whatever's getting to you.

116 123 FREE
This number is FREE to call

07725 90 90 90
Standard UK landline

jo@samaritans.org
 samaritans.org

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If you can't wait until your GP surgery reopens



NHS 24

www.nhs24.scot

HAVE YOU BEEN AFFECTED BY SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

For support and information please call Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline

Freephone:
08088 01 03 02

Email: support@rapecrisisScotland.org.uk
 For more information: www.rapecrisisScotland.org.uk

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Callander Community Council Petition



We, the undersigned, wish to petition Forth Valley Health Board and the Scottish Government to provide a new local NHS Dental Service for residents of Callander and the surrounding area.

Please complete the form below if you wish to support this petition, indicating the number of people in your household who would benefit from this service.

Name (Printed)	Signature	Address (Including Post Code)	Number In Your Household
----------------	-----------	-------------------------------	--------------------------

Local NHS dental services for Callander and surrounding villages will cease on 1st February 2023

Please sign the petition today

There has been an NHS dental practice in Callander for over 50 years. The present practice has announced that it will stop providing NHS dental services for adults from February 2023 onwards.

The previous NHS dental service offered services to a wide rural area similar to the catchment area for McLaren High School – Killin, Lochearnhead, Aberfoyle and surrounding villages and Doune and its surrounding areas. Patients have been advised to register for NHS dental services in either Auchterarder or Killin, but many people are now left without a dentist and have been advised by Forth Valley Health Board that there are no NHS dental services available in the Stirling area for new NHS patients. Patients have been travelling to Alloa and Falkirk to seek dental care, but places are very limited.

Forth Valley Health Board has been supportive but advises that there is a shortage of dentists across the UK.

The local medical practice has also been very supportive and has suggested that Forth Valley Health Board could use vacant rooms in Callander Health Centre as premises for a new NHS dental practice. Some local organisations have also offered financial support.

Callander Community Council believes that it is inappropriate to expect patients to make a round trip of 40 or 50 miles for routine dental care and that the community must do everything it can to encourage a new NHS dentist to come to the area.

Callander Community Council has launched a local petition, asking Forth Valley Health Board and Scottish Government to support a new NHS dental practice in Callander. The petition is available for signing in Callander at Farrens Pharmacy in Main Street, Callander Health Centre and Callander Library. Many local villages have also started petitions in support. An online petition is being developed and should be available shortly.

Please sign the petition today, either locally or online at: <https://www.change.org/NHSDentalservicesCallander>

If you are unable to access the petition, but would like to sign it, please contact Callander Community Council at callandercc556@gmail.com

*Ray Watkins Community Councillor
on behalf of Callander Community Council*

MINOR INJURY?

Please call NHS 24 first on 111

- For healthcare advice
- A video or telephone consultation with a local healthcare professional
- A face-to-face appointment with an Emergency Nurse Practitioner, if you require further assessment or treatment

What is a Minor Injury?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprains and strains • Broken bones • Minor burns and scalds • Minor head injuries • Cuts and grazes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insect bites and stings • Infected wounds • Minor eye injuries • Minor ear injuries
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For more information visit www.nhsforthvalley.com/miu

What's On for December and January

REGULAR MEETINGS

Mondays:

- Body Fit 7.00-7.45 am McLaren Leisure
- Active Life 9.30-10.30 am McLaren Leisure
- Chair Yoga 11.00-12noon McLaren Leisure
- Core Fit Express 1.00-1.30pm McLaren Leisure
- Climbing Club (children) 4.00pm and 5.00pm McLaren Leisure
- Soccer School (5-7 yrs) 5.00pm, (8-11 yrs) 6 pm McLaren Leisure
- Highland Dancing 4.00pm Kirk Hall: except 13th February
- HIT Circuits 7.00-7.45 McLaren Leisure
- Cycle Fit 6.00-6.45pm and 7.00-7.45pm McLaren Leisure
- Indoor Cycling 8.00-9.00pm McLaren Leisure
- Core Fit 8.00-8.45pm McLaren Leisure
- Guides 6.30-8.00pm St Andrew's Church Hall
- Callander Pipe Band practice/teaching 7.00pm Masonic Hall
- Open rink night Bowling Club 7.00pm Visitors/beginners welcome (bowls available) Contact Donald [075134 488453](tel:075134488453)

Tuesdays:

