



Lasswade District Civic Society

# Newsletter

AUTUMN 2022



## Chairman's Report

The death of HM Queen Elizabeth II, the events in Ukraine and our financial and cost of living crises at home have dominated the news of late, and understandably so. It was only a few months ago that the country was celebrating the Queen's Jubilee and your Society was delighted to host a party for members in the Community Garden to "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee". The garden looked immaculate, due to the unstinting efforts of Wendy Macmillan and Jill Davies and we are very grateful to them and to other volunteers for keeping this important amenity in such excellent condition, for us all to enjoy. We are also very grateful to the Lord Lieutenant and his Deputy, Sarah Barron, for attending the event and for planting the tree under the watchful gaze of the children from Pinocchio's Nursery and their staff. The weather was kind and the event a great success, as you can see from the photographs below.

We are pleased to report that the yellow box which we had requested some time ago at the junction of Westmill Road has appeared, albeit the paint is not that easy to see! A number of our members had asked us to raise this issue with Midlothian Council, due to the difficulty and potential danger of turning right into and out of Westmill Road, particularly at rush hour times. It is good to see this resolved.

Can I draw your attention to the AGM arrangements which are noted in this Newsletter. LDCS is your Society, and it would be great to have a good turnout on the evening.

We are living through difficult times, largely due to events entirely outwith our control. Let us hope that solutions are found and that we can look forward to a Merry Christmas and a Happier New Year.

*George Clark, Chairman*

## AGM Notice

The 2022 AGM will be held on  
Tuesday 22nd November 2022  
in **St Leonard's Church Hall, Dobbies  
Road from 7.30pm for 7.45pm.**

There will be a Speaker

There will be refreshments and the opportunity to pay membership fees for those who have been unable to submit their 2022-23 subs.

**We look forward to welcoming you to the AGM.**

## Secretary's Report

This Newsletter has a Royal theme.

Some years ago, we were honoured to receive the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services. This Award is the equivalent of an MBE and is the highest award that can be made to a voluntary group. This recognised the work of Bill Dobson, Tom Delaney, and Sarah Barron, amongst others, who created the Community Garden and oversaw the funding, design and construction of the footbridge crossing the river. Councillor Derek Milligan and pupils from Lasswade Primary School opened the bridge and Garden on 10th December 2002.

In consideration of the Award, it was agreed that the Society should mark the occasion of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. We were delighted that the children from the village Nursery, Pinocchio's were keen to join us in creating a card for Her Majesty. Wendy Macmillan produced a beautifully decorated cake, which the children enjoyed.

In November last year the Woodland Trust announced its plan to create dozens of 70 acre woods to celebrate the Jubilee. This initiative The Queen's Green Canopy, went on to invite groups and individuals 'to plant a tree for the Jubilee.' This has created a living legacy with over one million trees being planted in her

late Majesty's honour. Indeed, such is the success of the project that it has been extended to the end of 2023. The Society has planted a Sorbus (rowan) cashmiriana, very kindly donated by Wendy. This is situated by the river in the grass area close to the war memorial. A plaque will be placed at the site. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the organisation of both events and to all those members who attended the tree-planting. It was a very enjoyable afternoon.

We would like to thank Wendy and Ian Macmillan, their friend and fellow member Jill, who all spent many hours preparing the Community Garden for the Jubilee events. This has been a real labour of love and the results have been enjoyed by many people. Those attending the Jubilee events expressed their delight in the beautifully maintained flower beds. Wendy herself puts it all down to precise edging of the grass!

We would like to thank Joy Moore, a Rep for more than 30 years, for contributing a short article reflecting on her many years living in Lasswade. It is a reminder of the beauty and biodiversity to be found in and around our village.

*Best wishes, Rosemary Mackay, Secretary*

## Reflections on my life in Lasswade



When we moved to Lasswade 39 years ago from Plymouth we had no friends or family in Scotland. I was pregnant with our first child and our nearest family were many miles away in North Yorkshire.

I quickly found that there was a lot going on locally. I started attending Dalkeith Baptist Church where the other members soon became like family to me. I also campaigned with local people to stop what is now Springfield Mill nature reserve, being turned into a luxury

housing development.

I became a member of the National Childbirth Trust and later their Postnatal support Co-ordinator and representative on the Midlothian Council of Social Services.

The Esk Valley Trust with its goal to create a path from the source of the Esk river in the hills above Carlops to the sea at Musselburgh was another group of like-minded people that I joined.

The Lasswade District Civic Society (LDCS), with its aims to preserve, protect and promote our local heritage and take care of the local area, including the community garden, seemed to fit very well with my own goals.

