

Linlithgow Union Canal Society

Annual Report 2024 - 2025



St Michael leading flotilla out of Winchburgh Marina on 6th September 2025



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

2025 LUCS Committee

David Shirres Chair

Liaison Scottish Canals /
other canal societies
External Relations
Marches
Museum



Andy Eaglesfield Vice Chair

Membership secretary
Victoria project manager
Health & Safety
Receptionists
info@lucs



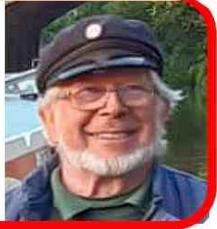
Peter Lewis Treasurer & Marketing

Basin Banter
Insurance/ Boat licensing
Fun Day
Company Secretary



Mike Smith

Engineer - Victoria
project
Public speaking
BID representative



Ronnie Reis Boats



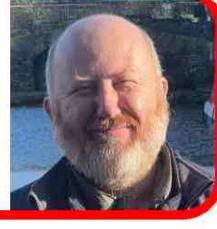
Graeme Simpson

Designated Person
Ashore

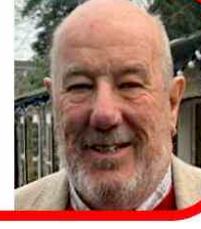


Ian Gray

Fund Raising



Doug Scott Booking Secretary



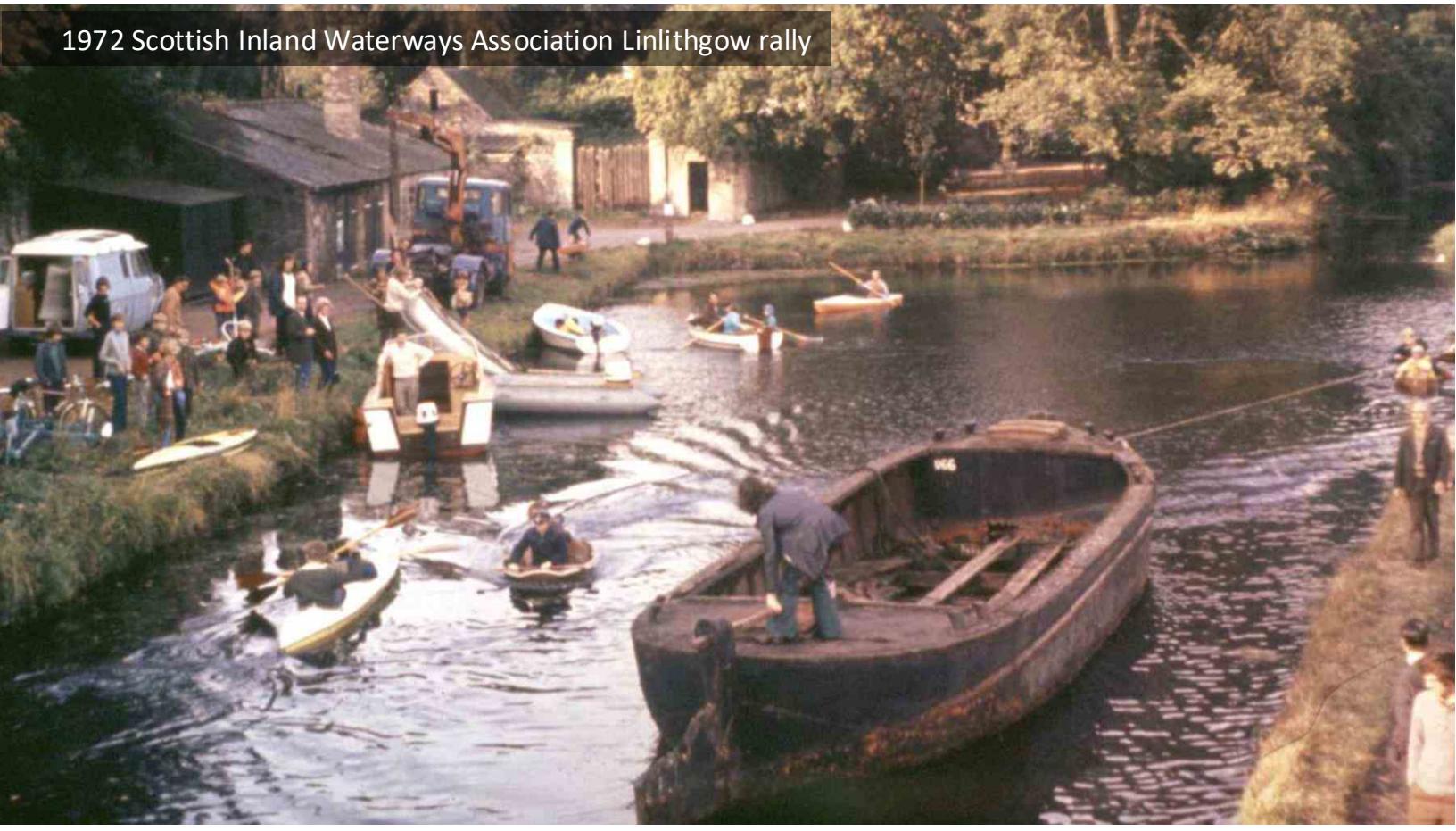
David Morrow

IT



Before LUCS

1972 Scottish Inland Waterways Association Linlithgow rally



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1. Chair's Report

In 1975, LUCS founder Mel Gray invited 15 people to his house who agreed to form the Linlithgow Union Canal Society (LUCS). This annual report records the events of LUCS's 50th anniversary year in addition to its usual offering of cruises and the Society's usual activities. This year LUCS welcomed over 5,000 visitors to its canal centre and provided them with boat trips. It should not be forgotten that the Society was only able to do so due to the achievements of former generations of LUCS volunteers who developed the canal basin and acquired the Society's boat fleet.

We commemorated these achievements at our 50th birthday event in April at which I was joined by nine previous Society Chairs. It was also good to see the basin full of boats after the 50th birthday flotilla from Winchburgh on the 6th September.

