



Rousing welcome for returning heroes ● Athletes gear up for Children's Games ● Get fit for summer

# SCHOOL FOR EXCELLENCE SCORES TOP MARKS

By Sarah Burrows

A SOUTH Lanarkshire school has been given a glowing report by Education Scotland.

Inspectors lavished praise on John Ogilvie High in Hamilton after visiting the Burnbank school in March.

They were very impressed with what they found at the 932-pupil secondary, highlighting the polite, courteous and well-behaved pupils who, they said, evidently enjoyed learning.

Inspectors also praised the positive relationships between young people and adults based on gospel values.

Headteacher Eddie Morrison's vision and effective leadership in taking the school forward were highly commended, as were pupils' contributions to improving learning across the school.

The head teacher was delighted with the school's report.

"It is fantastic news that the inspectors were positive in their report but we will not rest on our laurels," said Eddie.

"We will keep working hard to continue to raise attainment for all pupils. All our staff will continue to develop the

# MARKS

## Inspectors praise staff



curriculum, taking account of Curriculum for Excellence.

"I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all teachers, staff and parents whose partnership working is central to the continued success of the school.

"I'd also like to thank the pupils of John Ogilvie for their

hard work, dedication and willingness to learn."

Councillor Jean McKeown, Chair of the Education Resources Committee, said: "This report is a reflection of the wonderful work that goes on at John Ogilvie High.

● TURN TO PAGE THREE



## Facing the music

PAGE 3

### Facilities



Community meals service earns prestigious top award ... page 5

### Education



Music encourages young people to learn new skills ... pages 8/9

### Communities



Historic local beauty spot is restored to former glory ... page 10

### Roads



Pupils and parents launch new Park and Stride scheme ... page 12

### Museums



In search of the final resting place of fallen WWI soldier ... page 14



## Contacts

### Editor

Tom Little  
Deputy editor  
Eileen McAuley  
01698 453975

### Publisher

South Lanarkshire Council.  
Produced by South Lanarkshire  
Corporate Communications and  
Public Affairs,  
7th Floor, Council Offices,  
Almada Street, Hamilton,  
ML3 0AA.  
Tel 01698 453975  
www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk

### Payments

Phone 0303 123 1005

### Council tax and benefits

Phone 0303 123 1011

### Council Tax arrears

Phone 0303 123 1014

### Housing repairs

Phone 0303 123 1010

### Housing enquiries (except repairs)

Phone 0303 123 1012

### Social Work and Money Matters

Phone 0303 123 1008

### Refuse, grounds maintenance and street cleansing

Phone 0303 123 1020

### Conference and banqueting

Phone 0303 123 1009

### Parking

0303 123 1006

### Bereavement services (cemeteries and crematorium)

Phone 0303 123 1016

### Fraud helpline

Phone 0303 123 1013

### For all other enquiries

Phone 08457 406080

### Out-of-hours emergency repairs

Phone 0800 242 024

### Out-of-hours Social Work emergencies

Phone 0303 123 1008

If you are hard of hearing you can  
use minicom on 0303 123 1017

If you need this information in another  
language or format, please contact us  
to discuss how we can best meet your  
needs. Phone 01698 454959; Email  
margaret.barr@southlanarkshire.gov.uk



## Planning update

# Have your say on the Local Plan

## Six-week public consultation

By **James Davitt**

### SOUTH Lanarkshire Council has set out its vision for the continued growth and regeneration of the area.

The proposed South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan aims to generate economic growth and promote the area as a successful place to live, work and invest.

The new plan follows the South Lanarkshire Local Plan adopted in 2009 and guides the council's decisions on development proposals.

Depute Chair of the Planning Committee, Councillor Jackie Burns, said: "The current Local Plan has many policies and proposals that are still relevant and can be carried forward into the new plan.

"This includes a number of significant proposals, including Community Growth Areas, Development Framework sites and Masterplan sites.

"However, the economic climate has changed since 2009 and we will need to look again at a number of key areas."

This includes a need to release additional sites for housing to add flexibility to the land supply and provide sites to accommodate a range of housing types, including affordable housing.

There is also a need to allow a wider range of uses in some non-strategic economic locations, to re-designate industrial sites that are no longer attractive to investors, review town centre and neighbourhood boundaries, and ease restrictions on some non-retail changes of use in these centres.

A review of settlement boundaries and protection of the council's historic and natural environment are

also included. The new plan is needed because the development planning system obliges the council to have a new Local Development Plan in place within two years of the Strategic Development Plan for Glasgow and the Clyde Valley being approved.

This happened in May 2012, which means the South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan should be adopted by May 2014.

The public is also to be consulted on the policies contained within the plan over a six-week consultation period, which started on May 16.

Proposed new housing sites, as well as boundary changes to settlements and town centres, have been mapped.

Potential new windfarm sites have been reduced in the new plan, based on the impact of consented and built windfarms.

Consideration will also be given to the land-use issues arising from the impact of climate change.

The plan will ensure developments are sustainably located, maximise the use of vacant and derelict land, utilise renewable energy resources, are as carbon-neutral as possible and avoid flood-risk areas.

Councillor Burns said: "The South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan is clearly a very detailed and complex document that will underpin much of the work carried out by our planning team in the years to come.

"We want to hear the views of as many people as possible, as we are aware elements of the new plan could have an impact on their communities. Their views will be the subject of further reports, with the possibility the plan could be adopted in early 2014."

● All the proposals are available for public inspection at council offices, libraries, Q&As and at [www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk) until June 28.



## Change of art



Seven-year-old Emily Ranson, above, was among the youngsters who took part in a fantastic puppet-making class in Biggar recently.

It was part of a series of arts and crafts classes, which also included rag rugging at Hamilton's Low Parks Museum, hosted by artist Karen Kelly.

She has been hooking rugs for around six years and is passionate about it.

Young Niamh Wilson, left, was among those youngsters who enjoyed trying their hand at rag rugging.

## Scheme boosts approved traders

SOUTH Lanarkshire Council's 'Buy with Confidence' scheme, designed to boost consumer protection, is going from strength to strength.

Almost 20 local businesses have, so far, signed up to the scheme, which is the largest national approved trader scheme in the UK with 51 local authorities involved.

It is endorsed and approved by the Office of Fair Trading and is considered 'best practice' in the industry. Any business operating in

South Lanarkshire can apply to become a member of the scheme.

If and when approved, businesses can then access support and advice from the local authority.

In return, businesses give a commitment that they will meet their legal obligations, treat their customers fairly, agree to resolve complaints and abide by independent forms of dispute resolution.

Councillor Hamish Stewart, Chair

of the Community Services Committee, said: "The 'Buy with Confidence' scheme improves levels of consumer protection by ensuring they buy goods and services from approved traders.

"The scheme also improves fair trading by driving up standards of business practice, by promoting legitimate businesses who engage in fair practices, while marginalising those that do not.

"It's a win-win situation for

the consumer and company."

Businesses accepted under the scheme pay an annual fee of £175 and gain other benefits, including:

- Having their business advertised on the 'Buy with Confidence' website
- Inclusion on a list of approved traders made available to South Lanarkshire consumers by Trading Standards

- The provision of logos, marketing and publicity materials to promote themselves as an approved firm.

- If you would like to put your company forward for the 'Buy with Confidence' Scheme contact 01698 454304.



## First-class report card



### Continued from front page

"The school's aspirations for all of its pupils has always been high and staff are to be congratulated for all they do in providing education of the highest quality for all learners."

Jim Gilhooly, Executive Director of Education, said the report was well deserved.

"It is a fully merited recognition of all that takes place in John Ogilvie High School," added Jim.

"I would like to commend the work and commitment of staff in developing strong relationships with young people that support and encourage them to achieve their best.

"It is also worth noting the close partnership with parents who, along with the young people and staff, are very proud of their school."

## Anita eyes up antiques



MORE than 200 people turned up at Chatelherault Country Park to have their treasures valued by antiques queen Anita Manning.

The recent event, in aid of Alzheimer Scotland, and supported by Great Western Auctions and South Lanarkshire Leisure & Culture, raised £2632.

People brought everything from jewellery to crockery, and silverware to furniture, for Bargain Hunt's Anita to cast her expert eye over.

People from as far afield as Argyll turned up to find out if they had been sitting on a small fortune.