- Callander Cycle Meander meet 10.00am Ancaster Square (contact [01877 339074](tel:01877339074))
- Aqua Therapy 9.30-10.30am McLaren Leisure
- MumFit 11.00-12 noon McLaren Leisure
- Yoga Basics 12.30-1.45 McLaren Leisure
- Gentle Yoga 2.00- 3.00pm McLaren Leisure
- Strength and Balance 3.00 -4.00pm McLaren Leisure
- Body Fit Express 5.00 - 6.00pm McLaren Leisure
- Power Fit 6.00-6.45pm McLaren Leisure
- AquaFit 7.15-8.00pm McLaren Leisure
- Badminton Club 7.30pm McLaren Leisure
- Evening Yoga 7.30-9.00pm McLaren

Leisure

- Taekwondo 7.00-9.00pm McLaren Leisure

Wednesdays:

- Cycle Fit 7.00-7.45 am McLaren Leisure
- Active Life 9.30-10.30 McLaren Leisure
- Citizens Advice Bureau 10.00am-12.30pm Callander Library
- Teapot Café 10.30am Callander Kirk Hall Library
- Body Fit Express 1.00- 1.30pm McLaren Leisure
- Core Fit Express 5. 30-6.00pm McLaren Leisure
- Bowling club 2.00pm (as Monday) Bowling Club
- Body Fit 7.00-7.45pm McLaren Leisure
- Cycle Fit 8.00-8.45pm McLaren Leisure
- Taekwondo (contact falkirktaekwondo@gmail.com)

Thursdays:

- Aqua Therapy 9.30-10.30am McLaren Leisure
- Town Break 10.30-12.30 St Andrew's Church Hall
- Craigard Club meet for lunch 12.00-2.00pm Callander Hostel
- Bingo Session 2.00- 3.00 (doors open 1.45) Callander Hostel (not March) Contact Jen Shearer [01877 0446](tel:018770446) or [07710 232908](tel:07710232908) for transport
- Power fit 6.00-6.45pm McLaren Leisure
- HIIT 7.00-7.30pm McLaren Leisure
- Cycle Fit 7.00-7.45pm McLaren Leisure
- Core Fit 8.00-8.45pm McLaren Leisure
- Redtooth Poker League at Lade Inn 7.30pm all welcome

Fridays:

- Body Fit 7.00-7.45 am McLaren Leisure
- MumFit 11.00- 12noon McLaren Leisure
- Power Fit Express 1.00-1.30pm McLaren Leisure
- Cycle Fit Express 5.30-6.00pm McLaren Leisure

- Spike Island 8.15 -9.15 pm McLaren Leisure

Saturdays :

- Body Fit 9.00-9.45 am McLaren Leisure
- HIIT 9.30-10.00am McLaren Leisure

Sundays

- Redtooth Poker League at Lade Inn 6.00pm all welcome

February

Friday 3rd

Ben Ledi View published

Saturday 4th

- CAOS Coffee Morning 10.30am Kirk Hall

Saturday 11th

- German-speaking group meets 2.00pm Coilhallan House,, Invertrossachs Road Callander FK17 8HW

Monday 13th

- Music and Memories 2-3.30pm Kirk Hall

Thursday 16th

- SWT Talk 'RZSS's Role in International Conservation,' by Jess Wise of RZSS ,Highland Wildlife Park 7.30pm St Andrew's Church Hall, Leny Road

Sunday 19th

- Callander Film Society 'Top Gun :Maverick (2022)' 7.30pm McLaren Leisure Centre

Monday 20th

- Community Council meeting 7.30pm TBC

Saturday 25th

- Messy Church 10.30am Kirk Hall

March

Friday 10th

Copy deadline for Ben Ledi View

Monday 13th

- Music and Memories 2.00-3.30pm Kirk Hall

(Continued on next page)

**Wednesday 15th -Friday 17th
nightly**

- CAOS 'Calamity Jane' 7.30pm (doors open 7.00pm) McLaren High School

Thursday 16th

- SWT Talk 'The Plants and Wildlife of Loch Tay Marshes' by John Holland of EAK 7.30pm St Andrew's Church Hall

Saturday 18th

- German-speaking group meets 2.00pm Coihallan House, Invertrossachs Road Callander FK17 8HW
- CAOS 'Calamity Jane' 2.30pm (doors open 2.00pm) McLaren High School

