

Linlithgow Union Canal Society

Annual Report 2023 - 2024



Winchburgh Marina opening flotilla 3rd May



Linlithgow Union Canal Society, Manse Road Basin, Linlithgow, EH49 6AJ

Registered in Scotland as a Company Limited by Guarantee. Company No. 71328

Registered Charity No. SC011100

Contents

1	Chair's report	David Shirres	1
2	Visitor numbers	Peter Lewis	2
3	Bookings Report	Doug Scott	2
4	Treasurer's Report	Peter Lewis	3
5	Independent Examiner's Report		4
6	Funding	Ian Gray	8
7	Membership	Andy Eaglesfield	9
8	Receptionists	Andy Eaglesfield	10
9	Tearoom	Anne Mackie, Lynne Nelson	10
10	Boat report – St Michael	Allister Mackie	11
11	Boat report – St Magdalene	Ronnie Reis	12
12	Boat report – Leamington	Ian Walker	13
13	Boat report – Victoria	Mike Smith	14
14	Boat report – Small boats	Ronnie Reis	16
15	Buildings and Premises	Allister Mackie	17
16	Marketing	Peter Lewis	18
17	Health and Safety	Andy Eaglesfield / Gordon Hewit	19
18	Designated Person Ashore	David Shirres	19
19	Gardening Group	John Lewis	20
20	Training Group	Ian Walker	20
21	IT	John Aitken	21
22	Webmaster's Report	Douglas Robertson	22
23	Events - Marches week	David Shirres	23
24	Events - Special Cruises	Maureen O'Donnell, Lynne Nelson	24
25	Events - Flotillas	David Shirres	26
26	Fun Day	Peter Lewis	28

2024 LUCS COMMITTEE

David Shirres

Mike Smith

Peter Lewis

Andy Eaglesfield

Ian Gray

Lynne Nelson

Ronnie Reis

Doug Scott

Chair

Secretary

Treasurer, Vice Chair

Membership Secretary, Vice Chair

Funding

Tea Room

Boats

Booking Secretary

1. Chair's Report

This annual report has many examples of folk enjoying themselves on our canals, be it on one of our types of various cruises or trips provided at the opening of the Winchburgh Marina, Falkirk Wheel's Revolution Festival as well as relaxing in our Tea Toom, enjoying our Fun Day or being one of the hundreds in Edinburgh who watched 18 decorated boats in the Flotilla of Lights go by.

It's also great that LUCS is very much part of the community. During Marches week we participated in the Perambulation, Deacons Night and Marches Day. It was also great to see the crowd around the basin on Fun Day in August

Operating our services requires about 60 volunteers who work in the tearoom, on reception, drive boats and other tasks. The report highlights the results of everyone's commitment and enthusiasm. Yet I'm aware that there needs to be a balance between the services we offer and what's expected of our volunteers for whom the Society should be fun. If we don't get this right, I'm open to suggestions.

Much of our volunteers' time is devoted to maintaining our boats and premises. In this respect, a great job was done replacing the Tea Room floor at the start of the year.

Ensuring our big boats pass their annual MCA surveys in no mean feat, though this year's surveys revealed no significant issues. Yet, as described in this report, our boats had significant problem this year. Despite the best efforts, and a lot of time, by those involved St Magdalene was dogged by cooling problems for some months. Leamington's stern tube seal was defective, and Victoria has had various problems which her forthcoming refit will resolve. At one stage these boats were out of service at the same time. As a result, we let our customers down and also lost income.

None of this is a reflection on those maintaining our boats, though we perhaps need to take a more strategic overview. To this end it was decided to reserve £10,000 for long term major boat expenditure and form a strategic boat group. This will consider any lessons from this season's breakdowns as well as considering the future of our small boats.

Last year's accounts show that our balance increased by £18,194. However, this amount includes generous donations from our members and funds raised for Victoria's electrification which together total £25,527 so there was an unusual operating loss of £7,333. This was due to our boats being out of service, reduced visitor numbers and unusual expenditure such as St Michael's stern tube repair.

Reduced visitor numbers are of concern and show that LUCS needs to review its marketing. This is something for next year's committee to consider, though if anyone wishes to be involved in publicity, particularly with regard to social media, their contribution would be very much appreciated.

I would particularly like to thank the committee for its work. It is a pleasure to take part in committee meetings that operate by consensus in a collaborative manner. Committee members also have demanding 'back room' roles which, though essential, are not always obvious. Though the recent survey indicates that most members feel involved about LUCS's decisions, I'm conscious that there is more that we can do in this respect.

As I write this, the Society's AGM is a week away when I will have the pleasure of formally presenting this report and thanking everyone for their contributions. 2025 will see LUCS celebrate its 50 years which saw its earlier stalwarts transform the basin and acquired our boat fleet. I look forward to celebrating important anniversary.

David Shirres

2. Visitor Numbers

2024	Days	Tearoom		Town Trips		Aqueduct	
		Total	Av.	Total	Av.	Total	Av.
WEEKEND							
March	2	70	35.0	20	10.0	15	7.5
April	8	209	26.1	58	7.25	59	7.4
May	8	226	28.3	72	9.0	90	11.3
June	10	335	33.5	102	10.2	160	16
July	8	293	36.6	86	10.8	177	22.1
August	8	249	31.1	72	9	178	22.3
September	8	183	22.9	65	8.1	147	18.4
Total	52	1565	30.1	475	9.1	826	15.9
2023	49	-6.5%	32.2	-24.5%	12.1	-10.8%	17.8
WEEKDAYS							
July	23	354	15.4	236	10.3		
August	7	79	11.3	45	6.4		
Total	30	433	14.4	281	9.4		
2023	30	1.6%	14.2	-18.6%	11.5		
2024 Grand Total	82	1998	24.4	756	9.2	826	15.9

August Tea Room figure excludes Fun Day when Tea Room had 205 visitors

3. Bookings 1st October 23 to 30th September 2024

SPECIAL CRUISES	Number		Tables/places		
	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	
Falkirk Wheel	5	8	103	151	places
Bridge 49 Lunch	8	0	86	0	places
Total	13	8	189	151	
Afternoon Tea	7	3	57	23	tables
Halloween	6	12	53	108	tables
Santa	32	32	228	256	tables
Total	45	47	338	387	

BOATS	2023/24	2022/23
40-seater charter	34	53
Victoria charter	16	23
Leamington	51	63
Total	101	139
ROOMS		
Tearoom	5	12
Mel Gray Centre	42	57
Total	47	69

Problems with our boats significantly reduced boat and cruise bookings this year.