"Alzheimer Scotland was delighted with the support they received from all of the staff at Chatelherault and we will be looking into holding more events at this wonderful and historic location," said spokesperson Rachel Lamming.

# Pupils make sweet music

Around 350 pupils from South Lanarkshire schools recently showcased their musical talents during a glittering performance at Hamilton's Townhouse.

South Lanarkshire Council's Instrumental Music Service organised the event, which celebrated the excellent partnership working between pupils, school music departments and the IMS.

The event gave pupils the chance to be involved in a professional-standard concert and to network with their peers from other schools.

Graeme Barclay, Instrumental Music Service Co-ordinator, said: "We are extremely proud of the notable musical achievements and attainment secured by our talented children and young people."

The breadth of talent on display ranged from traditional jazz bands, orchestras and vocalists to a samba band that brought the house down.



Picture by Anne-Janine Nugent

## Welfare Reform update

# It pays to keep council informed about change

By Council reporter

## Claimants advised to keep authority up-to-date

**PEOPLE claiming Housing Benefit are being urged to let South Lanarkshire Council know if their circumstances change.**

The council reports that those receiving Housing Benefit, and or Council Tax Reduction, very often do not let the authority know if their circumstances change.

This means people could be losing out on benefit, or perhaps receiving more benefit than they are entitled to.

South Lanarkshire Council wants to ensure its residents receive the correct amount of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction to which they are entitled.

With this in mind, those on benefit, or who are receiving a Council Tax reduction, should let the council know immediately of any changes in their circumstances that may affect their entitlement, no matter how small the change is.

This could be a change in the amount of income coming in, a change in the amount of capital someone has, or a change in the number

of people living in the household. If the council continues to pay someone more benefit than they are entitled to receive because they did not advise the council of a change in their circumstances, then they will be required to pay back all overpaid monies.

If you want to know more about how to report a change contact the council's Benefits & Council Tax Call Centre on 0303 123 1011, or visit the council's website, [www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk), where you will find the relevant online change-in-circumstances form.

The form is easy to use and is the quickest way to report a change.

Meanwhile, if you would like to know more about Welfare Reform and how it will affect you, and the person you care for, there is a series of free information events taking place locally.

They are being organised by South Lanarkshire Carers Network and Partners.

You will have the opportunity to speak to someone who can provide help and advice about changes to benefits or to make an

appointment to speak to someone who can help.

The events are being held at the following times and venues:

- Thursday, May 9, 7pm – 9pm  
Corporate Dining Room, South Lanarkshire Council HQ, Almada Street, Hamilton
- Tuesday, May 21, 10.30am – 1pm  
St. John's Church Hall, Duke Street, Hamilton
- Tuesday, June 11, 10.30am – 1pm  
Murray Owen Centre, 1 Liddell Grove, East Kilbride
- Friday, June 21, 10.30am – 1pm  
Fernhill Community Pavilion,  
12 Auchenlarie Drive, Rutherglen

Anyone interested in getting more information about benefit changes is welcome to go along to any of these events.

Organisers ask anyone attending to be there for 10.30am prompt for day-time events and 7pm prompt for the evening event.

● To book a place please contact Sheena Bogan on 01698 285163.



## South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture



# Athletes gear up for Canadian challenge



## Team spirit builds in run-up to kids' games

By **Mhairi Anderson**

**HUGE excitement is building in the team representing South Lanarkshire ahead of this summer's Canadian Children's Games.**

The 21-strong squad comprises young athletes aged 13-15, who will compete in four disciplines – tennis, volleyball, swimming and athletics.

Carluke High School's Connor Walker, who is in the volleyball team, is thrilled to be going to Windsor to take part in the Games.

"I'm very excited, it's all beginning to take shape, such as the kits we'll be wearing, and the atmosphere before the games. It's going to be great," says Connor.

"The volleyball squad has been put together for this year's Games and this will be our first time in a big competition as a unit. But I know some of the guys from playing in the previous ICG team with their brothers."

Connor added: "The volleyball at the ICG in Lanarkshire was fantastic and I was lucky to be part of it."

"I was only on the reserve list but one of the guys got injured and I was asked to step up a week before the Games."

"I was in Tenerife at the time and ended up getting off a plane at 4am, to be on court at 10am, so I didn't get much sleep."

"I was tired but the adrenalin kicked in with the excitement, and it was great."

Holy Cross High pupil Olivia Jackson, from Hamilton, is a member of the swimming team.

She said the first time the squad had got together at the introductory team meeting had helped ignite a great spirit.

"It was the first time our whole team had met up and everyone is great – it really was good to be together."

"We have our kit now, too, and going to Canada doesn't seem that far away – it seems to be coming up pretty soon and I'm really looking forward to going."



Canadian athletes from Windsor in Ontario proudly represent their country at the opening of the Lanarkshire 2011 International Children's Games

Report by **Mhairi Anderson**

### A 21-strong squad of elite South Lanarkshire athletes is to compete in the 47th International Children's Games in Canada this summer.

The team will head to Windsor, Ontario, for the Games in August where they will compete against some of the world's best young sporting talent in athletics, volleyball, swimming and tennis.

Hopes are high that the South Lanarkshire athletes will once again feature strongly among the medal winners during the six-day event, from August 14-19, which has attracted teams from 82 cities around the world.

Local athletes have excelled in the medal stakes at previous Games and now the baton has passed to the team of 2013, who will be flying the flag for South Lanarkshire.

They have trained long and hard and are determined to make the most of the opportunity to compete in one of the world's most prestigious youth sporting events.

Lanarkshire hosted the Children's Games two years ago, when Windsor was one of the dozens of teams from around the world that took part in the hugely successful event.

Councillor Hamish Stewart, Chair of the Board of South Lanarkshire Leisure & Culture, said he was delighted South Lanarkshire was reciprocating by sending a team to the Canadian Games.

"Lanarkshire already boasts a fine sporting heritage and was very proud, indeed, to have been given the opportunity to play host to the

### TEAM SOUTH LANARKSHIRE 2013

#### ATHLETICS

Pamela McNicol, Carluke and sister Emily McNicol, Carluke  
Sarah Basset, Strathaven,  
Chloe Mason, East Kilbride

#### SWIMMING

Angus Barr, Lesmahagow and Club member in East Kilbride

Olivia Jackson, Limekilnburn, by Hamilton  
Meg Fannon, Hairmyres,  
East Kilbride

Erin Homes, Cambuslang  
Ross Leslie, Cambuslang

#### VOLLEYBALL

Ryan Scott, Carluke,  
Connor Walker, Forth  
Mark Hickey, East Kilbride  
Sam Hume, East Kilbride  
Blair Gillies, Rutherglen,  
Charlie McFarlane,  
Burnside

Stuart Wynne, Burnside

#### TENNIS

Greg Walker, Bothwell,  
Calum Wilson, Hamilton

South Lanarkshire taking part in the ICG in Windsor and wish them all well as they step into this great international sporting arena."

Gerry Campbell, South Lanarkshire Leisure & Culture's General Manager, says the young athletes are "raring to go".

"Team South Lanarkshire, together with their parents, guardians and coaches, attended a briefing on the International Children's Games to find out just what the challenges would be, and all left with a great feeling of enthusiasm and anticipation, and just raring to get on with their training for the big event," he says.

"Preparing for the ICG this year has conjured up special memories from the many years we in South Lanarkshire have participated in the Games."

"What stands out to me is how much our young people have gained in so many ways, not least through having the opportunity to make new friends from all around the world, while enjoying this fantastic sporting experience."

● The first International Children's Games took place in Celje, Slovenia, in 1968 at the height of the Cold War and, 45 years later, the vision the founding fathers had for the event has become firmly established and grown into the wonderful annual event it is today.



International Children's Games in 2011, when we showed a progressive and friendly face to the world as we welcomed 50 countries from every continent," said Councillor Stewart. "We are delighted to have 21 young people from



## Community meals make their mark

By **Mhairi Anderson**

THE council's community meals service has become the first in the UK to achieve the Food for Life Catering Mark.

The prestigious bronze Food for Life Catering Mark was awarded for serving fresh, healthy and seasonal meals in the Hamilton and Blantyre lunch clubs for older people.

Now the council's Facilities Services team is looking to extend the service throughout South Lanarkshire.