Sunday 19th

- Callander Film Society 'Everything, Everywhere, All At Once' (2022) 7.30pm (doors open 7.00pm) McLaren Leisure Centre

Monday 20th

- Community Council meet 7.30pm Callander Hostel

Saturday 25th

- Messy Church 10.30am Kirk Hall

April**Saturday 1st**

- Visitor Information Centre Opens

Friday 7th

[Ben Ledi View published](#)

Sunday 9th (Easter)

- Rotary Bottle and Bric a Brac stalls 10.00am onwards Ancaster Square

BLV DEADLINES

The next issue of the Ben Ledi View will be published on **Friday 7th April 2023**.

Advertisements copy & artwork

Please send all advertisement copy for the **Apr/May** issue to our Advertising Co-ordinator Nina Taylor at:

advertising@benlediview.org by **Wednesday 8th March 2023** Full details of sizes for advertisement and artwork specifications are at www.benlediview.org under the Advertise tab. Please call or email for advice if in doubt.

We request full payment before we can accept advertising material for publication.

Editorial copy

All editorial contributions for the **Apr/May** issue should be emailed to editor@benlediview.org or handed in to the Callander Library by **Friday 10th March 2023**.

Items received after the deadline may be held over to next issue.

Help Needed**(desperately!)**

As you probably know the Ben Ledi View is hand delivered to every household in Callander for free. We are only able to do this because all of the many people who produce and distribute the magazine do it as unpaid volunteers. We are currently in need of some additional volunteers and I'm sorry to announce that if we don't get them, we may struggle to publish the magazine in the future.

The people we need are

- **Advertising:** Persons to help facilitate local businesses to place ads in the magazine and charging them for this.
- **Secretary:** person to set up and organise our team meetings.

If you think that you are able to help with any of the above roles, please contact me on the following [email convenor@benlediview.org](mailto:convenor@benlediview.org)

Steven McGowan

More Hotel Closures

Another blow to the accommodation situation in Callander comes with the news that both the Craggs Hotel and Abbotsford Lodge Bed and Breakfast have gone into Receivership. Not only is this a loss of beds in the town but it means that two of the very limited evening dining venues have also been lost. This could have an effect on the tourists coming to the town and then have a knock on effect on other businesses.

New Planning Applications

Erection of dwelling house Site On Glenfinglas Road Brig O'Turk Callander
Ref. No: 2022/0359/PPP | Received: Wed 07 Dec 2022 | Validated: Thu 15 Dec 2022 | Status: Current

Installation of bird hide
Trossachs Trout Farm Callander FK17 8HW
Ref. No: 2022/0328/DET | Received: Thu 10 Nov 2022 | Validated: Fri 02 Dec 2022 | Status: Current

Erection of replacement porch 3 Grant Court Callander FK17 8AD
Ref. No: 2022/0326/HAE | Received: Wed 09 Nov 2022 | Validated: Wed 16 Nov 2022 | Status: Current

Application to discharge a planning obligation related to planning permission ref. no. 2011/0167/PPP
Land At Lagrannoch Stirling Road Callander Stirling
Ref. No: 2022/0327/75A | Received: Tue 08 Nov 2022 | Validated: Thu 17 Nov 2022 | Status: Current

Business Opportunity

Situated at Killin Golf Club, We offer the opportunity to run and manage this restaurant and bar. The facilities also include a fully fitted commercial kitchen.

With all profit from sales of food and drinks being retained by you, in exchange you provide a core hour support to manage our on-course bookings. Start-up stock support can be provided as well as subsidy towards all utilities.

If this fantastic business opportunity is for you, or if you require more details, please apply in writing:

Killin Golf Club
Killin
FK21 8TX



or by email:

secretary@killingolfclub.co.uk

Callander Golf Club moves ahead with clubhouse plans



Callander Golf Club has taken another step towards a new clubhouse after the club's management committee identified a preferred option. Plans are in place to have a new temporary modular building installed by the start of the 2023 golf season, with proposals to build a permanent clubhouse in the near future. As instructed by members at the recent EGM, the management committee proposes erecting a structure in the style of the temporary accommodation

used at tour golf events which will provide reception, lounge, kitchen and toilet facilities for members and visitors as well as the wider Callander community. The preferred design consists of eight "blocks" measuring a total of 12m by 10m, and includes a viewing balcony, offices and facilities for golfers.

