

Linlithgow Union Canal Society

Annual Report 2018 - 2019



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

LINLITHGOW UNION CANAL SOCIETY

To all members :

NOTICE is hereby given that the 40th Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held in the Canal Tea Room on Thursday 5th December 2018 at 7:30pm.

*Mr D Shirres
Company Secretary*

Agenda

- 1) Apologies for Absence
- 2) Chairman's Welcome & Statement
- 3) Minute of Annual Meeting held on 6th December 2018
- 4) Matters arising from the 2018 minute
- 5) Report of the Committee of Management for the Year to 30th September 2019
- 6) Accounts for the year to 30th September 2019
- 7) Independent Examiners' Report
- 8) Appointment of Independent Examiners for the year to 30th September 2020
- 9) Appointment of Solicitors for the year to 30th September 2020
- 10) Election of Officers and Members of the Committee of Management
- 11) Proposals for the season 2019 – 2020
- 12) Fixing of Subscriptions for 2019 - 2020

All Members are welcome to attend

Foreword



This is the 44th Annual Report. The first, though not called an Annual Report, came out in March 1976. It had four pages: a cover, with a drawing of the Basin, followed by three close typed sheets. It cost 5p (free to Members). All very different from the handsome, colour printed document now before you.

But some things do not change. The objective - "To promote, encourage and assist the restoration, maintenance and use of canals in Scotland" - is as central to our activities today as it was in the 1970s.

The reliance on volunteers and the dedication to providing a unique and memorable visitor experience remain the guiding principles of all our activity. Boat trips are central to what we do. Originally undertaken in horse drawn U66 and decommissioned weed cutters, then progressing to Victoria, Janet Telford and St Magdalene we now offer in St Michael a level of passenger comfort and amenity undreamt of hitherto. And Leamington and our electric dinghies offers boaters, expert or aspirant, the opportunity to take the helm and explore the canal as they wish.

We also have the museum, the only canal museum in Scotland, which displays the history of the canal and the changing flora and wildlife that the canal sustains throughout the year. The museum also acts as a ticket office for boat trips and as a shop selling a variety of canal related merchandise.

Adjoining the museum, in what were originally stables and cottages, the tearoom offers light refreshments and a selection of cakes, scones and biscuits. Both the tearoom and the Mel Gray Centre, situated in the Canal yard are available for small meetings or social gatherings.

It is people, however, who make the Society function. Over the years many have been involved, some briefly, some for a long time, some doing a little, some doing a lot, but all doing it voluntarily.

To all we are grateful, and a warm welcome awaits anyone who wishes to join in any way in taking the Society forward

Jim Lonie
Past Chairman





Office Bearers & Committee 2019

2019 Office Bearers

Chairman	Mr Stuart Rennie
Vice-Chair	Mr Mike Smith
Minute Secretary	Mr Douglas Robertson
Treasurer / Company Secretary	Mr David Shirres

2019 Committee

Mrs Lynne Nelson	Mr Chris Hunt
Mr Ronnie Reis	Mr Andy Eaglesfield

Company Registration

Linlithgow Union Canal Society is registered in Scotland as a Company Limited by Guarantee.
Registered No SC71328

Registered Office: Canal Museum, The Basin, Manse Road, Linlithgow EH49 6AJ

Linlithgow Union Canal Society is a Registered Charity No. SC011100

Company Secretary: Mr D Shirres, Canal Museum, The Basin, Manse Road, Linlithgow EH49 6AJ

Auditors: Philip Bald Accountancy, 3B Ormiston Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 7SJ

Solicitors: Messrs. Pagan Osborne, 55 – 56 Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 3PA

Chairman's Report 2019



I am delighted to welcome you, one and all, to our 2019 Annual Report. As you read through the various sections written and contributed by the numerous convenors, I am sure you will very quickly appreciate that 2019 has indeed been a very successful year for the Society. I am happy to report that this is indeed the case in all respects, be it in relation to activity "on the water", in and around the basin, or LUCS's involvement and activities within the wider canal fraternity. It really has been a busy year, and this is due, as always, to the unstinting support and effort given by the numerous volunteers who constantly go above and beyond the call of duty to keep LUCS at the forefront as a vibrant and successful organisation, a Scottish tourist destination and an important community facility.

A considerable amount of work has been carried out, with numerous successes evident throughout the year, ensuring that your society remains in a very strong position going forward to not only address the many challenges that will no doubt continue to be thrust upon us, but to progress a number of exciting new projects and opportunities that are in the pipeline. More on that later.

Many forget that work continues through 12 months of the year, with maintenance of the boats and premises. Early 2019 was no exception, with programmed work being undertaken on some of the fleet, along with some unexpected, but urgently necessary, maintenance work being attended to Victoria which required her to be lifted out of the water earlier in the year. Thanks to Mike Smith, Joe Walker and a few others, this was completed very efficiently in time for the season opening.

2019 undoubtedly included an important milestone and landmark in the history of the society with the season opening celebrations centred around the official naming ceremony for St Michael and her inaugural public cruise. St Michael was officially brought into service on 6th April 2019, after Provost Tom Kerr performed the naming ceremony, accompanied by Lord Lieutenant Ms Moira Niven MBE, and Children's Gala Queen Emilie Cunningham. A festival atmosphere was created with Linlithgow Reed Band providing a stirring musical backdrop, before the complete LUCS fleet took part in a season opening flotilla, proudly led by St Michael, with a full contingent of VIP guests.

The season was well and truly underway.



Gala Queen Emilie cuts the ribbon on St Michael

Working hand in hand with Scottish Canals on many fronts, 2019 saw the commencement of some long awaited improvements to the canal. After many years of campaigning, we achieved the long awaited visitors mooring at Bridge 49 Bistro. This allows us to provide a much improved taxi boat service to the Bistro ~ a popular service appreciated by the local community.

New visitor and residential moorings have been constructed to the west of the basin, while embankment improvements to the east also provide much needed additional moorings to relieve the pressure on the basin due to the increased holiday and casual traffic we are experiencing on the water.

We have also encouraged necessary dredging works in our operating area, vital for our own cruising, our self drive hirers, and the wider canal users.

All good news that the canal is busier, but the infrastructure needs continuous attention to cope with the increased activity and we continue to emphasise this to Scottish Canals senior management.