Another notable event in May this year was a boaters gathering at the M8 canal bridge to commemorate its 25th anniversary. This year was not without its challenges for the Society's current volunteers. Leamington and St Michael both needed new gearboxes whilst St Magdalene's cooling system needed attention. This year's surveys by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) also required a large amount of work.

Also described in this report, is Victoria's refit and electrification. This is costly major project which requires much volunteer work to give our flagship a new lease of life. Whilst she was out of the water this year, our Town Trips were operated by the Bridge 19-40 Union Canal Society's boat, Roseann. This was a great example of collaboration between canal societies. Another good example of collaboration was St Michael operating Falkirk Wheel trips for Scottish Canals whilst their boats were out of service.

In addition to the work of maintaining boats and operating services at and from the basin, it is important to acknowledge the vital back office tasks such as Treasurer, Bookings and IT. The IT report in particular shows just what is involved in providing the systems that are essential for the functioning of the Society.





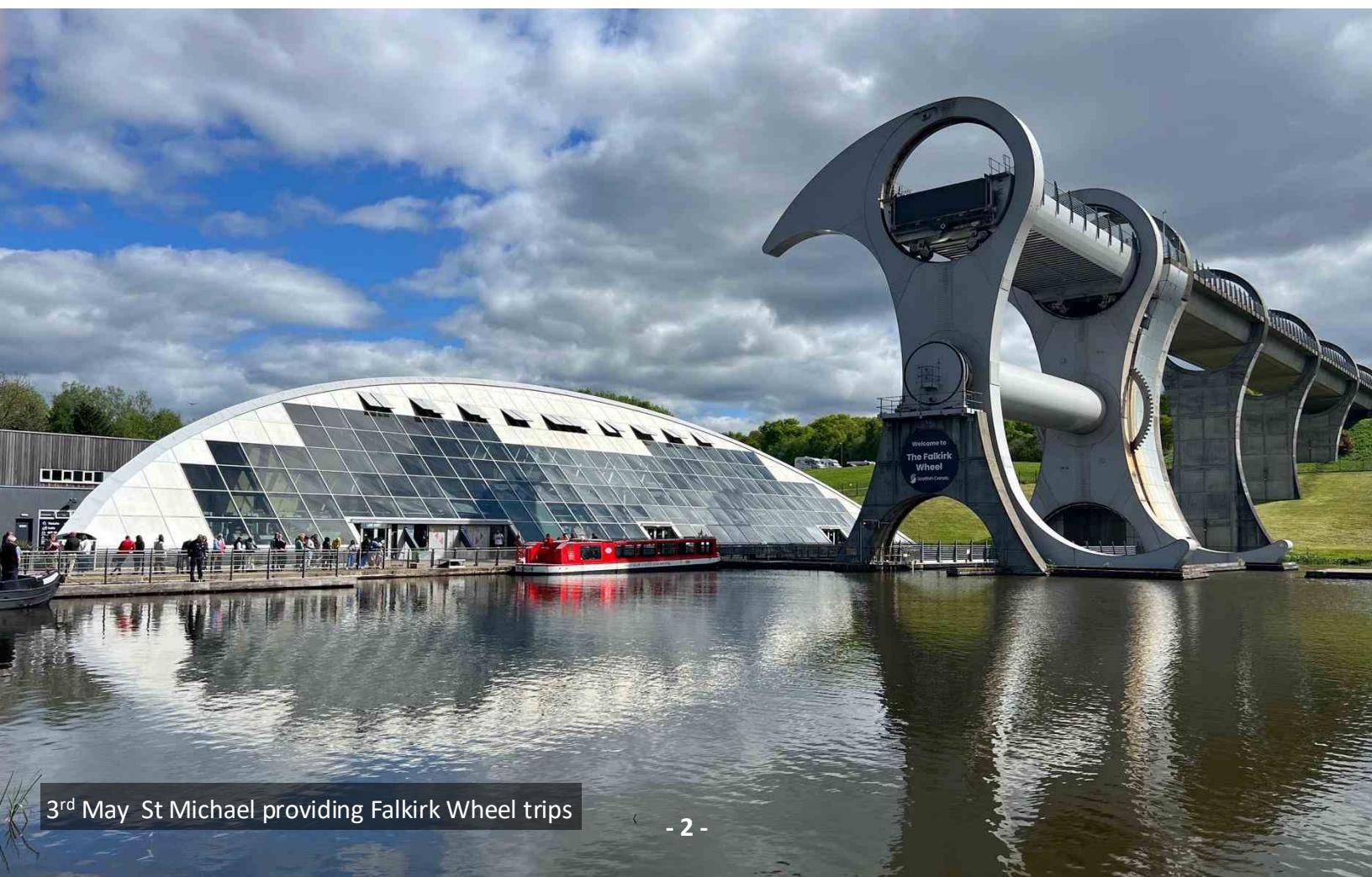
IT systems were not an issue when LUCS produced its Articles of Association in 1980 when the Society's focus was restoring the moribund Union Canal. Since then, much has changed. Hence revised Articles of Association with revised aims are to be presented to the Annual General Meeting for approval. Part of the current articles states that "no person shall be required to vacate office as Committee member by reason of having attained the age of 70 years." This highlights how the age profile of the LUCS's volunteers has changed over the years. Though it is good to report that the Society's membership is increasing, LUCS needs to increase its efforts to attract and retain volunteers.