The award is the Soil Association's

national food award and the UK's only independent certification scheme setting standards of traceability, quality and provenance for public and private sector meals.

It also inspects caterers to ensure that standards are met.

Laura Stewart, Director of Soil Association Scotland, said: "Food plays an essential role in our health and wellbeing throughout our lives, and it is vital that those accessing care services can enjoy fresh, healthy and tasty meals that are not only good for us, but better for the planet, too. The Catering Mark helps

to provide much-needed reassurance about where food comes from, particularly in these times, in which food provenance is questioned."

The award reflects the fact that everyone attending one of South Lanarkshire's 12 daily lunch clubs can be guaranteed that:

- At least 75 per cent of the dishes are freshly prepared
- All meat is from farms that satisfy UK welfare standards and can be traced back to the farm
- All eggs are from cage-free hens
- Meals do not contain any undesirable food additives.

## To loos no trek thanks to launch of new maps

By **James Davitt**

**MAPS showing the location of toilet facilities across South Lanarkshire are now available 'at your convenience'.**

The 'At your Convenience' guides for Hamilton, East Kilbride, Rutherglen/Cambuslang and Clydesdale have been produced by Seniors Together, with funding from Macmillan Cancer Support.

South Lanarkshire's Depute Provost Pam Clearie said: "Seniors Together is concerned that older people will become housebound due to a lack of knowledge as to where toilet facilities exist.

"These maps have been produced to encourage older people to maintain their independence by providing information on accessing toilet provision while they are out and about.

"I hope that this will encourage older people to get out and be active in their communities, and not to allow the worry of where to access toilet facilities hold them back.

"The maps highlight locations where public toilets are available.

"Many of them are in community centres, libraries or council offices, where people may not previously have been aware public toilet facilities are available to use.

"The maps give details of their locations, opening times and other general information that may be useful.

"We would like to say a big 'thank you' to Macmillan for very generously providing us with this funding."

The move follows the successful launch of the Rutherglen and Cambuslang maps last year.

Heather Woods, from Macmillan Cancer Support, said: The lack of toilet facilities can lead to older people becoming housebound and Macmillan is happy to be working in conjunction with Seniors Together on this initiative."

Helen Biggins, Chairperson of Seniors Together, added: "These publications will be of benefit to the wider community, although they are aimed, initially, at older people."

● You can download your copy of the maps from the Seniors Together page on the council's website, [www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk), or you can pick up a copy at your local Q&A office or library.

There are 24 public toilets in South Lanarkshire (many using the RADAR key scheme for those with disabilities).

There is no charge for the service except for the automated public toilets which cost 20p.

## Reshaping Care for Older People update

By **Euan Duguid**

**DAVID LYON is a man on a mission.**

The latest recruit to Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire (VASLan) will play a vital role in the organisation's innovative fusion of the satellite age with grass-roots voluntary support.

VASLan have just launched their online "Locator" tool, which uses cutting-edge mapping technology to help prevent older people becoming isolated across South Lanarkshire.

At the click of a mouse, older residents and their carers can pinpoint local voluntary services and groups around them, ranging from support for illnesses, to line dancing and lunch clubs.

The project is funded by the Reshaping Care for Older People programme.

It is looking at ways to support the rapidly growing numbers of people aged 65 and over, focusing on providing more care at home and in the community.

David, right, has been recruited by VASLan as the Locality Officer for Clydesdale.

He will make sure that information on third-sector voluntary clubs and services on his beat, which encompasses Lanark, Biggar, Lesmahagow and some 20 villages in between, is current and comprehensive.

He'll then feed the details gleaned on the ground into the Locator database.

In practical terms, the role is about research and intelligence gathering but David is driven by deep-rooted convictions.

The father-of-two explained: "Before joining VASLan, I worked in the third sector for around 14 years, latterly on a consultancy basis, helping set up and run various groups.

"People in the sector are motivated by a social purpose. If you can assist them achieving their efforts to help others it's a real buzz."

And David is thriving in his current work with Locator.

The programme, now live at [www.vaslan.org.uk/locator](http://www.vaslan.org.uk/locator), works by entering a postcode and the distance you would like to travel to receive help or join a club.

Locator then automatically pinpoints services, using Google Maps, and provides key information, contact details and what kind of transport is provided.

The database has been developed following extensive research by VASLan's team of Locality Officers, who have charted scores of voluntary groups in the area.

Since its launch last month, the site has received almost 20,000 visitors. But David



# Space age bid to connect elderly

Satellite hi-tec to prevent older people becoming isolated

explains that the continual gathering of information is critical to Locator's ongoing success.

"A big part of my role is to make sure all details of clubs and services out there are up-to-date.

"There will be nothing worse if someone fancies going to an art class and finds that it's not open any more, or it's moved from a Tuesday night to a Monday night.

"People might have to make a lot of effort to get to a group or a club so it's crucial it's kept current."

According to David, the technology will also pave the way for the future.

"Analysis of what's been searched from each postcode area will also help establish what people are looking for and need," he explains.

"We hope the information will help us determine where services are missing and how the voluntary sector could help fill the gaps. It's also hoped the system will help

existing clubs and voluntary services complement each other's services in terms of timings and support."

David's work will play an important role in the overall aims of the programme.

Over the next six years, there is expected to be a rise of 25 per cent in the number of older people who may need some sort of assistance to live well in their own homes.

In response, the programme is combining the expertise of third-sector organisations, such as VASLan, with partner agencies, including NHS Lanarkshire, North and South Lanarkshire Councils and the independent sector.

David added: "The third sector can be a great support to the council and the health board professionals who are doing a fantastic job. It's about linking in and we feel Locator will prove to be invaluable to that collaborative approach."

● Contact David Lyon by emailing [david.lyon@vaslan.org.uk](mailto:david.lyon@vaslan.org.uk)



## Shopping holds key to town's recovery after jobs blows

**BOOSTING** East Kilbride as a shopping mecca is a central flank of the fightback against a series of major job blows.

A multi-agency task force, set up in the wake of Rolls Royce's decision to close its plant with the loss of 600 jobs, has identified the retail sector as a key priority.

East Kilbride, with its lively mix of shops and designer stores, is already a top destination for shoppers across central Scotland, and the task force aims to tap further into that potential.

Rolls Royce announced last summer that its 59-year-old factory would close in 2015 and its 600 staff transfer to a more modern facility at Inchinnan, near Glasgow Airport.

In response, the task force has drawn up a four-point action plan to capitalise on East Kilbride's vibrant town centre and its status as a competitive business location.

This involves supporting the growing business community within the town, linking to improvements in infrastructure, business development support and targeted inward investment.

The task force is also promoting the area as a preferred location to live and work, as well as a centre of excellence for education and skills, fostered by the town's college and schools.

All of the agencies involved in the task force, which includes a range of private and public sector partners, agreed the action plan as the way forward.

## Woodland haven to rise from derelict eyesore

A WOODLAND park is to be created on derelict land on the banks of the River Clyde.

Full approval for the park, at a site known as Cuningar Loop, close to Rutherglen town centre, was given at a recent meeting of South Lanarkshire Council's Planning Committee.

The £5million scheme is expected to attract 100,000 visitors to the site by 2021.

Approval was also given for a footbridge from Cuningar Loop to link the area to the Commonwealth Games Athletes Village, as well as the Clyde Walkway and National Cycle Route.

Council Leader Eddie McAvooy said it will create a "fantastic, accessible" green space facility.

"Cuningar Loop has been a long-neglected area of derelict land and I am sure the community around the park will enjoy and appreciate the facilities once completed," he added.

"We also hope it will attract people from far and wide and that it will be an important legacy of the Glasgow Commonwealth Games."



■ Clyde 1 DJ George Bowie was on hand to lend advice to aspiring DJs

## By George, pupils rock the schools DJ project

SOUTH Lanarkshire Council has adopted an innovative way of promoting pupil attendance and addressing behaviour issues through a dynamic DJ project, with a helping hand from Clyde 1's George Bowie.

The project is run in partnership with school attendance officers from Trinity, Stonelaw and Cathkin High Schools, Universal Connections, Active Breaks and Kushi Records.

Around 30 pupils from Rutherglen schools have, so far, taken part in the project.

It has helped them to refocus on the benefits learning can bring, while their interest in music has made them feel they have a

reason for attending school and taking part in team activities.