Chairman Stuart Rennie visited the new embankment works with Catherine Topley Scottish Canal CEO and Fiona Hyslop MSP



Back in our own base, I can also report lots of progress on some items and projects that seem to have been on the agenda for a long time. These are detailed in the various co-ordinators reports to follow, but it is good to note that during the year we have completed the upgrade of the boiler for the Mel Gray Centre central heating system, the long awaited renewal to the cycle shed roof is now complete, we now have superb WiFi facilities throughout the premises, upgraded Audio Visual facilities in the Museum and the Mel Gray Centre, new battery storage and charging facilities ~ the list goes on and on. It really is amazing what has been achieved this year, and all credit to everyone who has contributed to this success.

And while all this has been going on behind the scenes, we have had an extremely successful season on the water, in the museum, and in the tea room.

2019 saw the introduction of a number of joint marketing initiatives with local companies and organisations, such as Mason Belle Kitchen, Linlithgow Gin, eek! Escape Rooms, and Narrowboat Farm to name a few, bringing additional visitor traffic (and all important revenue) to the basin. Not only was this successful for LUCS, but I know these organisations want to repeat such events next year.

I mentioned last year the formation of a number of sub groups ~ being formed partly to spread the work load beyond one person for one role, but in respect of the Strategic Development Group, to allow us to concentrate on certain larger projects, independent of the day to day running of the Society.

A number of such larger projects are now progressing, either in concept, design, or production, and it is good to see many new faces becoming involved in these proposals. More is mentioned throughout the Report, but I would like to make special mention about three. The Victoria electrification project; a proposal to allow us to withdraw boats from the Canal without the high cost of craning; and a complete review and upgrade of our on-line booking and payment system. There are other Strategic Developments under consideration, all of which are designed to keep us moving forward as a vibrant organisation.

Part of all these proposals obviously include costing analysis, and investigations into funding for same, prior to us deciding whether or not to proceed, but it is good to see us looking to the future with such enthusiasm.

So lots going on, and lots to do going forward. Hopefully we can build on the current momentum and look forward to a successful 2020 and beyond.

Stuart Rennie
Chairman

Boat Reports

The LUCS fleet consist of some 9 vessels including our public boats, work boat, ancillary craft, and our three electric dinghies.

All need continually maintained to keep them safe, and in good working order ~ a challenge undertaken by our Black Handers and numerous other volunteers willing to devote many hours of their own time.

The following reports cover just some of the work undertaken to keep the fleet operational.



St Magdalene was in Dry Dock at Ratho in October for her annual inspection & certification, and a wee bit TLC while she was in dock

St Michael



St Michael has completed over 300 hours of trips in her first season of operation

After 18 months and many hundreds of hours of work mainly by Les Duff, St Michael came into public service on the 6th of April.

Prior to the public trips the drivers and crew undertook hours of system familiarisation and practice drives. These proved to be a major learning experience not without a few swear words and scrapes to the paintwork! Since her initial naming ceremony she has completed over 300 hours of trips of all kinds. As well as her standard aqueduct trips, there have been music trips, corporate events, birthday parties, anniversary celebrations, school trips, gin cruises, escape night, pumpkin cruises and even our first on board wedding.

The universal reaction has been that the new boat is a great passenger experience in a modern, spacious, clean boat with an enhanced view of the canal. Very often we become buried in the effort it has taken to get St Michael into public service but the Society should be very proud of the team who simply took on each challenge as it arose and found the best solution.

There are of course still tasks to be addressed over the coming months, such as the modification of the entry hatches, replacing weak and broken door bolts and repainting the boat in our correct corporate colours.



The main objectives for the new boat however were to enhance reliability and increase the customer experience and that has been achieved. The increased driver challenge is just a bonus!

Allister Mackie
St Michael Coordinator

St Michael was officially named by Provost Tom Kerr at a ceremony at Manse Road Basin on 6th April 2019

St Magdalene

2019 has been a reasonably quieter year for St Magdalene since St Michael has been brought into service. This allowed St Magdalene to cover the Falkirk Wheel trips, and Victoria to do her usual town trips, but we also benefitted from running a number of "special event" trips with the availability and flexibility of running the two large boats simultaneously, subject always to the availability of BML drivers.

However, after just getting through the locks on the return July "Wheel" trip, and heading for home, St Magdalene suffered a failure in the drive train. After getting her into the side, David and his crew managed to get the passengers off the boat and sorted with taxis etc. On examination the drive was considered not fixable on site. The cavalry were called out and Stewart and Jim brought Leamington to the rescue. A slow process, as it took from late afternoon Sunday, till almost four o'clock on the Monday morning to tow St Magdalene back to base. A big thank you to all the volunteers who did this first ever "night shift".

A new drive unit was fitted, and we got her operational the day before "Fun Day".

During the close season, St Magdalene will be in Dry Dock for her annual inspection and given a much needed good spruce up, and we can look forward to her looking her best for 2020 and beyond.

Ronnie Reis
St Magdalene Coordinator



To put any of our boats into the Dry Dock at Ratho now costs over £500.00 per week

Leamington

Another major project attended to this year was addressing the old (and somewhat tiring) engine in our Self Drive Hire boat ~ Leamington. Such is the popularity of this work horse of the Society, it has always been difficult to find a slot to take her out of service to attend to such a major job.

But that is exactly what we did earlier in the year. We took out the existing engine, and Jem Engines from Polmont subsequently refurbished and rebuilt the complete power unit fitting new components where necessary before returning the engine to us to fit in the boat.

Timescale was against us, and by the time the shiny new engine came back to us there were only two weeks (i.e. 4 black hander days) to get the engine fitted and tested for the start of the season ~ a bit of a nail biter but we made it.

And so, Leamington took part in the opening day flotilla, and has since been extremely busy, and as popular as ever throughout the season.

Over the coming closed season, we will be replacing the boat's sink unit which has suffered from damp and rain ingress and hopefully making one or two other improvements to make the boat even more enjoyable for our customers.

Iain Walker
Leamington Coordinator



The shiny refurbished power unit is lowered into place in Leamington in time for the new season opening day.

Victoria - Season 2019 (and beyond)

Our much-loved Flagship, Victoria, underwent some more-than-cosmetic surgery early in the year, to re-plate a portion of the stern (caused by undiagnosed leaks in the wooden cabin letting rainwater in under the cabin floorboards, there to silently corrode from the inside). This repair was carried out by black handers, assisted by meticulous professional welding by local Agricultural Engineer, Martin Nelson.