The booking system has run much smoother this year with only minor hiccups.

Although I still get queries about information that is on the LUCS website, these seem to be less this year. One Santa cruise was made available for Ukrainian families, also 16 Santa cruise tables were made to WLC family social work department.

Doug Scott

4. Treasurer's Report

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT				
1st Oct 2023 to 30th Sept 2024	Expense	Income	Amount	Notes
Boats Expenses:Colin G	£47		£-47	
Boats Expenses:Fuel	£1,806		£-1,806	
Boats Expenses:General & Workshop	£1,551		£-1,551	
Boats Expenses:Leamington	£919		£-919	
Boats Expenses:MCA BML certification	£1,153		£-1,153	
Boats Expenses:St Magdalene	£5,241		£-5,241	
Boats Expenses:St Michael	£8,589		£-8,589	1
Boats Expenses:Training	£255		£-255	
Boats Expenses:Victoria	£3,061		£-3,061	
Subtotal boats expenses	£22,625		£-22,625	
Boats Income:40-seat boat Aqueduct trip	£1,439	£8,672	£7,233	2
Boats Income:40-seat boat charter	£370	£5,185	£4,815	
Boats Income:40-seat boat Falkirk Wheel	£2,082	£3,250	£1,168	
Boats Income:40-seater Cruise - Halloween	£1,227	£2,382	£1,155	
Boats Income:40-seater Cruise - Aft Tea	£1,941	£5,196	£3,255	
Boats Income:40-seater Cruise - Santa	£3,460	£4,158	£699	
Boats Income:40-seater Cruise - Other cruises	£1,419	£2,665	£1,246	
Boats Income:Leamington Hire	£605	£8,149	£7,544	
Boats Income:Special events		£1,587	£1,587	
Boats Income:Town trips		£3,834	£3,834	
Boats Income:Victoria Charter	£135	£1,875	£1,740	
Boats Income:Vocuhers		£1,377	£1,377	
Subtotal boats income	£12,677	£48,330	£35,652	
Events:Fun Day	£2,281	£2,703	£422	
Events:Marches	£310	£94	£-216	
Subtotal events	£2,591	£2,797	£207	
Other Expenses:Booking System	£2,460		£-2,460	
Other Expenses:Cash Unaccounted	£270		£-270	
Other Expenses:Company Management	£1,479		£-1,479	
Other Expenses:Premise Business Insurance	£0		£0	3
Other Expenses:IT equipment and software	£518		£-518	
Other Expenses:Marketing	£2,333		£-2,333	
Other Expenses:Members cruises	£371		£-371	
Other Expenses:Miscellaneous	£201		£-201	
Other Expenses:Paypal booking fees	£762		£-762	
Other Expenses:Volunteer sustenance	£531		£-531	
Subtotal other expenses	£8,925		£-8,925	
Other Income:Donations		£7,713	£7,713	
Other Income:Grants		£400	£400	
Other Income:Membership		£1,704	£1,704	
Other Income:Pump Outs		£185	£185	
Other Income:Sates and Museum		£1,551	£1,551	
Other Income:Scrap		£474	£474	
Subtotal other income		£12,027	£12,027	
Premises:Bills	£6,865		£-6,865	
Premises:Enhancement	£1,595		£-1,595	
Premises:Fuel Oil	£1,512		£-1,512	
Premises:Gardening	£266		£-266	
Premises:Maintenance	£1,561		£-1,561	
Premises:Other	£294		£-294	
Premises:Telecomms Internet Provision	£1,506		£-1,506	
Subtotal premises	£13,601		£-13,601	
Room Hire		£647	£647	
Subtotal		£647	£647	
Tea Room	£4,407	£7,817	£3,410	£2
Reserved special fund: Donation		£10,000	£10,000	4
Reserved special fund:Museum	£880		£-880	
Reserved special fund:Outboard Motor	£770		£-770	
Reserved special fund:Tea Room Floor	£4,764		£-4,764	
Subtotal Reserved special fund	£6,414	£10,000	£3,586	
Reserved Boat Fund	£10,000	£10,000	£0	
Reserved Victoria electrification:Donations		£7,814	£7,814	
Total reserved funds	£16,414	£27,814	£11,400	
GRAND TOTAL	£81,239	£99,432	£18,193	

BALANCE STATEMENT		
	1-Oct-23	30-Sep-24
Bank	£73,712	£90,351
PayPal	£6,895	£7,980
Cash	£178	£648
Total	£80,785	£98,979
Increase		£18,194
Reserved Funds		
Boat	0	£10,000
Victoria Elec	0	£7,814
Special Fund	0	£3,586
Total Reserved	£0	£21,400
Total Unreserved	£80,785	£77,579
TOTAL FUNDS	£80,785	£98,979

Notes

1. Significant spend on MCA requirements
2. £1.50 per person income transferred from cruises to Tea Room
3. Insurance invoice of £1,182 received on 11.10.24
4. Includes generous donations totalling £15,500 from members

This Income and Expenditure statement together with supporting documentation has been reviewed by the Society's accountant who provided the following financial statement as required by the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

The figures in this statements differ slightly from this statement to take account of accruals, deferred spend together with other financial conventions

4. Treasurer's Report

The Society was glad to be able to start the 2023/24 financial year with a cash balance of £73,712 as its finances had not been too badly affected by the Covid emergency. It had a cash balance of £90,351 at the end of the financial year with an excess of income over expenditure of £18,192 which is £1,034 more than last year. Although £90,351 is a healthy balance, the Society needs healthy reserves to fund potential major expenditure on premises and boats.

LUCS's reserves policy is to maintain a minimum reserve of £40,000. This provides sufficient funds to cover management, administrative and support costs should there be adverse weather or other unforeseen events which could affect the ability to run the boats. Unrestricted funds are maintained at this level throughout the year. We have three reserve funds:

1. General boat fund - we have ring fenced £10,000 for the purchase a new future boat or major repairs to our existing fleet. The intention is to do this annually
2. Special donation fund - One LUCS member has donated £10,000 towards the upgrade and maintenance of our Museum and Tea room. £6,414 has already been spent leaving £3,586 in this restricted fund
3. Victoria electrification fund - We have been raising money to Electrify Victoria. This currently stands at £7,813

Peter Lewis

5. Extracts from Independent Examiner's Report

Full copies of this report will be available at the Annual General Meeting.