Cathkin, Stonelaw and Trinity High schools wanted to look at ways of addressing challenging behaviour issues by finding ways to re-engage young people.

They wanted to look at why some pupils don't attend and get to know some of the challenges they face in their lives.

Through the project, young people have learned creative DJ skills in scratch mixing, record sampling, set building, beat mixing and music production.

Those involved were presented with an accredited DJ certificate and Youth Achievement/Dynamic Youth Award by George Bowie.

## Partnership working

# Take the pledge to get fit and healthy for summer

By **Mhairi Anderson**

**A FUN family activity day will take place in Strathclyde Country Park this summer with the message 'Get Active Lanarkshire'.**

Organisers are hoping thousands of people of all ages will go along on Saturday, June 1, between 12 and 5pm and take part in the wide range of free sessions on offer.

It's part of a wider campaign to encourage Lanarkshire residents to increase their physical activity in the run-up to and beyond the Commonwealth Games in 2014.

Those taking part will be able to find out about the many benefits of adopting a more active lifestyle, as well as the vast array of clubs, groups and services they can access to help them achieve this.

The event has been organised by NHS Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire Council, North Lanarkshire Council, South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture, North Lanarkshire Leisure and Healthy Working Lives.

Neena Mahal, NHS chair, said: "This is a hugely ambitious project that aims to encourage every Lanarkshire resident – young and old – to think about how they can increase their level of physical activity, by even a small amount."

"The Glasgow Commonwealth Games in 2014 will see huge interest in sport and all the partners involved want to use this tremendous opportunity to encourage more Lanarkshire people to get more active, more often."

Hugh Sweeney, Healthy Working Lives manager, continued: "One of the focuses of the event on June 1 will be to ask people to make a pledge to increase their physical activity."

"This can be something like taking up running or cycling to



Get Active Lanarkshire

More People. More Active. More Often.

Strathclyde Park - Saturday 1st June 12pm - 5pm

**FAMILY FUN DAY**

### Activities include:

- 01 • Main Stage – with a host of fun activities, activity and music demonstrations and competitions
- 02 • A Commonwealth Games Activity Walk
- 03 • Outdoor Skate Park
- 04 • Climbing Wall
- 05 • Outdoor basketball
- 06 • Soccer/Sports Arenas
- 07 • Trampolines
- 08 • Bouncy castle
- 09 • Face painting
- 10 • Fun Slides
- 11 • Play Talk Read Bus
- 12 • Birds of Prey
- 13 • Canoeing/Kayaking
- 14 • Body Check Bus
- 15 • Glasgow Science Centre – Body Works Exhibition
- 16 • Golf
- 17 • Sumo
- 18 • Rugby
- 19 • Library Bus
- 20 • Hexagol
- 21 • Young Scot Stand
- 22 • Strathclyde Fire & Rescue Stand
- 23 • Police Stand
- 24 • Cancer Stand
- 25 • Dental Stand
- 26 • Pledge Enquiries
- 27 • North Lanarkshire Leisure
- 27 • North Lanarkshire Council
- 28 • South Lanarkshire Leisure & Culture
- 29 • NHS Lanarkshire
- 30 • Toilets
- 31 • First Aid



joining a bowling club, or even vowing to spend another 20 minutes walking the dog.

"We realise that increasing your physical activity won't make everyone a winning athlete, but everyone will win by becoming more active."

Administration staff at Udston Hospital have all pledged their support for 'Get Active Lanark-



**Come to checkpoint 1 to collect your events map.** Get your map stamped in all 6 checkpoints, return completed map to registration tent for a chance of winning a fantastic iPad.

All completed maps should be returned to the Pledge Enquiries tent.

**WIN WIN WIN**  
Win An iPad



shire'. They have each vowed to increase their level of physical activity by making some small changes to their everyday lives to help them get more active.

For some, it will mean more walking, either while at work or on their journey to work, while for others it will simply be using stairs, rather than lifts, during the course of their day.

Udston receptionist Janice

McCormick said: "I already enjoy walking but I'd like to think I could do some more during my lunch break – particularly now that the summer is coming in."

Doreen Buttery added: "I often go to Carluke Health Centre to work and, when there, I plan to use the stairs rather than the lift."

● **Get Active Lanarkshire takes place on Saturday, June 1 at Strathclyde Park, 12-5pm.**



South Lanarkshire Council offers versatile business premises including Burgh Business Centre, Cathcart Place in Rutherglen, Carluke Business Centre and Howard Court in East Kilbride, that are suitable for all types of companies from start-ups to those wishing to expand their operation

# Council helps business start, grow and flourish

## Investing in economic development helps create opportunities

By **Andy Livingstone**

**AT a time when business news is dominated by cutbacks and reduced opportunities, it is encouraging to hear that investment is being made in economic development across South Lanarkshire.**

The council has been involved in several new business development projects throughout South Lanarkshire, helping to expand the range and versatility of units to meet the needs of companies of all sizes.

Improved infrastructure, combined with ready access to expert advice, means South Lanarkshire is an increasingly attractive option for businesses looking for suitable premises, whether for start-up or expansion.

"We have business people coming to us for all sorts of reasons," explained Joanne Forbes, Estates Manager.

"It can be someone setting up from scratch or an established business needing to expand into larger premises, or moving into this area.

"We also have people looking for smaller properties if, for example, new technology means they don't need as much space, or the economic climate means they have to re-organise their business.

"Whoever it is, and whatever size of

property they are looking for, they all have their own needs, from floors that are strong enough to take heavy machinery, to offices with a range of services available.

"That means we need to be able to offer a portfolio with a wide variety of properties to allow us to help as many people as possible."

To this end, the council has invested in a number of developments, offering more than 30 new units of different types and sizes.

In Rutherglen, the former Burgh Primary School has been transformed into Burgh Business Centre, creating 16 office units with modern facilities.

Nearby, Cathcart Place is a development of eight units, ranging from 250 to 500 sq m, while smaller businesses can find something suitable in Hamilton, where Kilcreegan Court, in Hillhouse, has seven units of around 92 sq m each.

Projects to further expand the portfolio of business premises are underway in Uddingston and Larkhall, as well as the market towns of Lanark, Lesmahagow and Biggar.

These will offer a mix of modern business spaces and facilities, in addition to existing office units in Hamilton Street, Carluke, and industrial space in East Kilbride's popular Howard Court.

Units are rarely available in Howard Court,

however, there is currently limited space to let.

Leasing business premises from the council offers a number of distinct advantages, not least being the ready access to advice that is available from other council services.

This includes experts in Business Development, who look after loans and grants to local businesses, Planning and Trading Standards.

Joanne added: "We are a large organisation, with experience and knowledge in so many different areas of expertise, giving our commercial tenants peace of mind that they can draw on expert advice quickly and easily, whenever they need it.

"We have invested an average of £8million a year, for the last five years on infrastructure, which has seen us improving or creating services for developments, clearing and preparing sites and undertaking regeneration.

"We aim to offer a comprehensive package of services, giving local businesses the opportunity to start, grow and flourish."

● **Any business interested in taking advantage of this tailored approach to finding new premises should contact Sandra Kinnon on 01698 455091, or Thomas Murdoch on 01698 455143, or email [landandproperty@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:landandproperty@southlanarkshire.gov.uk).**

## Celebrating the official opening of new schools' shared campus



By **Sarah Burrows**

**PUPILS and teachers recently celebrated the official opening of Carluke's new £9.3million Victoria Park School and High Mill Primary.**

Pupils performed to a packed hall of invited guests and dignitaries, who also enjoyed a tour of the new facilities.

Anne Fisher, Head Teacher at Victoria Park School, and Marion Girdwood, High Mill Primary Head Teacher, jointly welcomed guests to the new campus.

Anne Fisher said: "High Mill Primary School and Victoria Park School are both unique schools with their own identity.

"With our new campus, however, we welcome and are excited about the opportunities afforded us for joined-up working, through shared experiences, the learning and teaching, and the fantastic resources within the campus."

Marion Girdwood said: "We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone involved in creating our very unique schools and our wonderful campus. We are delighted to learn and teach in our new home."

Pupils from both High Mill and Victoria Park kicked off the entertainment by singing "We're On This Road" supported by High Mill pupils.