Ken Milligan, chair of the club's management committee, said: "This represents a significant step forwards in our mission to have a new clubhouse in place in time for the start of the 2023 golf season. Not only will the outlined facility provide a much-improved experience for members, it will make the club more appealing to visitors, new golfers and the wider Callander community. It will also ensure a better environment for our hard-working staff and volunteers who give up so much time and effort for the benefit of the club. We have also opened discussions with Stirling Council and other potential partners looking towards redevelopment in the longer term, and work will continue to secure a permanent multi-use facility. A huge amount of work has been done by a small dedicated team of volunteers to get the club to a position where we are ready to install our new clubhouse and we now ask members to give their feedback as promptly as possible in order for us to press ahead with this exciting opportunity."

The management committee is asking members to consider the options of buying the temporary building outright with a buy-back option or pursuing a lease hire. The club has been quoted £85,210 plus VAT to buy the building, while a lease hire would represent a significant reduction against the purchase price. Members were asked to give their feedback by December 21st ahead of their AGM which was scheduled to take place on January 19th.



Callander Target Sports Club

The club is continuing to run well with a steady number of members. Thankfully we are clear of the Covid bug and now back competing in local and National league competitions. Prior to closing down for the festive period we managed to hold our club Xmas shoot which, because of Covid, we have not been able to hold for over two years. This shoot is a great time for members to meet up with others whom they may not regularly see and for all to enjoy some unusual shooting competitions and relax with a selection of food provided by members. The shoot was won by one of our Glasgow members, James Martin, who was presented by our Club President with the Steven O' Keefe Trophy (a trophy presented to the club by the O' Keefe family in memory of their son who was a staunch club member).

Scottish leagues: The Callander team in the Scottish prone rifle team leagues got off to a poor start but recorded a super score of only "6 off" over 4 shooters to win their match in round 3. In the British Inter-Counties league only one Callander shooter, Mike Buchanan, represented Perthshire. Perthshire lost their first two rounds. Three Callander members shot in the Forth & Clyde "county" team which has a tough task ahead as they are in the national first division. They have won one of their first two rounds. If the official postal scoring ends up as predicted, then Gordon Motion will be their top scorer so far with a stunning 1 point dropped over 4 cards - 40 shots.

Cumbria leagues: Notwithstanding weather, postal delays and winter bugs 17 shooters in 6 disciplines have completed 4 Rounds in the Cumbria Leagues. No one has yet distinguished themselves scoring wise but we intend to persevere and improve.

Perthshire Prone results after 8 rounds: Team Results – Callander A is leading Div. 1 by 2 points ahead of St Andrews. Callander B is 2nd in Div. 4, 2 points behind Lanark ESM.

Individual Results - Jonathan Richards is tied for 1st in Div 8. and Allister McLean leads Div. 14 by 3 points.

Perthshire Benchrest results after 4 rounds: Bill Thomson leads Div 2, with Chris Miller in a close 2nd. Mark Griffiths leads Div 3. Frank Currie leads Div 4. Iain Bruce leads Div 5, with Malcolm Scotland a close 2nd.

For further club details, contact our new secretary Tony Ashford 07446 824918.

*John W Russell
Treasurer/Perthshire Match Secretary*



It's been a very busy start to the New Year here at McLaren Leisure and we have been excited to welcome you all back following the festive break. Members of our community have made a huge splash, jumping into the new year ready to get back in to their fitness routines or start new ones. From our first Kids' Camp of the new year to a new term of swimming lessons and fitness

classes we've had lots of activities to keep us moving. Haven't joined us yet this new year? Get in touch to find out how we can support you. We have a whole range of 'pay as you go' and membership options available to support your health and fitness journey.

2023 brings with it a big birthday for McLaren Leisure. 25 years of serving our wider community and supporting your health and fitness needs. 25 years ago, McLaren Leisure first opened its doors to the wider community and local High School. We are proud to have expanded our offering over the years to the busy centre we are today. This year, come and celebrate our 25th birthday with us. We will be holding some very special events to celebrate 25 years of supporting active communities and healthy customers. Look out for more information coming soon.

As we look forward to the next 25 years of McLaren Leisure, we are looking at some key projects to support our plans and allow us to thrive for the future, continue to work with local partner groups and expand our range of activities and services for all ages. Some of our key plans for the next few years include some upgrades to our changing facilities, energy saving projects, expansion of provisions in our soft play area, development of our café area and continuing to provide and implement new classes, activities and events.