Being an area representative for LDCS enabled me to meet my neighbours on a regular basis and encourage them to pay their subscriptions, attend meetings and get involved in local events and litter picks. I enjoyed doing this and taking part in organised activities, although I was dependent on guidance from our experienced gardeners when it came to helping in the garden!

One of my favourite places for a walk is the grounds of Mavis Bank House. I like to sit by the little curling pond if I'm alone and pray, especially in the summer when it's covered in yellow water lilies. I also like to spend a few moments on Anna and Bill Dobson's seat which is just across the Millennium Bridge from the garden. Anna and Bill were an inspirational couple; dedicated leaders of LDCS and I have fond memories of them.

Our two daughters grew up in Lasswade and attended Lasswade High before going to university. Now they both have young children of their own and they live within 10 minutes of each other in Falkirk. Since John and I have both retired, we now

feel we'd like to be on hand to help with child care and spend more time with our family.

When we move to Falkirk I will miss my friends in the area, especially Rosemary Mackay, who I have known for over 35 years. I will also miss the amazing views from our flat. It's been wonderful having an uninterrupted view of the Pentland Hills and the Bilston Glen Viaduct from the windows of our bedroom and lounge.

Lasswade will always hold special memories for me. A number of years ago I bought a lair in Lasswade cemetery so I could have my last resting place there. At the recent Platinum Jubilee tree planting ceremony, Sarah Barron, another long-standing member of LDCS, told me she has also purchased a lair. So we might well end up as neighbours!

Lasswade has changed with the advent of new housing and much more traffic, but its essential character remains. It is a beautiful historic area and I know I will be back, hopefully more than once!

*Joy Moore*



### Invitation from Esk Valley Trust

EVT have very kindly invited LDCS Members to join them on zoom

**Thursday 10 November at 19.30pm**

Peter Raine will introduce:

William Fergusson, surgeon extraordinaire

Born within a couple of miles of the mouth of the Esk River William Fergusson rose to be perhaps the most celebrated surgeon of his time. Peter, himself a Paediatric Surgeon, will describe the life and achievements of this extraordinary man.

To register for this Talk please use the link below

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tEgcu6rpzluGxWRFGBSkw88cqP3xJz9hbZ>

## Platinum Jubilee Tree-planting ceremony



The late Queen wished to use the celebration of her 70th year on the throne to leave a legacy for future generations, in the form of 'The Green Canopy.' We were delighted when Wendy Macmillan donated a Rowan tree *Sorbus cashmiriana*. We were pleased to welcome The Lord Lieutenant of Midlothian, Richard Callander to plant the tree, ably assisted by his Vice Sarah Barron and children from Pinocchio's Nursery. This was followed by non-alcoholic prosecco, canapes and a slice of the delicious 'Canopy cake,' created by Wendy. A thank you to all the members who attended this very enjoyable occasion.

Once again, we must extend our gratitude to Wendy and Jill for preparing the Community Garden for the event. Many people commented that the garden was beautifully maintained. Even the trees at the entrance to the bridge co-operated, forming a very pleasing arch. Thank you to Jan Jerome who was the official Photographer.



## Observations from our Garden

In early Spring our beautiful *Cercidiphyllum Japonicum*, also known as the Katsura, put on its usual glorious show of lime green leaves which slowly turn darker as the weeks go by. However, over our long, hot Summer the old tree suffered! There was one point about two months ago I thought we were going to lose it. The leaves were turning yellow and falling, creating the carpet of scented caramel more familiar at the end of September. I admit to taking out the sprinkler at that point and leaving it going for several hours and this appeared to revive it. Shortly afterwards we had a heavy rain storm and since those two waterings, and subsequent ones over the weeks, my favourite tree has utterly revived. Now I find myself watching it daily. I have taken photos every year when it is in its full Autumn glory - around 25th September. Today,

20th September, I see but a few yellowing leaves at the top and wonder if it will achieve its usual timetable. For those of you who walk the footpath between Kevock Road and Green Lane, keep your eyes and nostrils open!! There are mornings when the scent of caramel, or burnt sugar, is almost overpowering and you should be able to see the glorious autumn colours on it as you look over the wall. The attached photos show it as it is today and as it was 25th September 2021.



## Dates for your Diary

**Speaker on Zoom - 12th November 2022 at 7.30pm** - Please use the link on advert, left, to access this Esk Valley Trust Talk, entitled 'William Fergusson, Surgeon extraordinaire.'

**Defibrillator Training Session - Sunday 20th November 2022** - In the Polton Bowling Club from 10am-12pm.

There will be a minimum donation of £3 per person attending. Places are limited, please reserve by contacting Rosemary at [dequinceyrose@aol.com](mailto:dequinceyrose@aol.com)

**AGM - 22nd November 2022** - In St Leonard's Church Hall, Dobbies Road at 7.30pm for 7.45pm

There will be a Speaker following the formal business. Wine and soft drinks will be served.