Linlithgow Union Canal Society Independent Examiners Report

Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of Linlithgow Union Canal Society

I report on the financial statements of Linlithgow Union Canal Society for the year ended 30 September 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Summary Income and Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations
 - to prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 8 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations

have not been met: or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Philip Bald Accountancy
3B Ormiston Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 7SJ
29 November 2024

5. Independent Examiner's Report

Linlithgow Union Canal Society
Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 30 September 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Income and endowments from:				
Donations and legacies	4	25,526	25,526	2,013
Charitable activities	5	36,116	36,116	38,674
Other trading activities	6	12,165	12,165	12,199
Other	7	2,751	2,751	2,936
Total		76,558	76,558	55,822
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	8	6,998	6,998	6,993
Charitable activities	9	31,817	31,817	16,577
Other	10	22,514	22,514	15,526
Total		61,329	61,329	39,096
Net gains on investments		-	-	-
Net income		15,229	15,229	16,726
Transfers between funds		-	-	-
Net income before other gains/(losses)		15,229	15,229	16,726
Other gains and losses		-	-	-
Net movement in funds		15,229	15,229	16,726
Reconciliation of funds:				
Total funds brought forward		87,028	87,028	70,302
Total funds carried forward		102,257	102,257	87,028
Income		76,558		55,822
Gross income for the year		76,558		55,822
Expenditure		61,329		39,096
Total expenditure for the year		61,329		39,096
Net income before tax for the year		15,229		16,726
Net income for the year		15,229		16,726

Linlithgow Union Canal Society**Balance Sheet**

at 30 September 2024

Company No.	SC071328	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
Current assets				
Stocks		12	2,000	2,000
Debtors		13	2,310	5,078
Cash at bank and in hand			98,801	80,803
			<u>103,111</u>	<u>87,881</u>
Creditors: Amount falling due within one year		14	(854)	(853)
			<u>102,257</u>	<u>87,028</u>
Net current assets				
			102,257	87,028
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>102,257</u>	<u>87,028</u>
Net assets excluding pension asset or liability			<u>102,257</u>	<u>87,028</u>
Total net assets			<u>102,257</u>	<u>87,028</u>
The funds of the charity				
Restricted funds		15		
Unrestricted funds		15		
General funds			88,671	87,028
Designated funds			13,586	-
			<u>102,257</u>	<u>87,028</u>
Reserves		15		
			<u>102,257</u>	<u>87,028</u>

The trustees have prepared the accounts in accordance with section 44 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

For the year ended 30 September 2024 the company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

Approved by the board on 29 November 2024

And signed on its behalf by:

P. Lewis (Company Secretary, Joint Vice Chair and Treasurer)

Trustee

29 November 2024

Linlithgow Union Canal Society
Statement of Cash flows
for the year ended 30 September 2024

	2024	2023
	£	£
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net income per Statement of Financial Activities	15,229	16,726
Adjustments for:		
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	(2,751)	(2,936)
Decrease in trade and other receivables	2,768	401
Increase in trade and other payables	1	31
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>15,247</u>	<u>14,222</u>
Cash flows from investing activities		
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	2,751	2,936
Net cash from investing activities	<u>2,751</u>	<u>2,936</u>
Net cash from financing activities	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	17,998	17,158
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	80,803	63,645
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	<u>98,801</u>	<u>80,803</u>
Components of cash and cash equivalents		
Cash and bank balances	98,801	80,803
	<u>98,801</u>	<u>80,803</u>

6. Funding

Several trust and foundations were approached to support the electrification of Victoria. Most refused or did not reply. This is standard and reflects the number of appeals that trusts receive.

Due to the environmental nature of our Victoria appeal, and the strengths of LUCS overall, we nevertheless achieved a decent response:

£5000 was received from the Robert Barr Charitable Trust for Victoria electrification.

£3000 was pledged from the Hugh Fraser Foundation for Victoria electrification which will be granted once work starts

In addition, £2,813 has been received from individual donations.

At the time of writing it is not certain that the electrification will proceed. If we do not do this work we will inform the trusts, but appeal to them to maintain their support on other - perhaps related - grounds rather than withdraw completely.

Our 50th anniversary is an ideal opportunity to appeal to trusts for support, businesses for sponsorship, members for 'uplifts' and the general public for donations. Regarding the latter, a 'donate' button prominently displayed on our website really must be a priority. Any other fundraising ideas would be welcomed.

Ian Gray



7. Membership

It is great to be able to report that the Membership at LUCS has increased this year largely due to an encouraging influx of family members.

The Summary Table below notes current members and the number of unpaid subs separately as a way of presenting the data. As can be seen our total current membership numbers now sit at 428. Great news that this is up 24 from last year. We must try our utmost to continue this trend over the next few years in order to stay the vibrant, busy and enjoyable Society that we are currently. Both by retaining our current membership and by recruiting more keen and enthusiastic people.

What is particularly pleasing to be able to report is that we have 30 new members to thank for joining the Society over the course of this year.

Whilst we still have 43 unpaid subs this year, we are actively trying to encourage existing members to maintain their contact with the Society until they feel in a position to rekindle their interest or sadly advise they no longer wish to be members.

It has been good to see a large number of our members able to take the opportunity to get down to the Basin over this season and take an active part in the Society. We would estimate that about 70 - 80 of our members are active in helping run the society in one way or another and a great thanks go out to all of them. We have had a 'Members Cruise' to close the season to say a big thankyou to all those who work so hard to keep us going.

Finally, thanks to all our members for their support over the last year. We would not be the successful Society that we are without the hard work put in over the years by all our members.

Andy Eaglesfield

Membership Cat.	2023	Current 2024	Variance
New Members	(19)	(30)	(11)
Junior / Associate	1	1	0
Ordinary	18	18	0
Senior	37	47	10
Family	50	64	14
Life	292	293	1
Corporate	2	1	-1
Multi User/club	1	1	0
Honorary	3	3	0
Current members	404	428	24
Subs due	47	43	0
Total	451	471	20

8. Receptionists

LUCS receptionists talk to visitors, sell boat tickets and museum merchandise, and check off those who have a cruise booked. We also have a good record of encouraging new members to join the society and occasionally clean out the Museum.

We are very grateful to all the people who have stepped forward and helped as Receptionists/Museum attendants/Boat ticket sales; and occasional 'Land based mooring assistants'. We have a pool of about 15-20 people who volunteer for this role – But could do with more. We are based in the Museum, and roving in good weather. It is an enjoyable experience and if the sun is shining, particularly pleasant having an afternoon coffee/tea in the sunshine with the tearoom staff between customers. Due to the number of opening days per season (86) we do sometimes have a struggle to find a volunteer, but always succeed.