The promotion of the Union Canal's heritage remains one of LUCS's key aims, this year our canal museum, the only one in Scotland, was provided with 14 new display boards telling the story of the Union Canal between Edinburgh and Falkirk.

On a personal note, it has been a pleasure and a privilege to have been Chair of the Society for the past three years and to have had the support of an excellent committee.

Finally, on behalf of the committee, I must thank all our members and volunteers 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 last 50 years by all our members.

David Shirres



2. Visitor Numbers

| 2025 WEEKEND | Days | Tearoom | | Town Trips | | Aqueduct | |
|----------------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| | | Total | Av. | Total | Av. | Total | Av. |
| April | 6 | 260 | 43.3 | 81 | 13.5 | 55 | 9.2 |
| May | 9 | 377 | 41.9 | 121 | 13.4 | 157 | 17.4 |
| June | 9 | 266 | 29.6 | 58 | 6.4 | 205 | 22.8 |
| July | 8 | 242 | 30.3 | 118 | 14.8 | 215 | 26.9 |
| August | 9 | 332 | 36.9 | 150 | 16.7 | 211 | 23.4 |
| September | 8 | 133 | 16.6 | 51 | 6.4 | 187 | 23.4 |
| Total | 49 | 1610 | 32.9 | 579 | 11.8 | 1030 | 21.0 |
| 2024 Total | 52 | 1605 | 30.9 | 594 | 11.4 | 879 | 16.9 |
| 2025 increase | | 0.3% | | -2.5% | | 17.2% | |
| WEEKDAY | Days | Total | Av. | Total | Av. | | |
| April | 5 | 41 | 8.2 | 40 | 8.0 | | |
| July | 25 | 402 | 16.1 | 229 | 9.2 | | |
| August | 14 | 167 | 11.9 | 111 | 7.9 | | |
| TOTAL | 44 | 610 | 13.9 | 380 | 8.6 | | |
| 2024 Total | 30 | 427 | 14.2 | 343 | 11.4 | | |
| 2025 increase | | 42.9% | | 10.8% | | | |
| 2025 | | Tearoom | | Town Trips | | Aqueduct | |
| GRAND TOTAL | | 2220 | | 959 | | 1030 | |

3. Bookings Report 1st October 2024 to 30th

| 2024 /2025 SPECIAL CRUISES | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------|----------------|------|--|
| SPECIAL CRUISES | Cruises | Tables/ places | Av. | |
| Falkirk Wheel | 8 | 165 places | 20.6 | |
| 2024 | 8 | 151 | 18.9 | |
| Afternoon Tea | 7 | 143 tables | 20.4 | |
| 2024 | 7 | 129 | 18.4 | |
| Halloween | 4 | 30 tables | 7.5 | |
| 2023 | 6 | 53 | 8.8 | |
| Santa | 32 | 244 tables | 7.6 | |
| 2023 | 32 | 256 | 8.0 | |

| BOATS | 2024/25 | 2023/24 |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| 40-seat charter | 31 | 34 |
| 12-seat charter | 15 | 12 |
| Self-drive hire | 52 | 55 |
| Total | 98 | 101 |
| ROOMS | | |
| Mel Grey Centre | 30 | 42 |
| Tea Room | 5 | 5 |
| Total | 35 | 47 |

Bookings have gone fairly smoothly this year with not too many technical issues. Just a few minor issues with some customers not able to pay using their debit or credit cards.