Here are just some of the activities and events to look forward to this year! -

School holiday activities – including Kids' Camps this February, Easter, Summer, October and more, 25th Birthday celebrations (Summer 2023), season events including Easter, Halloween & Christmas and National Fitness Day. We have a whole calendar of events lined up for this year, so watch out for more details to follow!

*Rachel McLean
McLaren Leisure*

The Cutest Pair of Blue Eyes

Since I moved to Callander, I have been wanting a pet. Everyone seems to have one! Interestingly, my mum is not fond of animals. I remember the very first time I held a guinea-pig.

It happened during a visit to my friend's house. She has many pets: a hamster, two fish and four guinea-pigs! The guinea-pigs were hiding in their playpen when I arrived. Apparently, these animals like to hide under things to help them feel safe. They do this when they feel afraid, stressed or just need some alone time. The colours of their fur would almost make you think there were two sets of twins! Two guinea-pigs were orange-brown, like the colours of autumn. The other two were as white as snow, one male and one female. I started stroking the female's soft fur and it felt as soft as my fluffy dressing-gown. She was so cute with her small, dark blue eyes and black circles around them, like the meerkats at the Safari park. Her name was Daisy. I was so excited when my friend's mum asked if I wanted to hold one. The chance was all mine, and Mummy wasn't there, so I wasn't going to say "NO!"

We were told the steps on how to handle the wee animals. First, I had to wrap the guinea-pig in a towel so that I can be safe from anything coming out of their rear end. I thought about what Mummy might say if she knew that I was holding a 'dirty' pet, but those thoughts left as I began stroking Daisy's fluffy coat. I needed to offer her some food so that she wouldn't get bored and run away. Guinea pigs love lettuce and carrots, but parsley is their favourite. So I fed Daisy some parsley and a leaf of lettuce. She literally put half of her body on the lettuce to nibble on it! It was lovely to hear her squeaks as she munched. Little animals let out happy squeaks when they are excited about something or when they want attention. I laughed so hard when she wiggled into the towel with her head inside and the rear end out that I almost dropped her. Guess what worked to get her to turn around? Parsley! I was sad when my friend's mum mentioned I was getting picked up in five minutes.

The half an hour that I played with the cuties felt so short. Daisy was put back into the playpen where she joined her friends. By the time the doorbell rang, I was all dressed with my outdoor cosies. I can't believe that I managed to finish the visit without a bite or even a scratch. It was definitely a playdate to remember.

I think I'll have to wait until I have my own place before I can get my own pet. But then again, pets are a lot of work, so I may just have to keep friends with pets. By the way, Daisy now has five playpen pals!

Emmanuella (8 yrs)

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Patricia White 100th Birthday



Patricia White would like to thank everyone who kindly sent birthday greetings and good wishes on her 100th birthday on December 10th. Patricia celebrated with a party at Randolph Hill Nursing Home where she enjoyed a delicious cake from Mhor Bread, and also enjoyed a wonderful programme of songs by Jenne McClure. Patricia formerly lived in Balgibbon Drive, and was an active member of the Callander U3A, hosting the Music Appreciation Group for several years. She was also a member of St Andrew's Church in Callander. Patricia would like to wish everyone a very happy 2023.

Gregor Aitchison

Stuart, Karen & Ian would like to thank family, friends, neighbours and well wishers following the sad passing of their beloved Dad Gregor.

Thank you also to the nurses and carers and to celebrant Susan Chown for the lovely service and to Ross Anderson for help in making the process as smooth as possible.

Thanks also for the generous donations - heading towards £1,000 from various donations for SCAA.

Callander Window Wanderland

The 2022 Callander Window Wanderland took place over the weekend 9 – 11th December. The idea was to create a series of displays in house and shop windows which were illuminated from behind. The standard this year was extremely high and it was clear that a lot of time and thought had been put into the displays. The winner was Candy Boyd from Tulipan Crescent.

Next year's event will be held over the weekend 8 – 10th December and we want to introduce a new category for business premises in Callander. We will keep the house displays as back-lit creations but it would be very special to see all of the shops along Main Street with a Christmas Window Display. We also want to see if we can provide all shops along Main Street with exterior Christmas lights so that there is a line of lights along both sides of the street, displays in the shop windows and the lights around both sides of Ancaster Square.