She has had a busy season, as always, introducing lots of people to the delights of sailing the canals.

However, it is not lost upon us that she is coming up towards her 50th birthday, and being approximately a quarter of the age of the canal, she is showing signs of maturity: whilst her maintenance has been thorough, she is inevitably suffering from mechanical wear (she rattles and clanks quite a bit); areas of timberwork are in need of replacement, rather than further patching; her paintwork has become less than smart. She is our badge: she should show the world what LUCS is all about.

Accordingly, we are aiming to do a major refit over the next couple of years, retaining the essence of the old, but introducing the new, giving our dear queen an optimistic next half-century.

Gone, the noisy, conversation-stopping engine, and the complexities of its drive-train, the smell of diesel, and the exhaust fumes. The future (wait for it...) will be electric. Virtually silent, virtually maintenance-free, Victoria will still perform her current role, but without polluting the locality with her exhaust — still looking the elegant lady she has always been, still looking like a steamboat, but no longer sounding like a tractor. We cannot let the need for a major refit pass without taking full advantage of the opportunity to innovate for the future and do our wee bit for the planet.

There are lots of decisions to be made, calculations to be done, experienced brains to be picked, technologies to be chosen, suppliers to be assessed and selected, and possible funding assistance to be explored. Whilst mains electricity is currently (no pun intended) not entirely carbon-free, it's a lot nearer to it than diesel, and getting better.

There is a huge planning task ahead to make this work seamlessly. The aim is for Victoria to look as good as new, in her rightful place in the modern canal world.



Our flagship Victoria on “town trip” duties approaching the basin

Electric Dinghies



Introduced as an experiment, the 2019 season saw the arrival of 3 electric dinghies which have been available to hire on an hourly basis. Without exception, everyone who has taken one out has thoroughly enjoyed the peaceful and serene experience as the cruise silently along the canal. Many have come back to take a dinghy out for a second or third time.

There is no doubt that the dinghies will be an added attraction to the LUCS offering, and hopefully next year we can arrange a number of volunteers to assist with the task of hiring them out, and ensuring the clients are comfortable with their operation.



We saw a 9% increase in passengers on our big boat charters this year.

Booking Secretary's Report

The 2019 season was extremely busy for the Booking Secretary, which resulted in a significant increase in income.

The public cruises to the Wheel, Aqueduct and Town Trips have again been very successful, but in addition, a number of special cruises were added to the normal programme:

- Fathers Day Cruise in conjunction with Mason Belle Kitchen
- Escape Cruise in conjunction with eek! Escape Rooms
- Gin Tasting Cruise in conjunction with Linlithgow Distillery
- Summer BBQ (Members Social Event)
- Lowland Canal Festival on F&C canal
- Deacons Night Cruise
- Cruise & Dine (Members Social Event)

In addition to the foregoing, our newly introduced Pumpkin Cruises run in conjunction with Narrowboat Farm have proved exceptionally popular, with eight cruises sold out almost as soon as they were released for sale.

Next year also sees the introduction of Canal Art Holidays, run in conjunction with Wild @ Art Holidays.

These bookings and various queries generated approximately 4000 emails that required nearly 560 replies ~ a huge task in anybody's book.

Analysis of bookings system data is shown on the next page ..

Analysis of bookings system data is as follows ..

This year there were 237 public bookings. These bookings raised £21,864 as shown in the table below.

This is a significant increase from last year. This can be attributed in part to the increased number of Leamington bookings.

These figures do not include revenue raised by the Falkirk Wheel trips or any of the public trips, reported separately in the Treasurers financial statement.

	Bookings	Change from 2018 / 2019	Revenue	Change from 2018 / 2019
Leamington	68	11	£ 8,340.00	£ 2,140.00
40 Seaters	43	-2	£ 7,750.00	£ 693.00
Victoria	19	-1	£ 1,471.00	-£ 57.00
Rooms	87	-18	£ 1,936.00	-£ 11.00
Schools	20	4	£ 842.00	£ 26.00
Vouchers	-	-	£ 1,525.00	£ 565.00
Totals		-6	£ 21,864.00	£ 3,356.00

Booking system pre-payment

The integration of on-line pre payment into our booking system has proved to be a significant advance. This automated payment system appears to be very popular for the Aqueduct, Wheel and other Special trips. The integration of this system into our existing booking software has required a significant amount of time and effort from John Aitken and, as always, my thanks go out to John for his continued support.

The introduction of this new system has seen a significant decrease in the number of 'no shows': however under our current software implementation we are still limited in the extent to which we can provide a seamless interface to the user. This has sometimes resulted in Customers for various reasons not completing bookings which has resulted in a significant number of emails back and forth to these potential hirers.

As reported elsewhere in this report, we have established a working group to address these limitations and to derive a specification for an improved system that will satisfy our future needs.

LUCS booking volunteers

I must express my thanks to those who have crewed boats, rescued broken or abandoned boats, despatched Leamington, opened rooms and hosted schools' visits for all the bookings over the year.

Although it can sometimes be difficult to find a volunteer for a confirmed hire, someone has always undertaken the task. In the past it was often the same folk volunteering to handle a large number of the bookings. This year, due to the driver training programme and a significant number of new members, we have seen an increase in the number of trained drivers and despatchers.

Hopefully the upgrade to the booking system and these proposals should spread the load over a larger pool in the coming years, and not only lead to an easier task for the booking secretary, and a better customer experience.

Graeme Scott
Booking Secretary



We have welcomed 31 brand new members to the Society in 2019

Membership Report

At the end of our Financial year, I am happy to report that the society membership was at a healthy 480 which includes 31 new members, resulting in a net increase of 9 over the previous year. This increase is all the more welcome given that again we have lost a small number of our more elderly members who have sadly passed away during the year.

It is indeed good to welcome the new (and some younger) members, many who have come from further afield, and are already becoming involved in some of the activities around the organisation.

I would particularly like to welcome the new members from The Sorted Project in Edinburgh, an organisation LUCS are delighted to support. A big thank you to is due to them for undertaking various tasks every Wednesday. A big thank you is also due to all the other volunteer members and "Black Handers" who keep the society ticking over, making it the success it is.