I must thank Gordon Hewit for producing rota's for our scheduled boat trips and Willie Irvine finding volunteers for all other bookings.

Doug Scott
Booking Secretary

4. Treasurer's Report

| INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT | | | | |
|--|-----------------|----------------|------------------|-------|
| 1st Oct 2024 to 30th Sept 2025 | Expense | Income | Amount | Notes |
| Boats Expenses: Fuel | £1,791 | | (£1,791) | |
| Boats Expenses: General & Workshop | £1,842 | | (£1,842) | |
| Boats Expenses: Leamington | £3,988 | | (£3,988) | |
| Boats Expenses: MCA BML certification | £551 | | (£551) | |
| Boats Expenses: St Magdalene | £7,283 | | (£7,283) | |
| Boats Expenses: St Michael | £6,143 | | (£6,143) | |
| Boats Expenses: Victoria | £918 | | (£918) | |
| Subtotal: Boats expenses | £22,516 | | (£22,516) | |
| Boats Income: 40-seat boat Aqueduct trip | £1,108 | £10,641 | £9,533 | |
| Boats Income: 40-seat boat charter | £300 | £13,210 | £12,910 | 1 |
| Boats Income: 40-seat boat Falkirk Wheel | £1,484 | £4,857 | £3,373 | |
| Boats Income: 40-seater Cruise - Halloween | £510 | £930 | £420 | |
| Boats Income: 40-seater Cruise - Aft Tea | £1,824 | £5,130 | £3,306 | |
| Boats Income: 40-seater Cruise - Santa | £1,687 | £6,616 | £4,929 | |
| Boats Income: Leamington Hire | £480 | £11,081 | £10,601 | |
| Boats Income: Special Cruises | | £280 | £280 | |
| Boats Income: Town trips | £4,940 | £5,041 | £101 | |
| Boats Income: Vouchers | | £2,445 | £2,445 | |
| Subtotal: Boats income | £12,333 | £60,231 | £47,898 | |
| Events: Fun Day | £2,259 | £2,181 | (£78) | |
| Events: LUCS 50th | £1,680 | £550 | (£1,130) | |
| Events: Marches | £406 | £539 | £132 | |
| Events: Winchburgh Flotilla | £923 | £630 | (£293) | |
| Subtotal: Events | £5,268 | £3,899 | (£1,360) | |
| Museum | £200 | | (£200) | |
| Other Expenses: Company Management | £8,070 | | (£8,070) | 2 |
| Other Expenses: IT equipment and software | £334 | | (£334) | |
| Other Expenses: Marketing | £2,602 | | (£2,602) | |
| Other Expenses: Miscellaneous | | £124 | £124 | |
| Other Expenses: Paypal booking fees | £1,031 | | (£1,031) | |
| Other Expenses: Volunteer sustenance | £809 | | (£809) | |
| Other Expenses: Website | £75 | | (£75) | |
| Subtotal: Other expenses | £12,921 | £124 | (£12,798) | |
| Other Income: Donations | | £2,121 | £2,121 | |
| Other Income: Membership | | £2,146 | £2,146 | |
| Other Income: Pump Outs | | £310 | £310 | |
| Other Income: Sales and Museum | £23 | £1,110 | £1,088 | |
| Other Income: Scrap | | £85 | £85 | |
| Subtotal: Other income | £23 | £6,429 | £6,406 | |
| Premises | £178 | | (£178) | |
| Premises: Bills | £4,506 | | (£4,506) | |
| Premises: Enhancement | £1,268 | | (£1,268) | |
| Premises: Fuel Oil | £323 | | (£323) | |
| Premises: Gardening | £164 | | (£164) | |
| Premises: Maintenance | £1,535 | | (£1,535) | |
| Premises: Other | £59 | | (£59) | |
| Premises: Telecomms / Internet | £1,282 | | (£1,282) | |
| Subtotal: Premises | £9,315 | | (£9,315) | |
| Room Hire | | £755 | £755 | |
| Tea Room | £6,140 | £9,006 | £2,866 | 3 |
| XR02 Donation Fund: Gearbox | £2,030 | | (£2,030) | |
| XR02 Donation Fund: Museum | £540 | | (£540) | |
| XR02 Donation Fund: Tea Room Floor | £500 | | (£500) | |
| Subtotal: Donation Fund | £3,070 | | (£3,070) | |
| XR03 Victoria project: Donations | | £3,000 | £3,000 | |
| XR03 Victoria project: expenses | £36,049 | | (£36,049) | |
| Subtotal: Victoria Project | £36,049 | £3,000 | (£33,049) | |
| GRAND TOTAL | £107,836 | £82,787 | (£25,049) | |

| BALANCE | 1.10.24 | 30.9.25 |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Bank | £90,351 | £60,201 |
| PayPal | £7,980 | £13,228 |
| Cash | £147 | £0 |
| Total | £98,478 | £73,429 |
| Increase | | -£25,049 |
| | | |
| RESERVED FUNDS | 1.10.24 | 30.9.25 |
| Boat Fund | £10,000 | £20,000 |
| Donation Fund | £3,586 | £516 |
| Victoria Project | £7,814 | £0 |
| Total Reserved | £21,400 | £20,516 |
| Total Unreserved | £77,078 | £52,913 |
| TOTAL FUNDS | £98,478 | £73,429 |