Richard and Mary Johnson



The Winning Entry

Callander Christmas Lights

The 2022 Christmas Lights in Ancaster Square were switched on by Julie Carmichael on 3rd December as part of a well supported community gathering in the Square.

The lights, tree and tents had taken a lot of people a lot of time to upgrade, test and erect. On the night, Santa's Sleigh paraded from the Medical Centre to Ancaster Square where a large number of people had gathered. Santa and Julie judged the fancy dress competition while Callander Brass played Christmas carols. Julie pressed the plunger to switch on the lights supported by an alert fire fighter. Two of Santa's reindeer joined the party and mince pies, cake, mulled wine and hot chocolate were served. Thanks to everyone who came along and thank you all for the donations. We raised over £700 on the night which will go towards next year's event on 2nd December 2023.

We would like to thank the following people and organisations:

- Callander Enterprise for supplying the lights and funding the reindeer;
- Callander and District 41 Club for organising the parade and donating prizes;
- Callander Rotary for the fancy dress prizes;
- Deli Ecosse for supplying the mulled wine and hot chocolate;
- Main Street Bakery, Mhor Bread, Callander Co-operative and Tesco for the 300 mince pies;
- Claire at Hair Chair for making up the children's faces and hair
- CYP for the loan of tables and chairs;
- Cambusmore Estate for supplying and putting up the tree
- Callander Brass for the music;
- Lynne Shroder for lending us the tents;
- Central Scotland Fire and Rescue for putting the lights on the tree;
- Police Scotland for taking care of the parade;

And the many people who helped set up the Square and run the event.

Richard and Mary Johnson

Callander Amateur Operatic Society presents:

The days are getting longer and, after a long cold winter, the Deadwood Stage will be headin' over the hills, to bring some light hearted relief, in mid-March. After a break over the festive season, rehearsals resumed on 9th January and the hard work the cast have put in is beginning to pay off. There is a definite buzz amongst the company for this production; stage props and costumes have been sourced and we are looking forward to getting on stage. Support from the community is invaluable and there is still time to volunteer to help back stage or front of house and to advertise in the programme – talk to a committee member or see the web page (www.c-a-o-s.org.uk).

Tickets are on sale now and are available from the Visitor Centre on Callander Main Street (Wednesdays 1pm to 3pm; Fridays 12 noon to 2pm; Saturdays 10am to 12 noon), online (see website) or from members of the society. This year seats will be numbered so buying early will give you more chance of guaranteeing your favourite place. Prices are unchanged from 2020 – adults, £14; seniors and students, £11; and children, up to 12 years of age, £5. (Please note only full price tickets are available for the Friday performance).

As usual the venue for the show is McLaren High School and show dates and times are as follows:

Wednesday 15th to Friday 17th March – 7.30pm (doors open 7.00pm)

Saturday 18th March – 2.30pm (doors open 2.00pm)

Thank you for your continued support and enjoy the show!

Steve Murphy for the CAOS committee.

CAOS are pleased to be sponsoring this edition of the Ben Ledi View.

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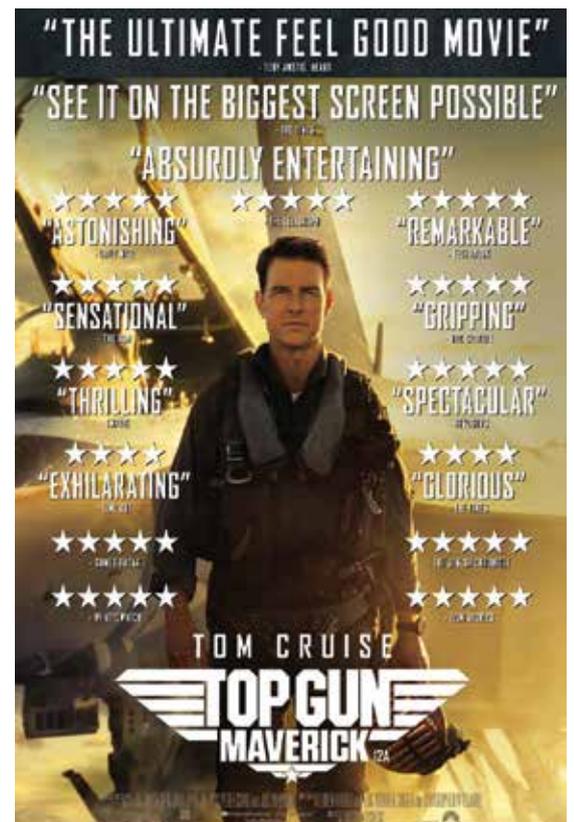
Callander Community Cinema

Two more great movies in February and March complete our 2022-23 season.