The table below shows the current membership breakdown, which this year contributed circa £1,672.00 in membership fees.

Ronnie Reis
Membership Secretary

Membership Cat.	2019	2018	Variance
Junior / Associate	1	1	-
Ordinary	23	19	+4
Senior	66	67	-1
Family	66	63	+3
Life	317	313	+4
Corporate	2	4	-2
Multi User	2	1	+1
Honorary	3	3	-
Total	480	471	+9

Basin Banter continues to be the main form of communication with the membership. Since it was introduced, we have produced some 20 issues of the publication which generally comes out monthly, and covers events, news about the Society, and the wider canal fraternity.

Your e-newsletter from the Linlithgow Union Canal Society
Issue 20 - October 2019 [View in your browser](#)



Basin Banter
Your e-newsletter from The Linlithgow Union Canal Society



As the 2019 season draws to a close, we can look back on a wonderful and eventful season at the basin. Thanks always to all the volunteers who work tirelessly to keep the

Basin Banter is read far and wide, including Australia, New Zealand, France, Spain, Canada & USA.

Members and others interested in the activities of the Society can sign up to receive Basin Banter free of charge on the LUCS Web Site or Facebook page, from any previous issue accessed through Social Media, or by contacting ezine@lucs.org.uk and asking to join the mailing list.



Every issue of Basin Banter is sent to over 300 readers each month.

Treasurers' Report – (Financial Year 2018 – 2019)

The summary accounts which have yet to be audited at the time of writing show that over the 2018/19 financial year LUCS' assets reduced slightly by £3,027, the account balances totalling £62,206 at the end of the financial year. This slight reduction is explained by the following abnormal "one off" items of expenditure, totalling almost £17,000.

• Work to bring St Michael into service	£ 3,514
• Reconditioned Leamington engine	£ 3,720
• Cranage for Victoria repairs	£ 3,960
• St Magdalene replacement coupling	£ 642
• St Magdalene 2016 MCA inspections	£ 611
• New MGC boiler	£ 3,750
• Work on Thistledown	£ 800

The total amount (£16,997) of this one-off expenditure is just under 30% of our annual income. The Society's ability to incur such additional expenditure without significantly affecting its finances demonstrates the health of its financial position.

In this respect LUCS has a duty to ensure the money it earns is spent to further its charitable objectives. This is a matter that is currently being considered by the LUCS strategy group who report to the main committee.

Ordinary Income and Expenditure : In respect of LUCS's ordinary income and expenditure, LUCS earned £57,422 for an expenditure of £60,499. Total boat income was £36,382 against an expenditure of £26,855 (not including a late 2016 MCA invoice) Total tearoom income was £8,702 against an expenditure of £4,523. This expenditure figure includes £1,455 for 2018/19 tearoom supplies received immediately after the financial year end. Note the tearoom income includes £1,476 deducted from St Magdalene's Aqueduct and Falkirk Wheel cruise income at £1.50 per passenger in respect of refreshments served. The Tearoom income also includes takings from the Santa and Fun Day weekends which are not shown against these events. Other significant income includes Donations (£2,094); Membership (£2,093); Museum sales (£757) and Room Hire (£1,709).

PayPal and Pre-payment : This year is the first year in which PayPal has been used as the default for all bookings. In addition a credit card reader was used for the first time this year in the museum. This also took Tea Room sales when customers did not have cash. As a result, during this financial year money collected through the PayPal account this year was £27,011 compared with £15,491 in 2017/18. Of this amount £24,379 was taken by the Booking System and £2,632 was taken by the museum card reader.

Monies automatically collected by the booking system included Charters and Self-hires (£15,319); Falkirk Wheel and special cruises (£6,372); Aqueduct cruises (£3,450). The way in which the booking system collects and categorises these payments greatly eases your Treasurer's task. However I must record my thanks to Graeme Scott who oversees the operation of the booking system, particularly in respect of "pending payments". As Graeme mentions in his report work is being done to future-proof the booking system which will eliminate this problem. Payments taken by the credit card reader included: Aqueduct cruises (£776); Town Trips (£991); Museum Sales (£520); Battery Boats (£45); Tea Room Sales (£300). Hence, income for Aqueduct cruises is split as follows: booking system pre-booked (£3,450); museum credit card payment (£776); cash taken in museum (£1,671)

I must express my appreciation to the museum volunteers as these different types of payments have significantly increased the complexity of their task. In general this has not been a problem, although on occasions it has not been possible to reconcile the museum takings which explains the small cash unallocated sum in the accounts. It is recognised that payment systems in the museum need to be more user friendly for the museum volunteers and this will be reviewed over the winter period to see what improvements can be made in 2020. Another card reader is to be obtained for the tearoom.

David Shirres
Treasurer & Company Secretary

	01/10/2018	30/09/2019	Increase
Current Account	£63,812	£61,606	
Cash	£199	£100	
Paypal	£1,222	£500	
Total	£65,233	£62,206	-£3,027