Notes

- Includes £5,600 from Scottish Canals for Falkirk Wheel trips
- Includes £7,669 for boat and commercial insurance
- £1.00 per person income transferred from cruises to Tea Room

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

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

4. Treasurer's Report

The cash reserves of the society were £73,429 at the end of the financial year which was a decrease of £25,049 after a net expenditure of £33,049 on the Victoria refit during the year. Over the past two years we have received grants and donations of £10,813 towards this project. This includes grants totalling £8,000 thanks to Ian Gray's applications to many organisations. A grant of £3,000 from Turcan Connell was received during this financial year.

Of this £73,429 balance, £52,913 is unreserved funds. Reserve funds comprise of £20,000 for major boat expenditure. The intention is that the Society adds £10,000 each year to this fund as it did last year. The other reserve funds are £516 from a special fund created by a LUCS member's £10k donation in the 23/24 financial year for specific purposes.

Overall, basin costs have increased inline with inflation.

Peter Lewis, Treasurer

5. Extracts from Independent Examiner's Report

Full copies of this report were made 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 2025 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 F.C.C.A
Philip Bald Accountancy
3B Ormiston Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 7SJ
06 January 2026

5. Extracts from Independent Examiner's Report

Statement of Financial Activities

Balance Sheet

| Notes | Unrestricted funds | | Total funds | | Total funds | | Company No. | SC071328 | 2024 | |
|--|--------------------|----------|-------------|---------|-------------|--------|-------------|----------|----------|---------|
| | 2025 | £ | 2025 | £ | 2024 | £ | | | 2025 | £ |
| Income and endowments from: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Donations and legacies | 4 | 5,120 | 5,120 | 25,526 | 36,116 | 48,531 | 14 | (457) | 2,000 | 2,000 |
| Charitable activities | 5 | 13,993 | 13,993 | 12,165 | 2,901 | 2,901 | 13 | 3,823 | 2,310 | 98,801 |
| Other trading activities | 6 | | | | | | | | 73,429 | 103,111 |
| Other | 7 | | | | | | | | 79,252 | (854) |
| Total | | 70,545 | 70,545 | 76,558 | | | | | 78,795 | 102,257 |
| Expenditure on: | | | | | | | | | 78,795 | 102,257 |
| Raising funds | 8 | 11,408 | 11,408 | 6,998 | | | | | 77,942 | 102,257 |
| Charitable activities | 9 | 63,904 | 63,904 | 31,817 | | | | | 77,942 | 102,257 |
| Other | 10 | 19,548 | 19,548 | 22,514 | | | | | 77,942 | 102,257 |
| Total | | 94,860 | 94,860 | 61,329 | | | | | 94,061 | 92,257 |
| Net gains on investments | | - | - | - | | | | | (16,119) | 10,000 |
| Net (expenditure)/income | | (24,315) | (24,315) | 15,229 | | | | | 77,942 | 102,257 |
| Transfers between funds | | - | - | - | | | | | 77,942 | 102,257 |
| Net (expenditure)/income before other gains/(losses) | | (24,315) | (24,315) | 15,229 | | | | | 77,942 | 102,257 |
| Other gains and losses | | - | - | - | | | | | 77,942 | 102,257 |
| Net movement in funds | | (24,315) | (24,315) | 15,229 | | | | | 77,942 | 102,257 |
| Reconciliation of funds: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total funds brought forward | | 102,257 | 102,257 | 87,028 | | | | | | |
| Total funds carried forward | | 77,942 | 77,942 | 102,257 | | | | | | |

| Notes | Current assets | | Notes | 2025 | £ | 2024 | |
|---|----------------|---------|-------|--------|---------|----------------|---|
| | Stocks | Debtors | | | | Current assets | £ |
| Creditors: Amount falling due within one year | | | 12 | 2,000 | 2,000 | | |
| Net current assets | | | 13 | 3,823 | 2,310 | | |
| Total assets less current liabilities | | | | 73,429 | 98,801 | | |
| Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year | | | 14 | 79,252 | 103,111 | | |
| Net assets excluding pension asset or liability | | | | 78,795 | 102,257 | | |
| Total net assets | | | 15 | (853) | - | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

The funds of the charity
Unrestricted funds
General funds
Designated funds

Total funds

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 2025 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 06 January 2026