The event then took on a distinctly Scottish flavour as pupils sang a selection of songs, including 'Wiggly Waggly Worm' and 'Three Craws'.

Guests were then treated to a presentation showcasing the range of activities pupils have been enjoying since moving into their new school.

Provost Eileen Logan, above, and Councillor David Shearer carried out the official opening by unveiling the plaques.

Provost Logan said: "It is fantastic to be here to officially open this joint campus.

"I know that both schools are very individual but it is fantastic that they have the opportunity to work so closely together.

"It is apparent that pupils and staff love coming here and long may the partnership working continue."

Councillor Shearer said: "It is always a pleasure to visit both schools and I am honoured to be part of the celebrations.

"The partnership approach not only extends to both schools but to the wider school community and Carluke in general.

"This is a credit to the fantastic leadership of both head teachers."

The event finished with a rousing rendition of 'We're On This Road' by pupils from both schools.



## GETTING PUPILS INVOLVED IN MUSIC ENCOURAGES THEM TO LEARN NEW SKILLS

**FROM ceilidh groups to samba bands, trombone soloists to full orchestras, music in schools can take many shapes and sounds.**

Earlier this month, South Lanarkshire Council's Instrumental Music Service staged an inaugural event to bring the brightest and best talents together under one roof.

The IMS Showcase was the first of two performances designed to show parents, teachers and the wider community the service's strengths and diversity.

The second event, planned for June, will concentrate on primary schools but the first included soloists, ensembles and orchestras from primary right up to S6.

Instrumental music co-ordinator Graeme Barclay explains: "From a musician's perspective, I can clearly see the benefits of bringing music into a young person's life.

"Learning to sing or play an instrument can help children to achieve and attain so much and they grow in confidence as a result. They take that confidence into other areas of school life, too, so the advantages are enormous."

South Lanarkshire's IMS works in partnership

with school music departments, learning communities and external organisations, such as Creative Scotland, which funds the council's Youth Music Initiative activities.

Since its inception in 2003, YMI has provided numerous opportunities for children and young people across Scotland to get involved in music, particularly many who would not normally have the chance to participate.

In South Lanarkshire, those activities give many young children their first taste of music, before moving on to lessons and the chance to participate in school bands, or South Lanarkshire ensembles and orchestras.

"We are very proud of the fact that 4000 pupils are currently receiving instrumental tuition but, if you add in all the YMI activities, that figure doubles to 8000," says Graeme.

"At the moment, there is a national debate about the issue of fees for musical tuition, part of a review currently being carried out by the Scottish Government.

"South Lanarkshire introduced fees in 2010 and, since then, we have worked hard to ensure that the standard and quality of tuition remains high." Since taking up his position last June,

Graeme has been keen to raise the profile of the IMS and the showcase events are an important part of his vision.

Music also has a significant part to play in helping pupils make the transition from primary to secondary school.

"The Lesmahagow Learning Community, for example, invites pupils from its five feeder primaries to rehearse together one afternoon a week, and Duncanrig Secondary and Calderglen High in East Kilbride do the same," says Graeme.

"This is a great way of helping pupils prepare for high school and the mentoring and peer support opportunities it provides are enormous."

He adds: "Music is an important part of Scottish culture – to get a sound out of an instrument, or out of yourself with your voice, requires great creativity.

"There is no doubt that getting involved with music at an early age helps young people learn new skills, grow in confidence and diversity and boost their creativity."

Graeme adds: "And music is portable, as well as welcoming the community to us, we can take music out into the community, and I hope



# Showcasing the best musical talents





## ILLS AND BOOSTS CONFIDENCE, AS ANNIE STUART HAS BEEN FINDING OUT

we can continue to make an impact on community life across South Lanarkshire.”

One successful bunch of musicians currently making an impact in East Kilbride is the Duncanrig Ceilidh 'n' Folk Group, below.

Based at Duncanrig Secondary in East Kilbride, the group was formed by music teacher Ian McLean and a handful of like-minded pupils who shared a love of traditional music.

Rehearsing twice a week at lunchtimes, they gradually built up numbers and their first public performance – at a school Christmas concert – raised the roof.

Their first ‘proper’ hire – to play at a local primary school’s fundraising Burns Supper – brought them to the attention of the wider community.

And first prize in the folk category at Glasgow Music Festival earlier this year confirmed what everyone who has heard them had already realised – Duncanrig Ceilidh 'n' Folk Group is destined for big things.

Ian McLean explains: “There has been a ceilidh band at Duncanrig in various forms since I joined the school around 15 years ago.

“There have been ups and downs along the way, and lots of different combinations of instruments and music, from the very traditional to much more modern.

“Our band, Ecosse, had great success a few years ago, playing a variety of gigs inside and outside school.”

He adds: “The current group are fantastic – they work really hard and they did themselves proud at Auldhouse Primary’s Burns Supper and at Glasgow Music Festival.

“It was a great confidence boost for them to perform at the school event because they got such a positive response from everyone who came along.”

Next up are gigs at the EK Crime Prevention Panel meeting in May and performances at local school awards ceremonies, plus a trip to France with Duncanrig music department.

The group comprises sixth years Darren Hutton and Alexander Marshall, who play guitar and sing; fourth year Rachel Keeley, who plays the fiddle; percussionist Kerr Gildie and guitarist Emma Clark, who are in third year, and second years Fraser Cooper and Rory Stark, who play piano and penny whistle respectively.

Rory explains: “I grew up listening to traditional music and my dad played the penny whistle, so I think I got my interest from him.

“Being part of the group is great and performing at events, like the Burns Supper and the festival, have given us a lot of confidence to keep going and to try new things.”

South Lanarkshire triumphed in many categories at the music festival this year.

The Orchestral Society’s senior concert band, Larkhall Academy’s Guitar Ensemble, Stonelaw High’s senior concert band and Uddingston Grammar’s Concert Band all took first place in their sections and there was an impressive variety of second and third prizes.

Elsewhere, Larkhall Academy’s Concert Band won a Gold Plus award at the Scottish Concert Bands Festival in Perth, while a number of pupils will represent South Lanarkshire during the 2013 West of Scotland Schools, National Youth Jazz Orchestra and National Youth Brass Band courses.

● **For more information on instrumental tuition in South Lanarkshire schools, visit the council’s website [www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk)**

Picture by Anne-Janine Nugent



# the brightest and talent in schools



## Pupils and parents 'park and stride' to help environment

Report by **James Davitt**

PUPILS and parents at Newfield Primary School have launched a new Park and Stride scheme.

Park and Stride is where the parent or guardian of a pupil chooses to park a short distance from the school and walk the rest of the way.

At Newfield PS, the designated Park and Stride point is the nearby Stonehouse Lifestyles Centre, which was identified through the School Travel Plan.

School Travel Plans aim to lower the number of car journeys being made to and from school, thereby reducing congestion at school gates and improving road safety and the school environment.

This involves the development, promotion and encouragement of sustainable travel habits and can involve the introduction of Park and Stride locations.

Councillor Graham Simpson, Chair of South Lanarkshire Council's Road Safety Forum, said: "The Park and Stride scheme is a great way to encourage children and parents to walk to school.

"As well as the obvious health benefits, if more children walked to school it would mean a reduction in the number of cars around the school gates, which is a huge problem.

"One way of doing this is to encourage the parent or guardian to take part in the walk to school.

"We recognise that, for some people, there is no other option than to take the car, which is why having a dedicated Park and Stride point is so helpful.

"Congratulations to everyone at Newfield Primary School who helped come up with this scheme."

## Driving home HGV danger to children

A NEW booklet highlighting the dangers of HGVs to children has been produced by South Lanarkshire Council.

'Large Vehicles – A Road User's Guide' informs young people and other road users about the particular dangers posed by large vehicles.

Supported by transport logistics firm Norbert Dentressangle, the booklet gives facts and figures about the number of crashes involving HGVs across the UK – around 7000 each year, resulting in 263 deaths.

It also provides information about the turning circles of HGVs, their size in relation to other vehicles and "blind spots" – the area around the vehicle not visible to the driver.

Councillor Graham Simpson, Chair of South Lanarkshire Council's Road Safety Forum, said: "The booklet is a great tool to enable our young people to learn all about HGVs and how dangerous they can be.

"It is very clearly laid out and uses illustrations to demonstrate exactly what the dangers are."