So, thanks to all who have helped out – and if you feel you could do with a bit of relaxation of an afternoon, please let Andy Eaglesfield (Membership Secretary) know and he can put you on his increasingly complex and not always up to date spreadsheet/Rota.

Andy Eaglesfield

9. Tearoom

The highlight for this year in the tearoom was the new floor covering. We had noticed that there were areas of the floor with a “bit of a bounce”. These were investigated by the black handers, who found nothing there! The floor of half of the tearoom was lifted and replaced, thanks to huge effort by Les, Allister and other black handers, then they had to find a suitable floor covering for the whole area. Allister found a company who could install a covering that complied with current safety regulations, and this was completed thanks to a very generous donation from one of our members. We are very grateful for this.

The new flooring helped us to pass an environmental health inspection with flying colours.

I would like to thank everyone who helps in the tearoom. We are becoming a smaller and smaller group. Once again if you would like to join us, please contact weeannie2@aol.com.

Anne Mackie, Lynne Nelson

10. Boat Report – St Michael

St Michael continues to be our main trip and hire boat sailing every weekend and many hires throughout the season. This involves a programme of constant maintenance and repair. For interest I thought I would share a few of the routine tasks carried out to keep the boat operational throughout the year.

The boat has run for a total of 292 hours in the last year. She has used 1080 litres of fuel. This equates to a fuel consumption of 3.7 litres an hour or in more familiar terms about 3 mpg. During this time, she has been filled with water 24 times and her waste tank emptied 20 times. She has undergone 20 engineering checks and 2 major services. The interior has been hoovered and cleaned 30 times. She has also undergone an in-water MCA inspection.

The major issues this year have been the failure of the onboard inverter which was replaced but due to the incorrect colour coding of the cabling by the installation company the new inverter was itself damaged. Fortunately, a kind neighbour who worked in crane control gear maintenance managed to repair it.

The other ongoing issue is the delamination of the plywood flooring in the toilet and kitchen area. Once again the poor choice of non marine ply by the builder means after Christmas the whole toilet area and possibly all the kitchen will have to be removed and the floor replaced. This may also involve removing some of the internal wall structure.

As the boat is 6 years old there will be the need to replace the 6 onboard batteries in the near future at considerable cost and effort (they are very heavy!). On a more positive note the boat has completed all its trips this season with no breakdowns and continues to be a good passenger experience. The afternoon tea cruises continue to be extremely popular thanks to a huge effort from Maureen and Lynne.

Once again if anyone has an interest in helping with either the routine tasks or with the more major repair jobs I would be very grateful.

Allister Mackie



St Michael leaves the Falkirk tunnel en route to the Falkirk Wheel Revolution Festival on 24th May

11. Boat Report – St Magdalene

It's been a bit of a hectic season for St Magdalene which has been plagued by engine overheating. An airlock in the cooling system was the prime suspect, as a process of elimination, the electric circulating pump, the mechanical engine water pump and the thermostat were replaced, the system was "bled" several times, including the radiators, and a lot of air released.

After all that, and by monitoring the water level the engine temperature has been steady, this has been made easier by the recent installation of a custom designed header tank specific to this engine, installed in the fuel locker, however cooling water is still being lost, the main suspect is a tiny leak discovered in the starboard keel cooling channel under the hull, although a repair carried out whilst in drydock, it may have been insufficient to be permanent, the search goes on. St Magdalene is now running reliably with not problems on a recent return trip to Edinburgh.

The other stumbling block was the starting issue, from cold the engine would start first turn of the key, then promptly die, and it was a struggle to get it back, having checked out the whole fuel pipework for air and fuel leaks, none found, the prime suspect was the mechanical fuel lift pump driven by the engine, an electric fuel pump is in the process of being installed/trialled, and starting has been as it should be, a permanent installation is in progress.

At drydock, in September, the usual pressure washing of the entire hull, blacking once dry, other cosmetic painting done by the hardy volunteers, a replacement port bow anode fitted, starboard cooling channel leak repaired. Thank to all the dry dock volunteers.

She passed her MCA survey this year with no problems.

Ronnie Reis



12. Boat Report – Leamington

A couple of issues have occupied with Leamington's maintenance this year. The first involved the leak at the point where the propellor shaft passes through the swim at the stern of the boat. We had previously observed this leak and due to the inaccessibility at the very point of the swim, had resorted to applying a good sealant and bandaging the site with self-amalgamating 'SOS Repair Tape'.

This has held good for a couple of years until towards the end of the season when the usual dripping became a distinct trickle which started to get a bit more concerning. Ideally, we would have liked to pull the boat up the slip to get it dried out at the back end and replace the bandaging but the slip was occupied by Victoria for several weeks.

We had to compromise by daily use of the bilge pump and keeping up the pressure from the stern tube greaser (thanks due to Willie and Ken and anyone else involved) and so far, that has been working well. The plan is now to pull the boat up the slip and fully explore/replace the measures that have served us well these past couple of years.

Due to the mounting position of the cold start and start relays they experienced a lot of vibration when the engine was running. As a result, the cold start warning light had become inoperative and remedial work involved relocating the relay/fuse assembly and the replacement of the cold start relay socket and a couple of the contacts.

Apart from the above, Leamington has had a good season and our next priority is to smarten up the external paintwork ready for next year.

Ian Walker



Leamington in Winchburgh Marina on 3rd May

13. Boat Report – Victoria

Our trusty flagship has had a difficult year and is showing her age. After offering free cruises at the Winchburgh Marina opening, she failed on her last trip and had to be towed back to the Marina and then back to the basin. The problem was worn gearbox drive splines, no doubt as a result of rapid changes from forward to reverse gear.

Later in the season she had overheating problems and then developed a stern tube leak. As the plan was for her to have a major overhaul over the winter, she then remained on the slipway until she could be lifted into the yard after it had been cleared. However, it then took time to find a replacement for her support timbers which were rotten. These were replaced by surplus wooden sleepers provided by our good friends at Bo'ness Railway.

This enabled Victoria to be lifted into the yard on 7th November. Prior to this, seats, floor timbers and ballast to be removed ready for her hull inspection on 14th November by Marine Design International (MDI). This survey involved around 200 hull thickness tests. MDI's report showed that whilst much of the hull is in good condition, the required hull repairs are more than anticipated. This includes replating around 7 square metres of plate, most of which is the bottom plate by the sidewalls in the open part of the boat. There is then the requirement to remove existing interior and exterior hull paint and apply of a suitable steel paint coating system.