'Top Gun: Maverick' (2022) certificate 12A on 19 February is the blockbuster sequel set 30 years after the original. Maverick (Tom Cruise) returns to the United States Navy Strike Fighter Tactics Instructor program, where he must confront his past as he trains a group of younger pilots. "Cinema's favourite ageless fighter pilot returns with all the nail-biting aeronautics and emotional sucker punches that made the original an 80s-defining hit", Mark Kermode, The Guardian.

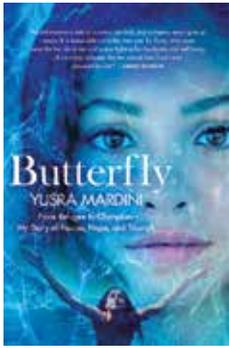
On 19 March 'Everything, Everywhere, All at Once' (2022) certificate 15 is a comedy adventure about overworked and unhappy Evelyn Wang (Michelle Yeoh), who struggles to cope with life, when an inexplicable multiverse rift becomes an eye-opening exploration of parallel realities. Can weary Evelyn tap into new possibilities and powers, and prevent an evil entity from destroying the thin, countless layers of the unseen world?

Callander Cinema will be screened by Callander Film Society at McLaren Leisure Centre, Doors open at 7pm for tea/coffee, showtime 7.30pm. £5 at the door, £3 for under 16s, free for CFS members. Come early to get a good seat. Full programme and links to trailers at incallander.co.uk/cinema, follow us on Facebook @callanderfilmsociety or join our mailing list by emailing callanderfilmsociety@gmail.com.





Book Club Review



This issue's book review title is *Butterfly* by Yusra Mardini (Bluebird: 2022) The full title of this extraordinary autobiography by Mardini is *Butterfly: From Refugee to Olympian, My Story of Rescue, Hope and Triumph* and is the true-life story of Syrian-born Mardini who fled her war-torn country in 2015 along with tens of thousands of other Syrians.

Mardini's story stands out because she is an accomplished swimmer and *Butterfly* is a chronology of her life. From a very young age, she had set her sights on becoming an Olympian and competing for her country. Her father was a swim-coach in Damascus and was an early influence and hard taskmaster. Yusra and her sister were quite literally thrown into a pool before they could walk and their father had high hopes for the girls' swimming talents.

However, circumstances were to scupper his plans. Not only was it very difficult for Syrian women to compete as swimmers - many dropped out of the sport in their teens due to conflicting idea about how girls should behave and what they should wear. Putting this aside, Syria was entering a violent and prolonged war. Life in Damascus was hard and daily routines such as going for a swim simply became too dangerous, as bombs destroyed many buildings (including swimming pools). People begin to leave the cities, and Syria, to seek normal, safer lives. Mardini and her sister planned to do the same.

A large part of *Butterfly* recounts the harrowing journey the girls take (including a horrifying sea-crossing in a jam-packed, flimsy boat) from Syria to their chosen destination of Germany. The girls are from a relatively affluent family in Syria, as are many refugees (this is frankly discussed, as the middle-class are more likely to afford the passage) yet Mardini details how quickly they are dehumanised, losing visibility and status at the hands of the many (official and not-so) they encounter on their journey.

Mardini's story is certainly extraordinary, so much so that Netflix made it into a film, released in September 2022 called *The Swimmers*. Whilst no doubt dramatic, I'd definitely recommend the book over the film, as Mardini's writing is insightful, intelligent and reflective. She reminds the reader constantly that hers is just one story of thousands of people, grouped simplistically as refugees, yet with unique lives, thoughts, stories and, who knows, perhaps very extraordinary talents.

The next BLV book club review will be *Case Study* by Graeme Macrae Burnet (Saraband: 2021)



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Your own transport is essential.

The ideal candidate will have some industry experience but a passion for cycling and being outdoors is a must. You need to have good problem-solving skills and a good attention to detail, as well as being friendly and approachable. Training will be given.