# Warm welcome

Report by **Stephen Terry**

## HUNDREDS of residents lined the streets of Hamilton last month to welcome home the 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

The crowds gathered along the parade route to welcome almost 200 soldiers, many from the local area, home from their last tour in Afghanistan.

Setting off from the Town Square, the parade marched up Castle Street and Quarry Street before moving along Lamb Street, Leechlee Road and Cadzow Street, finishing at the Hamilton Town House in Cadzow Street, where the Lord Lieutenant of Lanarkshire, Mushtaq Ahmad, took the salute. He was accompanied by South Lanarkshire Provost Eileen Logan, North Lanarkshire Provost Jim Robertson, local MPs, MSPs and councillors.

In her address, South Lanarkshire Provost Eileen Logan said: "It is a great honour and privilege to welcome home the soldiers of

the 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland. It is great to see so many people lining the streets of Hamilton to welcome you all back.

"And it must be especially moving for all the troops from the Hamilton area whose families and friends were cheering their heroes back from Afghanistan.

"I am sure the cheers from the children from the local primary schools make the welcome all the more special.

"I am sure you will all now be looking forward to spending more time with your loved ones.

"So, on behalf of everyone here in Hamilton, I thank you all for everything you have done in the service of your country – it is much appreciated."

The parade was staged to thank

the citizens of South Lanarkshire for their support during their six-month tour of intense and dangerous operations in Helmand Province.

The continued support for the soldiers provides them with a huge boost to their morale so the large crowds were very much appreciated.

Commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel Ben Wrench said he was "hugely proud" to lead his men through their home towns.

"It's a wonderful privilege to take the applause from people. The soldiers really appreciate it," he said.

"They have done a good job. Up to 40 per cent of these men and women were in Helmand in 2010 and they have seen real progress since then."

The battalion returned to their base in Edinburgh





Pictures by Anne-Janine Nugent



# for returning heroes

recently after six months in notorious Helmand Province.

The dangers they face daily was underlined recently by the deaths of three soldiers from the Royal Regiment of Scotland, when their armoured vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device.

Among those who turned out to welcome the soldiers home was World War II veteran Ian Forsyth, left inset.

As a young soldier in April 1945, Ian faced the gates of Belsen Concentration Camp from the confines of an Army tank as Allied troops prepared to liberate it.

The images of emaciated frames of men, women and children who had been starved and beaten were forever seared on Ian's memory.

And he knows that the soldiers returning from active duty in Afghanistan will have to come to terms with the horrors they, too, witnessed during their tours.

Another veteran determined to salute the returning troops was Jim Hamilton, from Larkhall, who served with the Cameronians

from 1956-59. Jim, below right, was involved in three conflicts, finishing up in Aden.

Pupils from a number of local primary schools also made a point of assembling to welcome the troops home, including Hamilton's St Mary's and Woodside primaries.

They came armed with banners and flags and joined in the rousing welcome enjoyed by the soldiers from an appreciative crowd of well-wishers. Also among the crowd was South Lanarkshire woman Elsie

Anderson, who has nine nephews serving in the military, and said she wouldn't have missed welcoming the troops home for anything.

The family of a Larkhall soldier who died in Afghanistan was also among the well-wishers.

Johnathan Moore was just 22 when he was killed in a bomb blast in Helmand while commanding his section on patrol.

His family have fostered close bonds with those who fought alongside Jonathan, including Private Danny Lawson, Corporal James McColm and Lance Corporal Sean Mullen.

Danny Lawson is seen with Jonathan's niece Esme-Brooke Whitelaw, below, left.



South Lanarkshire's Lord Lieutenant Mushtaq Ahmad and Provost Eileen Logan salute the homecoming soldiers in Hamilton, centre



Enjoying a walk along the recently upgraded path on the nature trail with Countryside Ranger, Chris McGinley, were four-year-old pupils from nearby Woodlands Nursery, Scott Anderson, Lucas Duffy, Marissa McGlynn and Caroline Grey. At the end of their trail, they all enjoyed a well-earned rest on one of the newly built bridges



# Woodland facelift

## AN ambitious restoration project is underway to improve a South Lanarkshire beauty spot.

One of Hamilton's most picturesque landmarks, the neighbouring woodlands of Neilsland Park and Earnock Glen, both of which were previously part of the Watson Estates, is undergoing a facelift.

The woodlands once formed a fine designed landscape around the now-demolished Neilsland House and Earnock House, which belonged to the Watson family, one of Scotland's leading coal mine owners.

The sprawling site stretches from Highstonehall Road and follows the old railway line to Iona Ridge Park.

The council's Countryside Rangers and Countryside and Greenspace officers have been working together with local community group New Roots and the Neilsland and Earnock Heritage Group, on a project to help raise funding to improve access to both areas and bring the woodlands back under management.

New Roots, made up of enthusiastic parents and residents, came together two years ago to try to help re-open

WORK IS UNDERWAY TO RESTORE A HISTORIC SOUTH LANARKSHIRE BEAUTY SPOT TO ITS FORMER GLORY. THE AMBITIOUS PROJECT WILL ENABLE CHILDREN TO ENJOY NATURE TRAILS AND WOODLAND PATHS SAFELY, WITH BRIDGES HAVING BEEN BUILT TO IMPROVE ACCESS. MHAIRI ANDERSON REPORTS

the old nature trails at Neilsland and Earnock Estates, so local children could enjoy the woodland paths safely.

With the invaluable support of New Roots, the council's Countryside and Greenspace officers secured approximately £100,000 for the project, of which £85,000 has been committed through Forestry Commission Scotland's Woodlands in and Around Towns (WIAT) Challenge Fund.

The first phase is currently underway, including the construction of two new

bridges and the upgrading of footpaths to form attractive, circular walking routes linking the communities of Woodhead, Meikle Earnock and Earnock.

The construction of the bridges has recently been completed, once more allowing access for people to make their way from the Neilsland end to the Earnock end of the woodland.

Meanwhile, woodland management and work to improve footpaths and entrance features has been ongoing.

Since the group formed, New Roots has organised clean-up days, attracting the help of more than 100 local residents, councillors, MSPs and MPs, who all willingly rolled up their sleeves to join the clear-up.

The group also holds regular guided walks helping local people to rediscover and enjoy their local woodlands.

Recently, the group made contact with Dr Anne Neale, Honorary Fellow of the School of Architecture and Design at the University of Tasmania, who thinks they may have uncovered a site linked to a world-famous artist and landscape designer.

Dr Neale is a world authority on the pre-Raphaelite artist and landscape designer Edward La Trobe Bateman, and believes that the designed landscapes of Neilsland and Earnock Estates are undiscovered Bateman gems right in the centre of Hamilton.





## Blind cord safety campaign aims to reduce accidents



■ Margaret Brunton is helping raise awareness about safety

MORE than 3000 safety leaflets and cleats are being handed out as part of a campaign to prevent tragic accidents involving blind cords in the home, writes *Mhairi Anderson*.

Council Home Safety officers have teamed up with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) to highlight the campaign that could save children's lives.

Over the last decade, 15 children in the UK have died after being caught in blind cords, five of these in the last year. And there are likely to have been many more near-misses.

In a bid to raise public awareness, the council's Home Safety team has been out and about distributing 3000 'Make it Safe' leaflets and easy-to-install window cleats.

Home Safety officer Margaret Brunton had a great response from the public when she recently went along to the Asda store in Hamilton.

"By doing something as simple as installing a very basic cleat, we can minimise the potential hazard to children caused by blind cords," she explains.

"It is also so easy to overlook the fact that accidents don't just happen in your children's own home but in those of family and friends, who may not have previously had to consider the dangers blind cords can pose. That is why, as part of this project, we are keen to include, not just parents and carers, but extended families, too."

Linzi Hill, from Hamilton, who was at the supermarket with her daughter, Amelie, said: "I had never thought about this sort of danger before, so it was great to have it brought to my attention. The pack looked really good – so good, in fact, that I took an extra one for my friend, as well."

And Bonita McKenna, from Stonehouse, who was also at the store with daughter, Neve, added: "This is something I am very conscious of."

"We have blinds all over the house and we check all the time that the cords are kept well out of the way, so I think this is a really valuable initiative for the council to do."