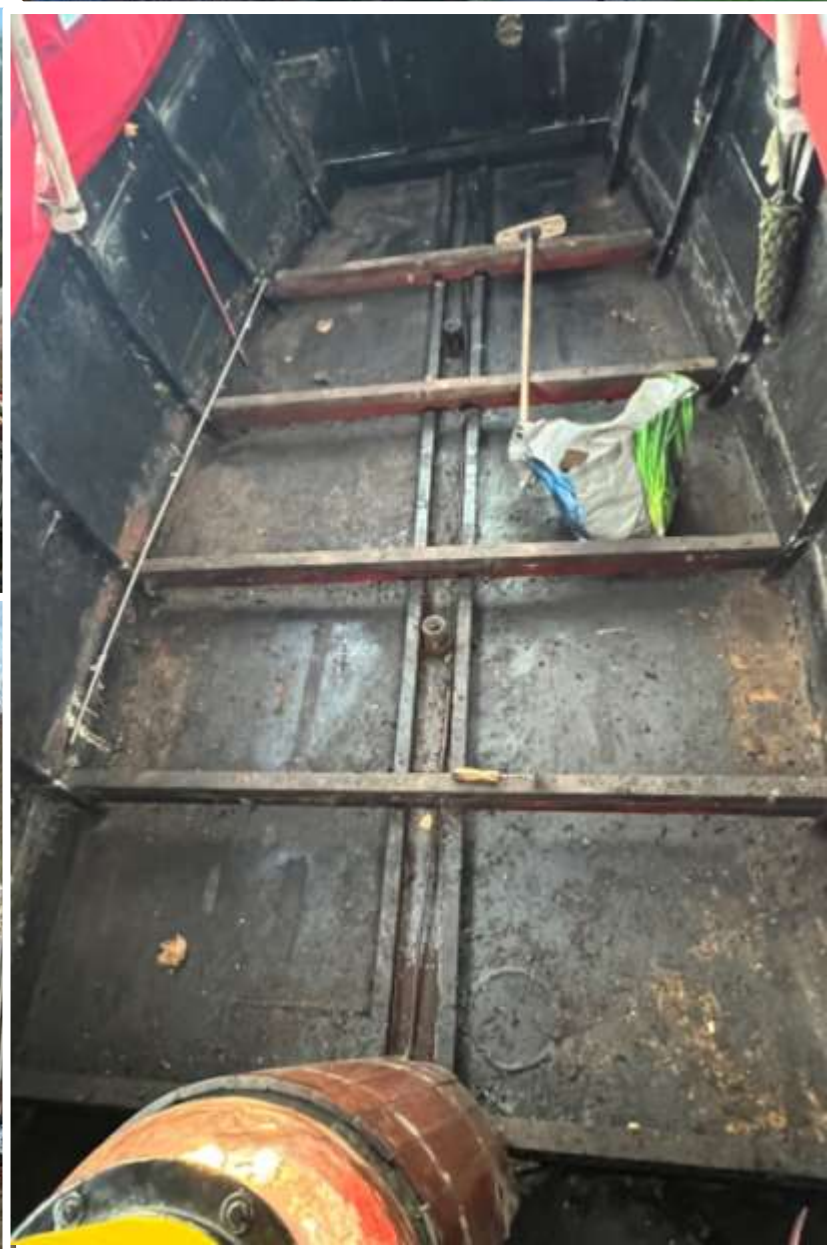
However, the cost of these repairs will be significant so at the time of writing they are being evaluated against other options. As far as possible in-house skills will be used for this work.

The intention is that Victoria will be electrified to replace her ever-ageing and increasingly unreliable (now obsolete) diesel engine, and worn-out transmission. This will eliminate nearly all the maintenance, wear and pollution issues, while reducing noise such as to allow skippers and passengers to converse. Moreover, an electric transmission eliminates shocks from changing between forward and reverse gear which was a factor in Victoria's failure earlier in the year.

Whatever decision is taken about Victoria, the aim is to give her a significant life extension and eliminate the reliability issues that she suffered this year. However, given the amount of work, it is likely that she will not be in service until, at the earliest, well into next season. Hence, whilst she is out of service, her town trip role will be covered by Leamington.

Mike Smith





14. Boat Report – Small Boats

Colin G

Since the engine parted company with the boat in the basin earlier in the year, brilliantly rescued by Ken, Colin G has been out of action. Whilst tied at her berth her hull rubbed on rocks and developed a leak. Hence, she was pulled onto the slip and pumped out with the large electric pump, the water was about a foot deep, the generator got wet but survived.

The leak was then plated by Tam and a few other minor leaks repaired, the engine lost it's cover during the rescue, (still to be found) the engine had the spark plugs removed to eliminate water in the cylinders, oil was cleaned out and replenished, it did fire up but the water pump impeller had failed, a new one being fitted now. The failed transom has been reinforced, the rooftop barrier has been rebuilt and installed, the horn is being sorted by Colin, the port bilge pump had to be replaced due to failure, mainly a good clean up and painting still to be done, once the engine is reinstated we can get back to doing what she was designed for.

Dinghys

The electric dinghy's have not been used much this year, except as a rescue boat on the fun day using a loaned petrol two stroke outboard, which went very well. Another small four stroke was donated, and yet another slightly larger four stroke was kindly purchased for the Society by Graeme Harvey, fits the dinghy well and it can certainly move, great rescue potential.



During the latter part of the year the dinghy's have accumulated a lot of leaves etc and so filled with water as the drain channel was blocked. They were brought to the quayside, pumped out and the leaves removed..

Anyone wishing to test run **any** of the outboard engines, please use the water barrel in the yard to fully immerse the lower half of the unit in the water for engine cooling, the hose adaptor is not efficient enough to supply sufficient cooling, and when finished running, please allow the carburettor to run dry, by disconnecting the fuel whist still running, this prevents the float needle sticking, thank you.

Slateford:

Slateford is normally only as a free ferry on Fun Day, however this year, the hull floor was deemed unsafe due to extensive rust, especially under the seating area.

Her canopy has kept her dry inside, and she has no leaks so far, having been previously repaired at the bow. S area where the step is mounted, she is currently being used for storage of Victoria's bits after she was stripped out in preparation for major restoration.

Slateford remains "Out of service" till further notice due to her hull condition

Ronnie Reis.

15. Buildings and Premises

This year started at a frantic pace with the removal and replacement of a large section of the tearoom floor. Once again Les and his team did a stunning job. Strangely the floor above the concrete flags had completely rotted away but the rest of the floor above open earth was still intact.