Category	Expense	Income	Total
Boats Expenses:Battery Boats	£363		-£363
Boats Expenses:Colin G	£65		-£65
Boats Expenses:Fuel	£671		-£671
Boats Expenses:General	£7,154		-£7,154
Boats Expenses:Joint Scottish Canals project	£3,957		-£3,957
Boats Expenses:Leamington other	£1,032		-£1,032
Boats Expenses:MCA BML certification	£1,287		-£1,287
Boats Expenses:St Magdalene	£4,934		-£4,934
Boats Expenses:St Michael	£1,943		-£1,943
Boats Expenses:Training	£320		-£320
Boats Expenses:Victoria	£5,459		-£5,459
Boats Expenses:Workshop	£281		-£281
Subtotal	£27,466		-£27,466
Boats Income:40-seat boat Aqueduct trip	£1,229	£7,126	£5,897
Boats Income:40-seat boat charter	£93	£7,459	£7,367
Boats Income:40-seat boat Falkirk Wheel	£1,553	£4,049	£2,496
Boats Income:40-seat boat Schools		£872	£872
Boats Income:40-seat boat Special Cruise	£176	£3,236	£3,059
Boats Income:Battery Boats		£388	£388
Boats Income:Leamington Hire		£8,880	£8,880
Boats Income:Town trips		£5,678	£5,678
Boats Income:Victoria Charter	£65	£1,811	£1,746
Subtotal	£3,115	£39,498	£36,382
Events:Fun Day	£952	£800	-£152
Events:Santa	£1,144	£1,490	£346
Subtotal	£2,096	£2,290	£194
Museum	£332		-£332
Other Expenses:Company Management	£3,794		-£3,794
Other Expenses:IT equipment	£225		-£225
Other Expenses:Cash unallocated	£207	£56	-£151
Other Expenses:Marches & Deacons Night	£361		-£361
Other Expenses:Marketing	£4,240		-£4,240
Other Expenses:Miscellaneous	£552		-£552
Other Expenses:Paypal booking fees	£568		-£568
Other Expenses:Volunteer sustenance	£281		-£281
Other Expenses:Website	£120		-£120
Subtotal	£10,349	£56	-£10,292
Other Income:Donations		£2,094	£2,094
Other Income:Membership	£20	£2,093	£2,073
Other Income:Pump Outs		£170	£170
Other Income:Sales and Museum	£296	£757	£461
Other Income:Scrap		£54	£54
Subtotal	£316	£5,167	£4,851
Premises:Bills	£1,876		-£1,876
Premises:Enhancement	£4,026		-£4,026
Premises:Fuel Oil	£1,121		-£1,121
Premises:Gardening	£239		-£239
Premises:Maintenance	£718		-£718
Premises:Telecomms Internet	£2,164		-£2,164
Subtotal	£10,144		-£10,144
Rooms:Room Hire		£1,709	£1,709
Tea Room	£3,118	£8,702	£5,584
Total	£56,935	£57,422	£487
Acquire St Michael:Rectification work	£3,514		-£3,514
GRAND TOTAL	£60,449	£57,422	-£3,027

Driver Training Group

One of the most active sub groups we have is The Driver Training Group. The training programme over the 2018/9 closed season resulted in seven new Helmsman Certificated drivers - Willie Irvine, Doug Scott, John Martin, Ian Robertson, Judith Crawford, Alan McAllister and Andy Eaglesfield – congratulations to you all. Willie Irvine, Doug Scott and Steve Braes are now working towards qualifying for a Boat master's licence and we hope to advise of their success before long,. They will be a welcome addition to our pool of BML drivers.

The 2019/20 winter training programme is now under way and at the time of writing we are expecting to have a few lady driver candidates to augment our current total of only two. If any members are interested in driver tuition either for driving our trip boats, dispatching our hire boat or even just to get a bit of confidence for a holiday hire, then just come along on a Wednesday or Saturday morning and we will explain what we can do for you. Driver training is not organised in classes so each individual may turn up as and when they can. On the water we try to keep to about three trainees at a time in a boat so that everyone gets a decent turn on the helm.

A new venture during the 2019/20 training programme will be working with the Sorted Project Edinburgh. This project provides support for people recovering from substance dependency and/or mental health problems. The project has recently had a new canal boat delivered and eight of their members have joined LUCS to get the benefit of our experience and driver training.

We discovered this year that although volunteers have been crewing on the 40 seat boats, often for years, we have no record of some of them having been signed off as competent by a BML. We are not only required to have these records but crew have to be signed off for each of our two 40 seat boats. If you are already crewing or would like to crew please contact a member of the Training Group to check that you are signed off or arrange to be so. For anyone who would like to restrict their on-board activity to cabin services then they will be welcomed by most of our skippers and mates as a third member of the crew.

This year we also carried out a practical man-overboard exercise as required by the MCA (Marine & Coastguard Agency). These exercises are important to engage drivers and crew members in the thought and planning processes required if or when faced with the real thing.

Ian Walker
Driver Training Coordinator



One of the members from The Sorted Group takes the helm of Victoria



Our dummy from our "man overboard" exercise took to the water to try out one of the electric dinghies



The fastest boat to sink in the 2019 cardboard boat race took just 19 seconds

Fun Day Report

This year's Fun Day was blessed with some fairly good (if a little breezy !) weather. As in previous years Victoria led the flotilla and as she entered the basin the ribbon was cut by the Gala Queen with her Lady in Waiting, and after disembarking on the quayside the Fun Day was officially opened by Catherine Topley the CEO of Scottish Canals. It is really gratifying that Scottish Canals have shown their support of LUCS, since apart from providing our guest of honour, they provided us with a skip for disposal of dead cardboard boats.

There were the usual stalls in Learmonth Gardens with children's entertainment provided by Punch and Judy shows and Face painting.

During the afternoon there were the very popular boat trips running as well as the free ferry service across the basin. Once again International Rescue gave an excellent demonstration of water safety as well as providing First Aid cover throughout the day.

The Tea Room and the BBQ also did a roaring trade and the Museum proved to be as popular as always.

The main event of the day as always was the Cardboard Boat Race. This year there were 12 entries which is slightly fewer than in previous years, but it proved to be much easier to launch and recover this number of boats. On the subject of boat launching we had a last minute issue with our normal launching tractor, and at just a couple of hours notice, local man John Kerr stepped in by bringing along his vintage tractor to help launch the boats. Now that's community support!

The challenge for the Cardboard Boat entrants this year was designed by the fiendish mind of our erstwhile Chair and it proved to be a challenge indeed!

The whole of LUCS is run by volunteers and it would be remiss not to remember everyone who helped out to make the day a success. However there is always a need for more staff and it would be fantastic if a few more people could be involved next year.

Thanks again for everyone's contributions.

Chris and Karen Hunt.
Fun Day Coordinators



According to our Fun Day coordinators, playing snakes and ladders whilst on a cardboard boat in the middle of the canal is deemed "a bit of a challenge" !!!

Gardening Group

There is no doubt that the attractiveness of our setting at Manse Road is a major asset for the society. Not only is this appreciated by our visitors, but it also attracts attention as a location for filming, photograph shoots etc. Our gardening team do a superb job ensuring the basin continues to look its best at all times.

Although not participating in any competition this year we received many compliments, including from the head gardener at Oatridge College, on the flower tubs and hanging baskets. A wetter season and the use of slow-release fertiliser helped to keep the displays at their best. As well as continuing the participation in Burgh Beautiful's bulk-purchase agreement, we also found Mill Garden Centre, Armadale, very helpful and good value.