● **Anyone who would like cleats for use in their home should call Margaret on 01698 454182.**

## £22m health centre given the go-ahead

PLANS to build a £22million health centre in East Kilbride have been given the go-ahead.

The new Hunter Health Centre will be built next to the existing building on the site of the current Ballerup car park and the old facility will be demolished.

The new building will be five storeys high with a four-storey car park built on the site of the current facility. NHS Lanarkshire say the new building will enhance patient care in the community, with facilities including six GP practices, one general dental practice, podiatry, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, a community treatment room, phlebotomy, mental health, public health nurses and long-term condition nurses.

# bridges gap

The New Roots Heritage group is naturally keen to establish the Bateman link and is looking into commissioning a landscape heritage study to help prove the theory.

Since its inaugural meeting in November 2011, the group has gone from strength to strength, becoming a powerful campaigning voice for, not only improvement to the parks, but also to ensure the rich cultural and natural history of the area is celebrated by local people and visitors alike.

With help from Sir Simon Watson, 6th Baronet of Earnock, whose family owned the estates during the late 19th and early 20th century – and who is Honorary Patron of New Roots Neilsland and Earnock Heritage Group – a valuable archive of historical documents, maps and photos has also been created.

New Roots aims are to:

- improve access to Neilsland and Earnock Estates for the benefit of the inhabitants of the area
- encourage the goodwill and involvement of the wider community
- foster community spirit and encourage civic pride
- promote the historic relevance of the estates, documenting and preserving information for wider use
- conserve and enhance the natural and designed landscapes and biodiversity
- promote the sustainable use of the area for

the benefit of people and wildlife

- promote and facilitate the use of Neilsland and Earnock Estates for local schools and groups interested in outdoor learning and activity.

In the coming months, council Countryside and Greenspace officers will be working hard to develop the group further and plan to have a website up and running to keep everyone up-to-date with news. It will also make the Neilsland and Earnock History Archive more widely available for those interested in research.

- **Anyone interested in helping to improve access to the old estates, or has a passion for local history and wildlife, should join the group's Facebook page, which currently has more than 100 members and continues to grow.**





16 MILLION YOUNG MEN LOST THEIR LIVES IN THE GREAT WAR, MANY LIE IN UNMARKED

# The killing fields of Arras..

**THE first I heard of my Great Uncle William, I was 16 and had been sent home with a special assignment from my Modern Studies teacher.**

He'd asked if anyone suffered from recurring nightmares. I had one every now and again that woke me up terrified. There was nothing to see in the dream – my whole vision was filled with grey fog but I knew there was something oppressive behind it.

When I was young, I'd wake up screaming but, as I got older, I'd just wake up feeling scared.

My teacher said he'd read some research linking nightmares to some horrific story from the past and to go home and ask an older relative if anyone had died in extreme circumstances.

I went home and asked my papa who told me the very little he knew about his brother, William, who he had hardly known, before he died in the Great War, as he was only six when the word came back from the Front.

All we had was a half centime piece, with one side polished flat and the date of his death – 3/5/1917 – engraved on it, presumably sent back by a friend.

All he knew was that William had been killed in the trenches somewhere in France.

Strangely, the nightmares don't wake me up any more, although I can still bring back the fear if I close my eyes and remember what I saw.

Over the years, I did bits of research here and there and I knew that William was commemorated on the war memorial in Hamilton Town House.

Once the Commonwealth War Graves Commission built a website with a searchable database, I discovered he was also commemorated on the memorial in the French town of Arras, suggesting he died somewhere in the area.

Fast forward to the end of 2012, when I decided now was the time to make the pilgrimage, along with my mum, to visit the memorial, a trip we finally got round to in April.

I wanted to be armed with as much knowledge as possible before I went, so I bought *Walking Arras*, written by WWI researcher and advisor to the BBC Paul Reed.

The pictures he paints are horrific – hundreds of young men dying on both sides of the wire every day, just to gain a few yards of French mud.

William served with the Scottish Rifles, better known as the Cameronians but, unless you know the structure of the Army well, all the brigades, battalions and divisions can be really confusing.

However, I knew that the Cameronians' records are held by Low Parks Museum in Hamilton and I emailed them with as much detail as I had to see if they could help me with my search.

A short while later, I received an answer from Museums Assistant Lizzie O'Neil, who had checked back the official war diaries and had also checked the memoirs of a local man on the slight off-chance that William would be mentioned.

William originally enlisted with the Lanarkshire Yeomanry and transferred to the Cameronians. The war diaries give the detail of the division's movements but it was the memoirs of Private Thomas Banks, who



wrote them in 1971, when he was in his early 80s, that provide the interesting details.

He transferred from the Yeomanry around the same time and wrote: 'our company suffered some casualties by a shell landing in one of the trenches, Willie Currie from Hamilton being killed, others wounded, the rest of us had to keep on moving – casualties had to be left for the Red Cross (Field Ambulance) then to Royal Army Medical Corps'.

However, the real gem is a photograph of William from Private Banks' collection. On the back he has written: 'Killed around Arras in Trenches beside me, 3/1<sup>st</sup> Lanarkshire Yeomanry, From William Currie, Townhead Street, Hamilton'.

Looking at the photo is like looking at my grandfather George Jack Currie, who was too young when William left for war to remember him – that's why we so know little about him.

William was no hero, except to his family, and his story isn't extraordinary, it's extra ordinary.

Every family was touched by loss in WWI. I used to wonder why I had so many maiden aunts but it was because so many young men died that there weren't enough left to go round. It must be one of the darkest periods in living memory, along with the Holocaust.

is the French town where Private William Currie fell aged 20 during the First World War, as the battle raged between Germany and the Allies on the Western Front. Almost a century later, his great niece Carolyn Mitchell retraced his footsteps to find his final resting place among the fallen

Lizzie invited me along to see the memoirs and the war diary. We found map references for where William would have been around the date of his death and the Cuba Trench is mentioned as being where he emerged from before he died.

Closer inspection of Private Banks' memoirs reveals that he joined the Lanark Yeomanry and stayed overnight in the Crown Hotel in Lanark before starting training next day.

He and William then transferred to the Cameronians and he describes how they had to give up their Yeomanry uniform and start wearing that of the Cameronians'.

Next, he goes on to describe their first days in France and their first taste of French coffee.

It must have seemed like a Boys' Own Adventure to these two Scottish lads, who had probably never been out of Lanarkshire.

His memoir later describes them coming up out of the trench, then William being hit and dying right there beside him. The trench is in the war diary as the Cuba trench but matching up old maps with modern maps can be tricky.

The photo of William was in the box Lizzie had put together, along with a photo taken of the company taken after the war. There, marked by a cross, was Private Banks. I felt quite emotional looking at those pictures.

Two young men but only one lived to tell the tale. Thank goodness he did.