And signed on its behalf by:

P Lewis (Company Secretary and Treasurer)
Trustee
06 January 2026

5. Extracts from Independent Examiner's Report

Cash Flow Statement

| | 2025 | 2024 |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Cash flows from operating activities | | |
| Net (expenditure)/income per Statement of Financial Activities | (24,315) | 15,229 |
| Adjustments for: | | |
| Dividends, interest and rents from investments | (2,901) | (2,751) |
| (Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables | (1,513) | 2,768 |
| Increase in trade and other payables | 456 | 1 |
| Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities | <u>(28,273)</u> | <u>15,247</u> |
| Cash flows from investing activities | | |
| Dividends, interest and rents from investments | 2,901 | 2,751 |
| Net cash from investing activities | <u>2,901</u> | <u>2,751</u> |
| Net cash from financing activities | | |
| Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents | - | - |
| Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year | | 17,998 |
| 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 | 73,429 | 98,801 |
| Cash and bank balances | <u>73,429</u> | <u>98,801</u> |

6. Fundraising

Fundraising has continued with Victoria the focus of effort. So far £8,500 has been raised from Trusts and Foundations towards Victoria's restoration as follows: £5,000 from the Robert Barr Charitable Trust; £3,000 from The Hugh Fraser Foundation and £500 from the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights for a £500. I believe this last grant was partly due to Victoria being listed on the National Register of Historic Ships.

Even if at first unsuccessful, good causes like ours are more likely to receive funding in the long run if we make regular appeals, as it keeps us in the eye of funders, builds familiarity and shows our ambition. So it is important that we consider what the next focus of fundraising should be - tools? tearoom furniture or equipment? Your suggestions would be appreciated. And if you know of anyone who might be keen to support us please contact me at ossiangray@yahoo.com

Ian Gray

7. Membership

It is great to be able to report that the Membership at LUCS has increased this year, our 50th year of existence. It is a sign of great success, and of course effort, that we are managing to grow despite all the challenges of current times.

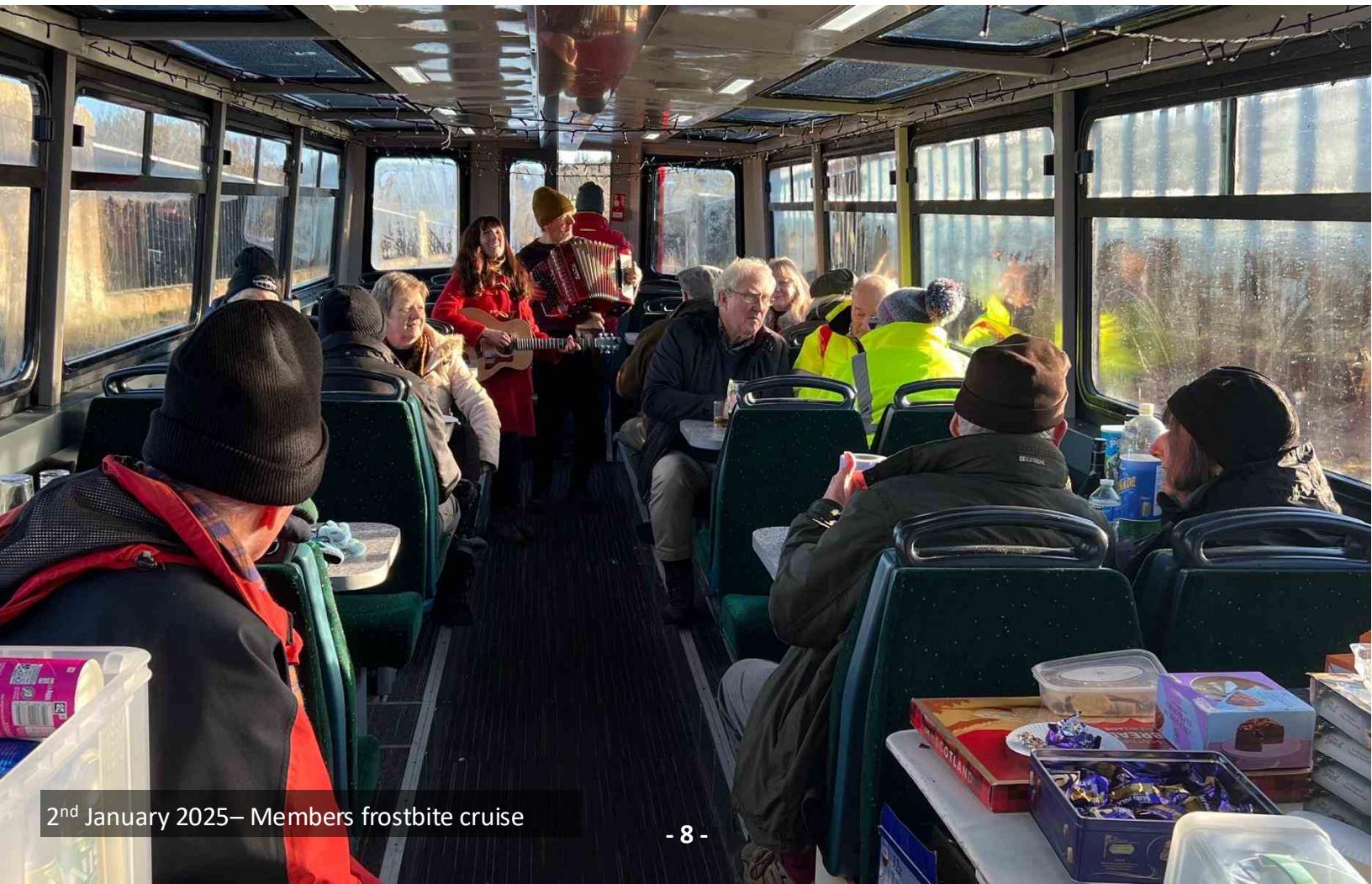
Over the last few years we have tried hard to recruit more members and encourage them to remain involved in the Society. We have cleared from the Membership database those with whom we cannot communicate and despite this we are still managing to grow.