The strip of grass down the side of the drive enjoyed more regular treatment this year but I fear, because of the ill-treatment it receives from cars, gongoozlers and cardboard boatists, it will never reach the status of "lawn", but it does provide an attractive & welcoming entrance into our premises.

The main contributors to the gardening team are Maureen Wilson and Tom Findlay, though I also pay tribute to the happy liaison with the Premises team and especially to Les Duff for making a couple of new under-window tubs whilst being extremely busy with other vital work.

It speaks volumes for the esprit de corps of our society that when our work peaked we had willing assistance from the other black-handers. Many thanks to you all.

Stewart Liddle
Gardening Coordinator



Manse Road basin & our boats were hired in June as a photoshoot location for a Spanish range of children's clothing.



The photoshoot for a "winter" clothing collection was held on the hottest day of the year !!!

Social Committee

In answer to a strong cry from the membership that we should encourage more membership engagement, the committee introduced a number of "Members' Benefits" in 2019, while also organising a number of social events, not only for LUCS members, but their immediate families and friends ~ the creation of this wider circle designed to not only spread the word about the activities of the Society, but to have some fun while we are doing so.

There is no doubting the popularity of such events such as the Summer BBQ which was attended by some 60 guests. After cruising from the basin, a warm summer evening was enjoyed at the Bridge 51 Picnic Area, food cooked, games played, and prizes awarded, before everyone boarded the boats for the journey back to Linlithgow. Hopefully an active Social Committee will be formed going forward, to increase the number of events in 2020 and beyond.

As we go to print, details are being finalised for a "Cruise & Dine" event ~ an evening of fine dining and entertainment.



Our Summer BBQ for Members, their families and friends was attended by around 60 guests



The LUCS Golf team, comprising Peter Nixon, Ian Walker, and Tom Findlay triumphed at the Annual Young Enterprise Charity Golf Day



LUCS Members, their families & friends cruised on St Michael to the Members BBQ on a warm June evening.

Buildings & Premises



Our premises have been used this year to film a new canal series for Channel 5

As always the upkeep of the premises has been one of continuous care and maintenance.

Every week the public areas require cleaning and tidying. This involves many people taking on tasks as they become apparent. Special thanks to Tom for endlessly sweeping paths and trimming the trees, Alan for sorting the many bins and tending to the flags and Christine for keeping the tea room and toilets spotless.

The public rarely comment when the place is clean and tidy but are quick to comment when it is not.

A number of major projects have been completed this year. At last we replaced the failing boiler in the MGC with an external oil boiler: this will not only make the heating more reliable but frees up space in the tractor shed.

Some of the upgrades by the IT group needed coordination with the building group. Extending the Wi-fi coverage to the whole site involved hard wiring the router in the office to all the buildings. This must rank as one of the dirtiest most awkward jobs of the year. At the same time, the ceiling projector in the MGC was replaced and relocated in a more convenient spot and we now have good Security Cameras giving us 24 hour coverage of the basin.

The exterior security lighting consisted of 3500watts of ageing tungsten halogen lamps which have been replaced by 600watts of modern LED lights, providing a better coverage at a much lower running cost. After an incident while charging a boat battery in the workshop, Chris Hunt built a new external purpose built shed for all our batteries and chargers.

As we go to print Les is doing his usual wonderful job in replacing the roof of the tearoom boiler house and wood shed. This is a complex job due to the difficulties of sealing the joint with the back sandstone wall. And on the wall front we have also been lucky to have the services of a Scottish Canals work group, who under expert supervision have repointed much of the sandstone wall near the bridge.

Over the closed season we propose to look at the heating in the public toilets, trim back some of the vegetation round the basin, rationalise the boat moorings and perhaps make doors for the wood store.

Again many many thanks to all who take on the many unglamorous tasks that keep our public image so positive.

Allister Mackie
Buildings & Premises Coordinator



Jennie Bond, Anne Diamond, Pete Waterman & Bill Oddie visited our premises during a recent filming for a new Channel 5 series ~ Barging through Britain : then and now [Scheduled to be broadcast circa. Spring 2020]

This year saw the setting up of an IT Group, tasked with overseeing everything related to computers, software, internet, audio-visual equipment, website and email. The group commenced by listing current issues and proceeded to deal with them as appropriate, with regular reports to the LUCS committee.

Internet: It was agreed to upgrade our broadband internet service, increasing the bandwidth available from around 10 to 40 Mb/sec. It was also agreed to replace the old mains carrier WiFi access points with hard-wired wireless access points (WAPs) located in the Museum, Tearoom and Mel Gray Centre and to operate these WAPs as a single unified WiFi system, permitting seamless coverage throughout the buildings and the surrounding area. Now completed, these upgrades not only assist the LUCS volunteers, but are also a major step forward in the service we are providing to visitors to our premises.

Webcam: Power supply problems caused by water ingress have been resolved and the webcam continues to let LUCS members and others keep an eye on the basin from afar.

Audio-Visual: The DVD based system in the museum was replaced by a "smart" TV, with the DVD content converted to MP4 and fed to the TV by a USB memory drive. The LUCS video has been converted from slides to VHS video, to DVD and now to MP4. Consideration is being given to producing an updated HD version to provide a higher quality presentation. The Mel Gray Centre AV system was also updated to a Windows 10 computer, with all the LUCS MP4 video files available, and a new HD resolution projector.

Office 365: A major change this year was the adoption of Microsoft Office 365. This gives 1Tb of shared "cloud" SharePoint storage for LUCS documentation, image library and other files. Each LUCS user now has an email address @lucs.org.uk and 1 Tb of "OneDrive" cloud file storage.

Website: The LUCS website is regularly maintained by webmaster Douglas Robertson and is well used. It will probably be updated to run on a secure (https://) server before the start of next season.

Booking System: The booking system continues to facilitate on-line booking of charters, room hires, self-drive hires and cruise bookings. Most bookings are now paid on-line. As we look forward however, we are keen that our systems remain futureproof as far as possible. A group has been set up to manage a complete overhaul of the entire booking system with the objective of making it easier to use by both bookers and LUCS volunteers. The new system should be introduced in 2021.

CCTV Security: Four HD CCTV cameras have been installed with a recording system that keeps about 1 month of video evidence.

Documentation: The LUCS document management system has been moved to cloud-based SharePoint storage, so that LUCS documents are widely available to everyone. A new category has been added for IT documentation and new documents have been originated covering Office 365, WiFi, SharePoint, email and the booking system.