The quantity of beechnuts are driving me crazy as they fall onto our pebbled forecourt. The fruit pods on the horse chestnut tree looked splendid but early falls have only contained tiny conkers. However, since the stormy weather at the end of the month, more pods have fallen and the conkers are enormous! The squirrels which I thought may go hungry over the Winter should be able to stock up well. The sweet chestnut tree has been covered in its round prickly burrs again this year. It too has dropped much of its lower fruit over the last couple of days covering the lawn below. The split burrs have only shed shrivelled nuts so far. No chestnuts for roasting on the open fire again this year unless the remaining fall is different. The eucryphia is still flowering profusely and the berries on the sorbus cashmiriana, cotoneaster and pyracantha are abundant. In addition, many trees are showing their Autumn colours which are just wonderful in the bright Autumn sunlight. We have much to enjoy everywhere and Nature is giving us her best!

*Wendy Macmillan*

## New Interactive Map

A new interactive map showing features of mid-20th century Lasswade is now on the website.

The eagle-eyed among you may have noticed a new addition to the history page of the LDCS website.

We have recently added an interactive sketch map showing key features of Lasswade in the mid-20th century. It is hoped that this will be a novel and engaging way to capture various pieces of information (photographs, oral histories, web-based material and other literature) that is of interest to LDCS members and to others with an interest in Lasswade's past.

Aerial photographs of Lasswade from the period, kindly provided by Mr Howard Turner, were initially used to trace the contours of the river and major roads (somewhat different to today). To this was added rectangles or squares denoting key sites in Lasswade including the working paper mill, The Laird and Dog, Lasswade Church and both the Primary and Secondary schools. Some of these squares or rectangles are 'hot', so that clicking on them will take you to more information about that site. For example, clicking on the paper mill leads to comments from former employees at the mill and to a website showing interior photographs of the mill when it was a working factory.

This is just a start, and clearly more can be added as resources

become available and to reflect member's interests. Please take a look at this new source of information (instructions below) and let us know how you would like to see the site developed.

How to find the interactive map:

1. As the file is in PDF format it will only work on devices with ADOBE.
2. Go to the home page of the website <https://www.lasswadecivic.com> and click on the 3 horizontal bars at the top right-hand side.
3. Click 'About'
4. Click 'Our History'
5. Scroll down this page to the links at the bottom.
6. Click on 'Map of mid-20th Century Lasswade', this takes you to the sketch map.
7. The blue rectangles are 'hot': clicking on them will take you to a page with more details of that building or site. The information varies from site to site. Some contain snippets from the oral histories relevant to the site, some historic photos and others have further links to relevant websites.

We look forward to your feedback and input.

*Cheryl Ashworth*

## Will you become a friend of Mavisbank?

Historic (Environment) Scotland (HES) organised a Tour of the Mavisbank Estate as part of Open Doors Day on 10th September 2022. Where they launched a plan to establish the 'Friends of Mavisbank.'

Following the recent unsuccessful bid to finance a major re-development of the site. HES have decided to step back from the project, in order to concentrate their limited resources on maintaining their current estate of properties. As a result, The Mavisbank Trust is evolving to become a community-run organisation, working in partnership with the Friends of Mavisbank. This will allow the local community, volunteers and other supporters to join together and take an active role in protecting and enhancing the grounds of Mavisbank as well as shaping future plans for the site.



*The first time I have seen the house through an open gate. An impression of the original building, before the wings were added. A sketch of the forecourt by Sir John Clerk circa 1728.*

The Society are keen to be involved with this new organisation and if you would like to become involved as an individual please e-mail [friends@mavisbank.org.uk](mailto:friends@mavisbank.org.uk) for further details.

## Subscription Preparation for 2023

1. Thank You again! Many of our members have kindly set up Standing Orders for their Annual Subscription. This is our preferred method of receiving your dues but you can still pay by cash, cheque or a one-off annual payment. PLEASE check the date on your Standing Order and alter it, if necessary, to fall within the two and a half month window of January to mid March. Thank you again!

Here are the details:

Name of Account:	Lasswade & District Civic Society	Date to Pay:	15 March latest (January [preferred])
Sort Code:	80-17-42 (Bank of Scotland)	Frequency:	Annually
Account No:	00427753	Reference:	YOUR Surname and Initial(s)
Amount:	£3.00 Single      £5.00 Family		

2. If you wish to pay by cheque or cash, you can still do this. Please email Rosemary at [dequinceyrose@aol.com](mailto:dequinceyrose@aol.com) for up to date instructions.
3. Cheques should be made out to: Lasswade & District Civic Society.

*Thank you*