Following the floor renewal the complete tearoom floor and the kitchen floor was expertly re-covered in modern non slip flooring by Calton Flooring a local contractor, just in time for our season opening.

Thankfully the rest of the season has been a less hectic schedule of routine maintenance and renewal. Thanks to a very generous donation the old oil tank was replaced by a new much larger tank which will make heating control much easier.

The other major task has been the clearance of the yard to allow Victoria to be taken out of the water. This involved removal of tons of old rotten timber, metal and stone. A very special thanks to Tom McPhie for the use of his forklift and many skips.

We also carried out a survey of all the electric circuits within the basin, relabelling where needed and identifying areas in need of upgrading. This is in part to help us prepare for the electrification of Victoria if it goes ahead. Also thanks to Allan who investigated and rectified the faults with our outdoor lights to ensure a bright and safe welcome to visitors as the days get shorter.

Once again, our thanks to the gardening team who work away in the background to present a bright colourful centre to our customers.

Allister Mackie



16. Marketing

My thanks to Douglas Robertson for keeping the WEB site up to date.

Basin Banter has been produced (usually once a month) to let you know what has happened at LUCS and what is coming up. I hope you enjoy the read - any comments / suggestions of what to include please let me know. If you are not receiving it please let me know marketing@lucs.org.uk

LUCS is still using Facebook and Twitter for communications with the wider community. We have nearly 4000 Facebook followers - used by people to communicate questions about bookings on a regular basis.

We also put articles and adverts into the Linlithgow Black Bitch magazine that goes through every door in Linlithgow – 7 times this year – at a cost of £1000 - our biggest spend this year. <https://www.linlithgowcommunitymagazine.co.uk/publications/>
For all the previous issues

My thanks to David, Mike and Andy on putting the articles together about LUCS, Victoria's Electrification and Volunteering at LUCS

Peter Lewis



Promoting LUCS at a Linlithgow Street Fayre

LUCS @LUCS_Canal · Jul 20
By popular demand our lunch cruises to the Bridge 49 Bistro are back on Fridays from 16th August up to 13th September
Book your cruise here
bookings.lucs.org.uk/cruise/5

Friday Lunch Cruises
16th, 23rd, 30th August,
6th & 13th September
£25 – Adult menu
includes cruise and light lunch
high tea style at Bridge 49 Bistro
£12.50 – Children's Menu

Very young children not requiring lunch travel free but must have a booked place

Leave Linlithgow canal basin at 11:30 am return around 3 pm
After a stop to admire the view from the Awin Aqueduct, Victoria arrives at Bridge 49 around 12:30 pm where the adult choice of menu is:

- Roast Garlic and Lemon Chicken Salad,
Mac 'n' cheese with Salad, and Garlic Bread
- Battered Fish'n'chips with Garden Peas and Tartar Sauce
- or Chicken Goujon Dippers With Chips and Salad

followed by
Scone/Cream cake/Tea

Book by scanning QR code

Or visit
<https://www.lucs.org.uk/cruise/5>

LINLITHGOW COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

BLACK BITCH

ESTD. 2011

LINLITHGOW'S NEWS BY LINLITHGOW'S PEOPLE

ISSUE NO. 108 AUGUST 2024

CANAL FUN DAY
THAT SINKING FEELING! P17.

ROSE CFC GIRLS - LIFE
LESSONS FOR TEAM PLAYERS P10.

FLYERS NETBALL -
FUNDING A FLIGHT TO FRANCE P18.

17. Health and Safety

Over the course of this last season 2024 we are very pleased to report that we have had no serious accidents or incidents to people or boats largely due to the hard work and commitment of all our volunteers. We have recorded our relatively minor Accidents/Incidents and we have incorporated the learning and improvements from this process into our operations.

The Boat Safety Management System for our 40-seater boats has been updated by David Shirres and successfully audited this season by the MCA. We passed an Environmental Health inspection of our Tearoom facilities this year thanks to Allister and Anne Mackie and all of our tearoom staff have carried out Essential Hygiene training.

We have again updated the Risk Assessment for Fun Day. Yet again we had to provide our own safety boat and First Aid cover as International Rescue were unavailable. As this is becoming a regular thing, we invested in a new outboard engine to operate one of our dinghies as a rescue boat. This performed well and allowed a much faster response time to the pretty much inevitable sinking of the cardboard boats.

All our Safety and First Aid equipment has been checked at the recommended intervals and replaced where necessary, by Gordon Hewit, albeit he would like to hand this over to another 'willing' volunteer next year.

As LUCS has maintained our accreditation as a MCA Training centre, Ian Walker has organised several First Aid and Safety training days over the 2024 season.

Whilst we manage to maintain a safe volunteering environment at LUCS it is still our wish to consolidate our Procedures into a coherent whole that is easily accessible to all volunteers. Yet again we hope to complete this work over the course of this off season. The committee hope to promote and increase the number of 'Safety Conversations' taking place at the Manse Road Basin. This essential part of volunteering safely can only help us maintain our enviable Safe Operations record.

Andy Eaglesfield

18. Designated Person Ashore (DPA)

Shipping regulations require all UK operators of passenger ships (i.e. all UK vessels carrying more than 12 passengers) to have a Designated Person Ashore (DPA). For LUCS the DPA's role is liaising with the MCA to ensure that both our 40-seater boats have an effective safety management system (SMS) and satisfy MCA requirements so that both boats will get their passenger certificates renewed each October. This requires annual In-Water and Out-of-Water surveys (only 2 OOW surveys for St Michael every 5 years) and regular SMS audits for each boat although it's the same system for both boats.

This year only required St Magdalene to be dry docked for an out of water survey and in water surveys for St Michael and St Magdalene. No particular issues were found on these surveys.

My thanks to everyone who has helps LUCS ensure that its big boats meet MCA standards.

David Shirres

19. Gardening

My thanks to everyone who has helped keep the gardens in good order throughout the year. From the various comments I know the spring and summer colours in the planters, hanging baskets and beds are appreciated by our numerous visitors. This year we have coordinated with and ordered our plants through Burgh Beautiful whose volunteers look after all Linlithgow's flowers.

My thanks to all who have helped with lifting and carrying and keeping the watering system working as well as all who have helped with planters and beds. This year also a welcome to Alistair Laing who has joined the team.

If anyone has any suggestions for improvements, please let us know, new ideas are always welcome.