| Membership Cat. | 2024 | Current 2025 | Variance |
|---------------------------|------------|--------------|-----------|
| New Members incl | -30 | -31 | -1 |
| Junior / Associate | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Ordinary | 18 | 27 | 9 |
| Senior | 47 | 44 | -3 |
| Family | 64 | 66 | 2 |
| Life | 293 | 296 | 3 |
| Corporate | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Multi User/club | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Honorary | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Current members | 428 | 441 | 13 |
| Subs due | 43 | 36 | -7 |

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. It has been somewhat disappointing that despite the number of new members there have been a few folk who have started volunteering and then decided not to return. Over the next few years we must increase our efforts to encourage our volunteers to continue to stay involved in all the things we do to run and maintain a successful and growing society.

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 last 50 years by all our members.

Andy Eaglesfield, Membership Secretary



8. Receptionist's thoughts

Being a LUCS receptionist can be fun and interesting. As the first point of contact for most of our visitors you get the chance to chat to folk from all over the place and steer them in the right direction within the basin. Or of course sell them a boat ticket or something from the Museum.

And if the sun is shining when it quietens down a bit you can always sit and chat to our Tearoom assistants at an outside table in the sunshine.

We have been open for more days than ever this year (102 days) – our 50th anniversary year. We have managed to cover all these days, although there have been some close things with the limited number of people prepared to give a little of their time as a receptionist. So it is particularly important that we can encourage some more people to help us out for the occasional afternoon next year, otherwise we may be forced to limit our offering.

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 will put you on his rota.

Andy Eaglesfield

9. Museum Sales

Another steady year for museum sales which totalled £1,088. Best sellers were LUCS historic booklets (22), LUCS brasses (9) and 50th anniversary baseball cap (9). Other popular items were pencils, pens, colouring books, fridge magnets, keyrings and, as always, fishing nets.

Next year, we intend to review what we're selling with a view to possibly adding or discontinuing some items. This should help volunteers to better reconcile items with the payment system in the future.

Lynne Nelson



10. Tearoom



We have had another good year in the tearoom. Our biggest seller was tea, with 592 sales between April and October, followed by coffee at 528 and ice cream at 467.