John Aitken
IT Group Chair



A new Audio Visual display has been installed, appreciated by the many visitors to the museum

Marketing & Events



Over 9,000 people have looked at LUCS's Facebook pages during the season

Our marketing activities this year followed previous campaigns, taking advantage of the growing (and now accepted as 1st port of call) Social Media marketplace. This together with our busy Web Site, local support advertising in programmes such as Children's Gala Day, and press releases to local & national media keeps our name in the spotlight throughout the year.

Our Seasonal Campaign is centred around brochure distribution throughout the Lothians, Tayside, Borders & Central Regions. Some 25,000 leaflets are distributed via tourist information display boards. This year, our exposure was increased to include 10 additional sites at major leisure attractions such as the Royal Commonwealth Pool and the International Climbing Arena. This provided exposure to a further 2.5 million people who visit these centres, and lets us address the local population in addition to visitors and tourists.

A major addition to our marketing activities during 2019 has been the introduction of joint marketing initiatives with other local organisations. These included a Father's Day promotion with Mason Belle Kitchen, an "Escape" cruise with eek! Escape rooms, a Gin Tasting Cruise with Linlithgow Distillery, and of course our popular Pumpkin Cruises with Narrowboat Farm. (Sold out in 2019 again)

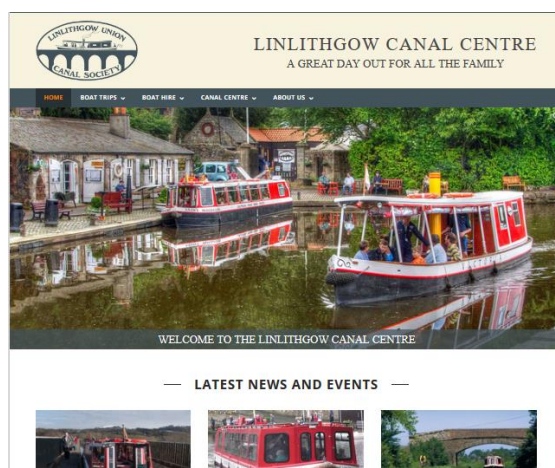
A new event this year was the introduction of the Veggie Boat, transporting produce from Narrowboat Farm to the basin. This proved exceptionally popular, gained considerable exposure in Social Media, and was even featured in "The Scotsman".

We would hope to repeat all these features and more in 2020 and beyond.

Stuart Rennie
Marketing Convenor



The Wee Spark arrived at Manse Road Basin to unload her cargo of fresh veg from Narrowboat Farm.



The Society Web Site remains an integral part of our marketing activities and communication with our members

Webmaster's Report

Its been a busy year for the website and webmaster, making sure that all the societies activities are communicated and promoted as effectively as possible. This means that front page content changes almost weekly. Hopefully everyone finds what they need quickly and easily. The changes made to the structure of the website last year makes all this a lot easier. If anyone has any suggestions for changes, or sees out of date content, broken links then please let me know

Douglas Robertson
Webmaster

Education Group

Last year I expressed disappointment at a reduction in bookings for school trips. At least this year we have kept our end up with 17 one-hour bookings as opposed to 14 last year. The big disappointment this year was our loss of canal safety cruises for local primary schools which has been an ongoing feature for many years.

The safety cruises were originally led by the local community police constables. However, after the reorganisation of Police Scotland into a national force, staff were redeployed and unable to spare time for this role. We were then 'saved' by Scottish Canals who offered excellent input through the services of Linton McBurnie. But earlier this year Scottish canals also went through a staff reassignment process leaving us with no option but to cancel the programme.

In terms of visiting schools, one school came by bus and two were local schools with pupils walking to the canal centre. The others were all completing a residential course at the Low Port Centre usually incorporating activities such as canoeing, visits to the Palace and activities at Beecraigs as well as a visit us. But we have now heard that Low Port intends to close their residential facilities which gives us concern for next year's uptake of school cruises. As I have stated many times, most schools find the cost of hiring coaches far beyond their reach in this era of diminishing finances .

Finally, my thanks to the team – Elizabeth Wood, Jean Meldrum and Therese Stewart. Therese unfortunately is now leaving us to pursue other challenges, but we wish her well. We may, therefore, be looking for new volunteers next year, although that will depend very much on our bookings holding up in 2020.

David Wood
Education Coordinator

Health & Safety Group

Health & Safety have been busy this year with improvements to our facilities and systems to make the boats and premises safer for the volunteers and our customers. We are now entering our busy time of year when the fire extinguishers and the life jackets have to be inspected and signed off by an approved supplier.

The signage in the yard has been improved in line with our legal obligations. This also gives contact details of H&S personnel.

The charging station for lead-acid batteries has been moved from the workshop to a new installation in the yard. The installation was designed and constructed in-house by H&S personnel.

New eyewash stations are to be installed in the workshop and the battery charging shed.

New incident report books have been put on all the boats. They join the original book kept in the MGC. We are also putting an article in Basin Banter to inform as many of the membership as possible about the process of recording incidents. We will also be generating a standard procedure sheet for integration into the LUCS Library. The recording of incidents is a vital to our obligations to the MCA and part of ensuring that we learn from the incidents and improve our safety record. To this end, we have instigated the issuing of anonymised reports on incidents that occur on the boats or at the on-shore premises. These are not issued on all incidents, only ones where we feel that there are lessons for volunteers to be learned.

Gordon Hewit
Health & Safety Coordinator

Museum Report



*The LUCS Museum, is housed
in former stable buildings
converted by our volunteers*

Our Museum - the only Canal Museum in Scotland - continues to be a major attraction for visitors to the basin, and we strive to keep it looking fresh and appealing.

During 2019 I have changed round the sequence of the board displays. From discussions with some of the museum staff, this is working well starting from pre canal through to regeneration.

I have not used any new pictures as those already in place I think best tell the story of the canal.

I would like to update the existing panels to laminate boards but this will require the skills of a design artist to put together, and we are on the lookout for someone with design skills to help with this task.

One major upgrade this year has been the installation of a new display monitor. Following a few operating glitches most of the hard working attendants are now adept at using the system, and have loaded different presentations which means the poor attendant does not have to listen all day to the same presentation. My thanks to John Aitken for loading our films onto memory stick.