John Lewis

20. Training Group

Having no candidates for the full Boatmaster Ancillary Safety Training course at the beginning of the year, we ran two First Aid refresher courses for Boatmasters during April and May. In October we ran a full course for three candidates from sister organisations and one of our own. At the completion of this course two of the three external candidates promptly took out family membership of LUCS. Many thanks to our instructing team, Derek Ure, Allister Mackie, Scott Castel and Steve Braes.

Steve, the newest member of the team is an RYA Instructor/Assessor and was approved for Boatmaster Ancillary Training by the MCA this year in time for the October course. Over the closed season I will be transferring leadership of the Training Group over to Steve after a very enjoyable six-year shift.

Congratulations are due to three of our drivers who obtained their Boatmaster's Licences this year, Willie Irvine, Peter Lewis and Tom McPhie, and to three trainees who secured their RYA Inland Waters Helmsman certificates.

Although we are currently in a fairly comfortable position with respect to BMLs and SPV Skippers, we have to be mindful that those of us at the upper end of the demographic have only a few years before we hang up our tillers and therefore, we always need younger ones coming through to replace us. By younger ones, we mean of course, anyone under the age of seventy!

We are always prepared, subject to available resources, to give boat driving/handling tuition to any LUCS member regardless of whether they intend to skipper passenger boats or not; which could, for example, leave them better prepared to take out a holiday hire boat or even our own day hire boat Leamington.

Ian Walker



21. IT

This year saw the re-establishment of the LUCS IT Group, tasked with overseeing everything related to computers, software, internet, audio-visual equipment, website and email. The group commenced by listing and reviewing current IT issues.

Internet: The current provision is working well, with Wi-Fi throughout the basin area and a good internet connection for the webcam, sales terminals and the Mel Gray Centre.

Webcam: The webcam continues to let LUCS members and others keep an eye on the basin from afar. The camera is old and may need to be replaced before long, but it is currently working well.

Audio-Visual: The “smart” TV has improved the museum display. New HD content may need to be produced.

Microsoft 365: The main issue is helping users to get the most from the free “Not for Profit” licenses provided by Microsoft. We are pleased that David Morrow has taken over the administration of this important part of LUCS’ IT infrastructure.

Website: The secure LUCS website at <https://lucs.org.uk> is regularly maintained and is well used. A review is planned that may require a complete rebuild at some point.

Booking System: The booking system enables on-line booking and payment for charters, self-drive hires and cruise bookings. Most of the problems with the “new” system have now been resolved. The “old” system has been closed down completely.

CCTV Security: Four HD CCTV cameras with a recording system keep about 1 month of video evidence of activity in the basin area.

Documentation: The LUCS document management system uses cloud-based SharePoint storage, so that LUCS documents are widely available to everyone. Some documents need to be updated.

John Aitken.

22. Webmaster

The website continues to provide essential information to those interesting in the canal and our visitors. And it is good to see that the numbers of those accessing the website has now exceeded pre-covid levels. As always our most popular page is the webcam, with the front welcome page a close second followed by boat trips.

We have visitors to our website from all over the world, primarily from the UK, but many views also come from the USA and Switzerland. I am led to understand that there are changes to be made to the website in the near future, so you may be seeing some refreshed pages by this time next year. Some behind the scenes work is also needed to support how the website is backed up.

I would also encourage LUCS members to keep an eye on the member's pages (accessible from the front page under the "about us" menu). If you have any comments on the website, would like anything publicised or need any help with accessing the site please write to me at web@lucs.org.uk

Douglas Robertson



SANTA ON THE CANAL

THE CANAL CENTRE IS CLOSED

Public boat trips have now finished for the 2024 season.

SANTA ON THE CANAL

Join him on one of our cruises between 10.30am and 3.30pm on 14th, 15th, 21st and 22nd December at LINLITHGOW CANAL BASIN

Book tables for family groups at all our parties. Drinks will include an age appropriate gift. The women will also be serving non-alcoholic hot punch. bookings.luc@lucs.org.uk

VICTORIA'S HALF-CENTURY REFIT 2024/5

Help us make our flagship Victoria a more carbon friendly and quieter boat.

LUCS's flagship, Victoria, was built in 1973 and acquired by LUCS in 1978. Since then she has had two major refits in 1996 and 2001. During the 2000 refit she was fitted with her current 2-cylinder Kubota diesel engine.

Victoria is now due for her 50th birthday. With advances in battery technology, it is now possible to replace her aging diesel engine with an electric motor without losing her character.

She offers significant long-term advantages as Victoria would then have no carbon or particulate emissions and be a silent boat enabling the skipper to talk to customers. This also offers improved reliability, reduced maintenance and a clean skip.

[BOOK HERE](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR BOAT HIRE](#)



23. Events – Marches week

Marches week has some great community events and it was great to see LUCS being part of this.

For LUCS this started with the Perambulation on the 12th June when over 150 townsfolk headed up by the Provost of the Deacons' Court, flagbearers, halberdiers and the town piper walked four miles to visit eight town boundary stones. The canal basin is two thirds of the way around and provided a welcome respite for the walkers who availed themselves of refreshments from the hard-pressed Tea room volunteers.



Linlithgow's Deacons tour the town before the Marches in a tradition dating back to the 16th century to ensure everyone knew who the craft and guild officials were. Today the Deacons come from organisations in the town such as LUCS, Hence Saturday 15th June saw LUCS hosting the Deacons at the canal basin. Speaking at this event, Provost Liz Park stressed the importance of LUCS to the community. After eating their burgers together with other suitable refreshment, the Deacons were ferried to Friars Brae bridge en route to their next visit.

Marches day on 18th June saw a small group of LUCS volunteers march with an unpowered entry for the unpowered float of "Electrify Victoria – Ditch the Diesel." As was customary we won the first prize in this category. The prize money paid for well-earned fish suppers at the canal basin afterwards. It's good to march with the LUCS contingent and the impressive floats and bands on Marches Day when there's a wonderful atmosphere as hundreds line the route.



24. Events – Special Cruises

AFTERNOON TEA

Following a successful 2023 season providing Afternoon Tea Aqueduct Cruises it was agreed to continue to provide these for the 2024 season, at a cost of £30 per head. There were 7 Afternoon Tea cruises in 2024, starting with Mother's Day in March. A total of 48 bookings carrying 129 passengers. In addition, we had 2 private Afternoon Tea bookings, with a total of 57 passengers.

Demand increased the workload so a rota of volunteers was drawn up to help setting up the boat, food preparation, customer care on board and the wash up afterwards. It would not have been possible to meet demand for the cruises without the help of Maureen Wilson, Betty Reis, Val Withnal, Lorraine Ronalson, Marion Duerden, Maria Gray and Fiona Curle.