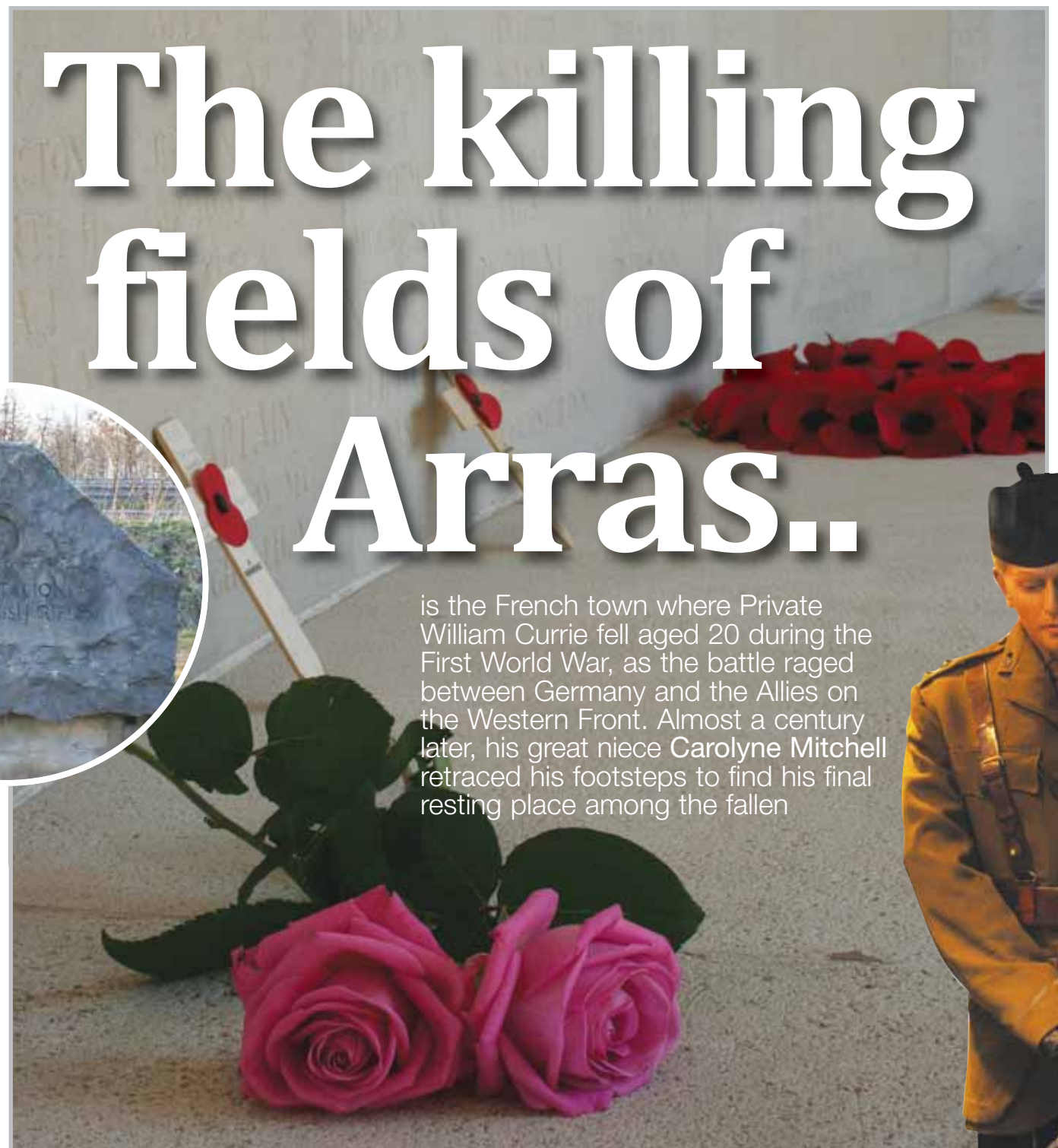
It's really unusual to find this much information, especially the photos. Even WWI searches in the National Archives can be futile, as the majority of the records were lost in a fire during the Blitz in WWII.

I contacted Paul Reed, the author of *Walking Arras*, on Twitter to see if he could help me identify where the Cuba trench would have been.

He very kindly sent me a modern map with it overlaid. The main motorway crosses where it would have been.

When we arrived in Calais we relied on the navigation and maps on my phone and, as we headed towards Saint-Quentin just after Arras, the familiar double loops shone bright on my phone. We were driving over where the Cuba trench had been and, all around us, was the battleground where William and so many men lost their young lives.

We chose Easter Monday to visit the Arras Memorial but, first, I visited a florist to buy two pink roses – deep pink is for respect and gratitude but that barely covers how I felt.





## GRAVES BUT THEIR ULTIMATE SACRIFICE HAS NOT BEEN FORGOTTEN BY THEIR FAMILIES



Private William Currie, left, was just 20 when he lost his life during the Great War. Almost a century later, his great niece made a pilgrimage to the French town of Arras, where William is thought to lie in an unmarked grave.

Carolyne Mitchell and museums assistant Lizzie O'Neil pore over the war diaries at Low Parks Museum, below



there is a cairn just yards from it dedicated to all the Scottish divisions who fought.

The stones were shipped to France from all the areas the men came from and the cairn, itself, is a copy of the one in Culloden.

He said that if we made the trip across the field we'd really be stepping in William's shoes.

We had to do it.

When we got there we stood in silence, looked for the stone to commemorate the Cameronians, then headed for the cemetery next to the cairn.

Most of the graves are for soldiers who couldn't be identified, probably because they were buried quickly before being transferred to a proper cemetery.

Most wore leather dog tags that disintegrated very quickly.

One man, Archibald McMillan, who served with the Royal Scots, for some reason had the foresight to get his made of metal and sewn into his uniform.

He died and would never have been found, had it not been for the careful archaeological digs done on the industrial site.

When they found his body, they managed to trace his son, who was born after Archibald died.

Aged 91, he attended his father's funeral and his last resting place is the cemetery at Point du Jour – I can't think of anything more tragic and moving.

As we looked at the other unmarked graves and realised how close Point du Jour is to the Cuba Trench, it dawned on us all that William is probably in one of those graves. It may just be wishful thinking but, in our own hearts and minds, we can lay him to rest there.

Our journey is at an end and William can rest in peace knowing that we did our best to find him.

I'm guessing that many more people will make the pilgrimage over the next few years, given that next year marks the centenary of the start of the Great War.

If I can help anyone I will – I may even make the trip again myself.

Thanks go to Lizzie and the Friends of the Cameronians, and also Paul Reed.

Thanks also go to Private Thomas Banks for being with William when he died, and for keeping his memory alive in his memoirs.

It may even have been him who sent back the half centime I now wear on my charm bracelet.

● **If any of his family recognise his story it would be great if you could get in touch – carolyne.mitchell@southlanarkshire.gov.uk**



As you enter the Arras Memorial, there's a huge engraved stone that puts everything into perspective.

Aside from the marked graves, the memorial commemorates the lives of nearly 36,000 men who have no known graves – and that's just the ones who lost their lives in the Battles of Arras, not the Somme, not Passchendaele, not Ypres.

Even though we had a map of the memorial, and details of the bay we'd find his name in, the sheer scale of the place made it difficult to get any bearings.

All around the semi-circular walls there are names and, at the base, people have left flowers, crosses and old sepia photos of sons, brothers, fathers and uncles.

We eventually found his name up high in bay six, along with the others in his battalion who lost their lives and were never found. I left the roses there, one from me,

one from my mum – and that's when the tears started with both of us.

We never knew William but the magnitude of the whole thing just got to us. We could also put ourselves in my great gran's shoes when she got 'the knock' on the door to say her son would never be coming home.

We were the first in the family to have the chance to make that journey, so we cried for everyone who had known him.

We took a last, sombre look round to pay our respects and, again, the graves brought it home to us how many gave their lives.

From there, we headed to a museum in Arras that opened in 2008 and, although I didn't think it would have much relevance to William's story, I wanted to visit.

Carrière Wellington is part of a mediaeval warren of chalk quarries 20m under the pavements of Arras.

Although abandoned, the British got wind of their existence and worked out that part of them came up a few metres from the German

line. They used the mining talents of the troops from New Zealand and the North of England to make them safe, the plan being to take the German line using the element of surprise on a grand scale.

One of the guides asked if we were visiting as tourists or if we had a personal reason for the visit.

When I pulled out the research I'd done before I left home, he took it from me and said he'd do some more research while we were doing the tour.

You descend into the dark and the damp of the quarry in a small group with a guide.

You walk along wooden duckboards, out onto pontoons where there are screens showing old footage and photos of the soldiers.

There are also exhibits of old bottles and tins found down there, as well as tabletops with the war manoeuvres and the plans of those in charge.

You can see inscriptions in the chalk with place names to remind the men of home and there are even drawings of sweethearts back

in Blighty. There were 24,000 troops down there for the start of the Battle of Arras on April 9, 1917, and the chances are William would have been one of them.

The element of true surprise was dashed in the end, as the Germans retreated shortly before the British and Commonwealth troops came above ground. And, although the Allies won, they were losing 4000 men a day at the height of the fighting.

When we got back to the shop, the guide had done his research and gave me a printout of a map with the advances William's brigade made during the Battle of Arras.

He also told us about the archaeology that's been done in the area, from the TGV line being laid and the motorway being built, to the clearing of a site close to Arras to build an industrial estate.

He pointed out that the leapfrog advances in a creeping barrage that William would have made were on the very ground around the industrial estate. Not only that,

**adoption**  
in South Lanarkshire

**could you be  
my  
future?**

**Think about  
adoption  
now!**



Contact South Lanarkshire Council  
adoption service on

**01698 454895**

or visit **[www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk)**



Social Work Resources