Of course the museum attendants are the backbone of the museum, standing sometimes in the cold, struggling with the card payment system, selling boat tickets and answering numerous questions and only being rewarded with a warming tea or coffee. My thanks to you all.

We have been gifted from Judy Gray's daughters a large library of canal books and many films that Judy has taken over the years. These are in numerous formats, and require some cataloguing and skills to digitise them to store within the LUCS archive for future use and retrieval for display.

We also have from Judy's daughters the rights to the copyright of the films and the photographs taken by Judy in the LUCS collection. Judy was rightly very meticulous on copyright. Few realise that photo copyright remains the property following the photographer's death for 70 years with their rightful heirs.

Once again this year the museum will turn into the wonderful world of Santa's Grotto: wonder who his little elf will be ?

Danny Callaghan
Museum Curator

Museum Sales

Shopping locally makes good sense for all sorts of reasons. This also applies when buying stock to sell in the canal museum: for example, Network Promotions for branded items (some are made from recycled plastic too), JMK for printing and just along the canal at Broxburn sits Lomond Books.

We also sell books and craft items produced by local people and members of LUCS, while a visit to a wholesaler in Glasgow tops up the toys. Other items we buy in which have to be shipped up from England haven't been without problems in recent years. A long term favourite supplier stopped trading in 2016 only for the company taking on their stock also closing down at the beginning of this year. However I have found another that sells similar canal themed items so we still have a variety to choose from.

Sales over the past few months have fluctuated along with the weather. As in past years fishing nets have been a best seller and yoyos have been very popular with children again this season.

Therefore more will be ordered soon and afterwards some time will be spent looking for something new to sell. There is always plenty to do in the winter months!

To those of you who volunteered to be behind the counter and keep an eye on the stock when I was unavailable -a big Thank You!

Janette Nixon
Museum Sales



A warm drink and mince meat pies are the order of the day in the tea room on the ever popular Santa weekends in December



Did you know that over 300 people visited the tea room on the Fun Day.

Tea Room Report

Well done to those who have looked after the tea room this year in the absence of a permanent tea room convenor. They have done an amazing job, and the tea room has enjoyed another good season, and been hired out regularly as a venue for community and social groups

Again, visitors were impressed with the look of the tearoom. Numbers varied from 2 (on a very wet and horrible day!) to 97 each day at the weekends, averaging around 35. Weekday numbers were generally around 20 per day. Almost 300 people visited the tearoom on Fun Day.

We continued to buy our weekly, fresh supplies from Taste, with many satisfied customers and positive comments, especially about the scones. Last year we bought packaged individual loaf cakes for the wheel trips, which went down well with the passengers and were much easier for the tearoom ladies to deal with. This year we added a variety of muffins which were also well received.

We welcomed some new tearoom volunteers this year. As a result, the rota was almost complete halfway through the season. A big thank you to everyone involved, whether recently retired, currently active or newly recruited.

Even with the new people, more volunteers to help in the tearoom would be welcome, even if it only one session in the year. If you would like to help in the tearoom, please contact weeannie2@aol.com.

Anne Mackie & Lynne Nelson
Tea Room Coordinators

Events & Awards

2019 was marked early in the year when LUCS were presented with an award for “Canal Charity of the Year” together with a number of other organisations operating on the Lowland Canal network. The award, presented by Catherine Topley, CEO of Scottish Canals and Ronnie Rusack MBE, recognises the contribution made by volunteer organisations to the ongoing maintenance and operation of the canals as an important community and tourist attraction.

There was further excitement at the presentation ceremony when it was announced that our very own Stewart Liddle was entered into the “Hall of Fame” for his long standing contribution, in particular for his work with the Lowland Canal Volunteer Group. Well done to Stewart.

June saw us partaking as normal in the Marches, and we welcomed the Deacons to the basin during the festivities, when they again enjoyed a short cruise as part of their perambulation of the town.

We were delighted to hand over a new Deacons Trophy, replacing the previous LUCS trophy which was showing signs of its 30+ years. We are sure the new glistening trophy will last another 30 years.. Barbara Braithwaite MBE collected on behalf of the Deacons Court



Chairman Stuart Rennie presents Barbara Braithwaite MBE with a glistening new Deacons Trophy



LUCS were awarded “Canal Charity of the Year” at the inaugural Volunteer Awards, held at the Falkirk Wheel in May.



Catherine Topley presents Stewart Liddle with his trophy as he was entered into the Hall of Fame for his work with the Lowland Canal Volunteer Group.

STOP PRESS



LUCS have been nominated for the 2020 Travel & Tourism Awards

Catherine Topley presents Stewart Liddle with his trophy as he was entered into the Hall of Fame for his work with the Lowland Canal Volunteer Group.



Excited crowds await the arrival of Santa on Victoria for the traditional Christmas festivities at Manse Road Basin.

Santa's Report

November & December 2018 was the normal busy months for the LUCS volunteers as they prepared for the ever popular Santa Weekends. First the museum was taken apart, with all the valuable artefacts carefully packed away and safely stored. Enter the building team to magically convert the museum into Santa's Grotto to be visited by literally hundreds of excited children.

Barbara and her team wrapped up hundreds of presents.

The tea room was transformed and decorated with the tree and festive bunting, while outside the giant tree was erected beside the gate, and the buildings were adorned with Christmas lights.

Excitement built as Santa arrived on Victoria, welcomed by the waiting crowd. All children were given their gift by Santa before the whole family boarded one of our boats providing short trips on the canal before returning to the warmth of the log fire in the Tea Room.

I am sure 2019 will be just as successful, and as one of the many helpers on the day, I am really looking forward to seeing all the excitement and expectations on the wee ones faces.

Let me wish you all a very Merry Christmas

Santa's little Elf
Ho Ho Ho

and finally ...

My sincere thanks to everyone who has helped run LUCS throughout the last 12 months and given me considerable support to carry out my duties as your chairman.

There are too many to mention individually, but I could not have done it without you all.

I would also like to thank the committee and convenors for their unstinting support and encouragement throughout the year.

And finally, thank you to everyone who has helped compile the content of this annual report, which I am sure gives our membership a valuable insight into the running of their society.

Here's to a successful 2020 and many years beyond.

Stuart H Rennie
Chairman
Linlithgow Union Canal Society



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

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