You will be comfortable working on a range of bikes from hybrid bikes to mountain bikes, electric bikes, tandems and tag-a-longs.

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Bike Hire Sales Staff

We are also looking for bike hire sales staff to help with our busy cycle hire operation. It would suit a local school student interested in bikes and the outdoors looking for a weekend job with the possibility of summer work during the holidays. The primary role is to help with customers hiring bikes from our rental cabin at Loch Katrine.

A friendly, approachable, and can-do attitude and great customer service skills are essential. A love of cycling and a passion for bikes, the outdoors and a sense of humour will also be helpful! You will require your own transport.

Salary: £8 -£9 per hour depending on age/experience

Contract: Temporary –seasonal

Interested in either of these roles? Contact Hamish, Bike Hire Manager to discuss

Email: katrinewheelz@yahoo.co.uk

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Blair Drummond Hall

We have had a lot of issues recently and more so over the Christmas period, with our glass and cardboard recycling bins at Blair Drummond Community Hall. These bins are provided by Stirling Council but the hall belongs to our community thus if any rubbish is left outside the bins or the wrong item is put in the bins, it is left to the members of the hall committee to sort it out and not the Council as they will not empty contaminated bins.

We are aware that the bins are used by many people outwith our local community, especially from Callander, Deanston, Thornhill, Port of Menteith and Doune (as they do not have their own recycling point). These bins are not for commercial waste.

We are happy that people are recycling but please do not leave anything outside the bins and please make sure you are only putting glass or cardboard in the bins.

If you bring your recycling to the bins in a plastic bag, please take this away with you to recycle elsewhere.

The cardboard bin is for cardboard only and not for plastic or polystyrene packaging. Please do not put it in these bins.

We have CCTV in operation on the site and anyone found leaving bags and boxes outside the bins or putting the wrong items in the bins will be considered to be fly tipping and reported. Please share this information.



Blair Drummond Hall Committee



Local Information

Emergency Services: 999

Callander Police: 101

Local Council Office & Registrar:
[01877 33004](tel:0187733004)

Social Work: [01786 471177](tel:01786471177)

Post Office: [01877 330267](tel:01877330267)

Stirling Council: [01786 404040](tel:01786404040)

Councillors

Martin Earl - earlm@stirling.gov.uk

Gene Maxwell - Maxwellg@stirling.gov.uk

Elaine Watterson-wattersone@stirling.gov.uk

MSP

Evelyn Tweed - evelyn.tweed.msp@parliament.scot

National Health

Callander Medical Practice [01877 331000](tel:01877331000) (Prescriptions (10.00am till 3pm))

District Nurse [01877 330150](tel:01877330150)

NHS 24 [111](tel:111) or www.nhs24.scot
www.nhsinform.scot

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Trossachs **M-F** 9-1 2-6 [01877 330016](tel:01877330016)

Vets

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Schools

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Callander Primary: [01877 331576](tel:01877331576)



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Brown/Blue Box	Sunday 19th

March

Brown/Green Bins	Sunday 5th
Grey/Blue Bins	Sunday 12th
Brown/Blue Box	Sunday 19th

www.stirling.gov.uk/waste

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Bus Station (Stirling): [01786 446474](tel:01786446474)

Travel Line Scotland: [0870 6082608](tel:08706082608)

Leisure Centre: [01877 330000](tel:01877330000)

Library: [01877 331544](tel:01877331544)

Visitor Information Centre: [07727 288 585](tel:07727288585)

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SEPA website:

www.sepa.org.uk/flooding/index.htm

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option 1 followed by: [06213 121](tel:06213121) (the
Teith at Callander)

Scottish Water emergency
information re flooding from mains
or sewers: [0800 0778778](tel:08000778778)

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Callander

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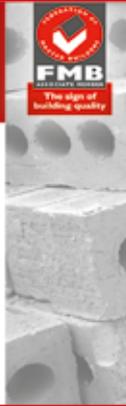
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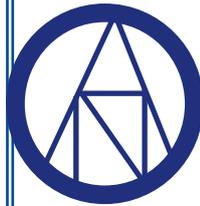
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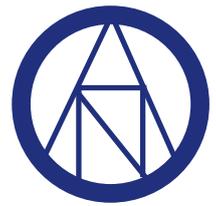
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