The cruises rely very heavily on drivers and crew, Blackhanders maintenance skills, tearoom and reception staff who provide a cheery smile and information about the cruise. This venture, initiated by Lynne Nelson, has proved successful and will continue in the 2025 season.



HALLOWEEN CRUISES

LUCS ran seven Halloween Cruises, each lasting an hour, on 26th and 27th October, with 119 adults and 97 children, in a variety of imaginative outfits, on board at a cost of £6 per head.

The format was like previous years with each child receiving a special Halloween toy, such as boppers, light sticks, ghoulish make up and games, each costing around £4-5. This year we also provided juice and sweets for the children.

On board crew were Craig, Cameron and Maureen. The cruises rely on the drivers and crew, Blackhanders maintenance skills, tearoom and reception staff who provide a cheery smile and hot drinks. These were successful and well received cruises.

24. Events – Special Cruises

SANTA CRUISES

On the 32 Santa cruises that LUCS ran in December 2023, Santa gave presents to 417 children.

LUCS also made 16 tables available on these cruises for West Lothian Council family social services department and, together with the Linlithgow and Bo'ness Rotary funded a special cruise for Ukrainian families.

Maureen O'Donnell
Lynne Nelson



25. Events – Flotillas

Winchburgh Marina Opening

On the 3rd May Victoria, St Magdalene and Leamington left the basin at 0800 to arrive at the new marina at 1000 for what proved to be a useful practice berthing there which was not as easy as it looked. Our mini flotilla then departed for Bell's Mill which although 1/2 a mile away was a 1 1/2 mile trip via the Niddrie winding hole. At Bell's Mill our boats were loaded with school children and dignitaries including John Paterson of Scottish Canals and MSP Fiona Hyslop. Our boats were followed by those of the Bridge 19-40 Union Canal Society as well as canoes and electric boats provided by Scottish Canals.

After leaving Bell's Mill, the flotilla arrived at the Marina at 1130 for the official opening. On arrival they were greeted by about 300 schoolchildren. Then with suitable ceremony John Hamilton, CEO of Winchburgh Developments handed over the marina to John Paterson of Scottish Canals. Victoria and Leamington then did 15-minute trips to bridge 33 to the north whilst St Magdalene did a longer 40-minute trip to Niddrie to the south. There was a steady flow of customers up to 1600 by which time these trips had carried about 350 people.

After the event Winchburgh Developments sent a letter expressing "enormous gratitude on behalf of our Marina opening event organising team to your amazing volunteers who worked so hard on Friday to help us bring the new marina to life for so many people." They also gave LUCS a substantial donation in recognition of our efforts.



Falkirk Wheel Revolution Festival

The 25th May saw Victoria and St Michael at the Revolution festival at the Falkirk Wheel on 25th Saturday.

This started with a flotilla on about 12 boats on the Forth and Clyde canal between Lock 16 and the Falkirk Wheel's Golden Jubilees Lock. After this, our boats, together with those from Sorted and the Forth and Clyde Canal Society were kept busy offering boat trips along the Forth and Clyde canal all afternoon. Our boats carried 189 passengers on these trips. St Michael carried a further 40 passengers when she was called from her F&C canal trips to deputise for a failed Scottish Canal's Falkirk Wheel trip boat. It was a busy and enjoyable weekend.



Revolution flotilla



Panacea, Gipsy Princess and Victoria



Boat Trips on Forth and Clyde canal



St Michael as a Falkirk Wheel trip boat

Ronnie Rusack Flotilla of Lights

St Magdalene was on of 18 boats that took part in the Flotilla of Lights event in Edinburgh on Saturday 9th November. Musicians join the boats on this flotilla in which boat crews throw sweets to the hundreds who line the towpath. This is an annual event organised by the Lowland Canals Association in which boats decorated with lights formed a flotilla on the last mile of the canal between Harrison Park and Edinburgh.

On the Friday night before there was a party for boaters at the Almond Aqueduct with a BBQ, bonfire and fireworks. On the Sunday St Magdalene got back to the basin in just seven hours from Edinburgh with a Pizza stop at Winchburgh Marina, having cruised the 21 canal miles at an average of 3.34 mph.

This was another enjoyable event which, like the other Flotillas provided a useful opportunity to meet other boaters and canal societies



26. Events – Fun Day



For LUCS, Fun Day is the biggest day of the year and the most complex event organised by the Society. It required 31 LUCS volunteers on the day with much work done during the preceding months by those organising the event.

We also had support from the Deacons Court and the Bridge 19 to 40 Union Canal Society who generously lent us their boat RoseAnne as Slateford was not operational.

The afternoon started promptly at 1:30 pm when Gala Day Queen Hannah aboard Victoria cut the ribbon at the entrance to the basin. We were then glad to have our MSP, Fiona Hyslop open the day.

Prior to the cardboard boat race there were an 600 people around the basin. 122 tickets were sold for boat trips on Victoria and St Magdalene, the BBQ sold 176 burgers sold and the Tea Room served 185 drinks. As well as the usual stalls, in Learmonth Gardens there were puppeteers for the younger children.

Of the 10 entries for the cardboard boat race there were 3 sinkings of which two capsized immediately. Of those that stayed afloat the fastest time 1 one minute 20 seconds. The entries included some impressive designs. It was a little sad to see them end up as soggy cardboard.

A very big thanks you to all of our volunteers for their work leading up to the event, on the Fun Day afternoon and the clean up afterwards.

Peter Lewis





2024 Fun Day Results



Colmans in Colman cruiser
1st prize Silver trophy – course time 1 min 20 secs



Munro boaters in Ben Hope
2nd prize – course time 1 min 21 secs



Selkies in The Roach MkII
3rd prize – course time 1 min 36 secs



Linlithgow Reed Band in Hannah's Banana
Low Port Trophy – Best under 15 team



Titanic Swim Team in Titanic 2.1
Yellow Duck Trophy – most entertaining team



Mario Cart Cruisers in Mario Cart Cruiser
Bill Watt Trophy for best design



The Euro Trash in Boaty McBowPhees
Novice Paddlers Trophy



RMS Lusitania in RMS Lusitania
Linlithgow Reed Band Trophy for perseverance



Red Squadron in Red Five
Wooden spoon award



Original Pirate Material in THE SS WE'RE GOING TO NEED A BIGGER BOAT
Wooden spoon award



Linlithgow Union Canal Society, Manse Road Basin, Linlithgow, EH49 6AJ

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