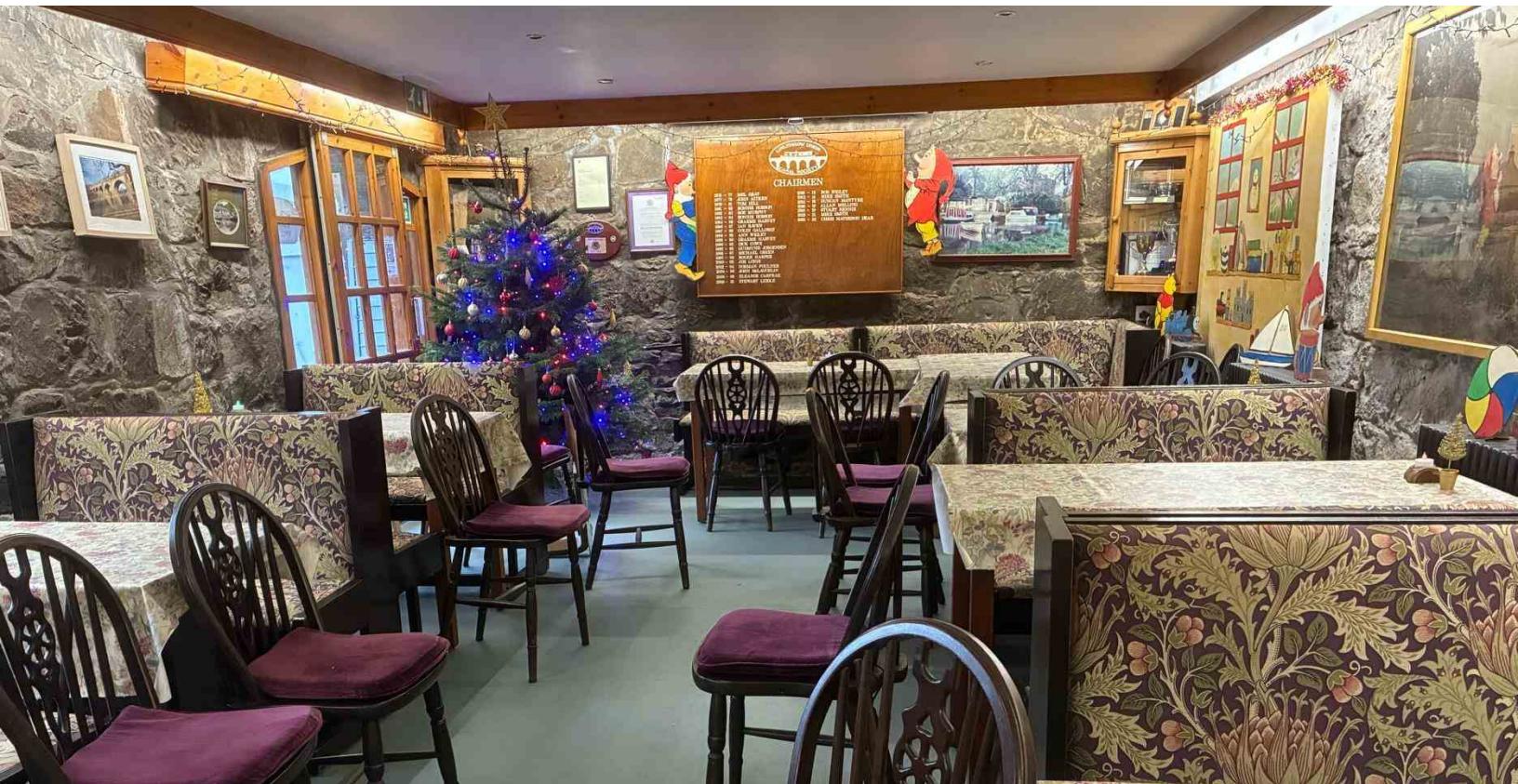
This would not be possible without our wonderful team of volunteers, including new recruit Karen Clayton and all our regulars. I would like to thank everyone for their help and willingness to step in at short notice.

I would like to thank Lorraine Ronalson for her help over many years and wish her well now that she has decided she cannot continue in the tearoom.

I am very sad to report the death of one of our staff. Nuala Lonie was an asset to the tearoom, always willing to step in at short notice, sometimes only minutes, when she was in good health. Nuala also provided the flowers for the tables every week and was, for a time, the museum curator. She will be greatly missed.

As ever, we need more volunteers in the tearoom, as we are becoming a smaller and smaller group. If you would like to help please contact weeannie2@aol.com.

Anne Mackie



11. Museum

From its early days LUCS recognised the importance of promoting the canal's heritage and, just two years after it was formed the Society created a canal museum from one of the stables which was opened on 18th June 1977. This was the first facility that LUCS created at the canal basin. It is also the only canal museum in Scotland.

This year the museum display was revamped to present information in a more logical manner. This was done by putting information about the Union Canal on 14 new boards. One of these has general information about the canal and ten boards describe points of historic interest from Edinburgh to Falkirk. Three Flora and Fauna boards were produced for Spring, Summer and Autumn though there is only space to display one according to the season.

My thanks to Jim Lonie and Danny Callaghan for their help producing the historic boards and also to Maureen Wilson and Nuala Lonie for providing the content for the Flora and Fauna boards. This was much appreciated.

A display on the yard wall about the Society's first boat was also created. This was a canal scow numbered U66 by British Waterways. The display features one of the boat's ribs and its rudder.

The canal's heritage and the history of LUCS were also promoted in a 24-page guide produced to commemorate LUCS's 50th anniversary which was given to visitors during the season. The cost of printing 1,600 of these booklets was generously paid for by our founder Mel Gray's daughters, Sally, Kirsty and Judith.

The new museum and U66 display were finalised and the booklets produced immediately before the Society's 50th birthday party on April 11th. My thanks to everyone who helped ensure that this deadline was met.

David Shirres



Your guide to the Union Canal and the Linlithgow Union Canal Society



12. Boat Report – St Michael

Another year of battling with a great passenger vessel of varying reliability.

The year started with tearing out the toilet and kitchen area to replace all the delaminating flooring. On completion and reinstallation of the kitchen and toilet we found that the toilet did not work. After investigation the water control valve had failed. Finding the replacement from Jabsco would have involved a mortgage so we purchase an equivalent from China...they were remarkably similar.

The start of the season saw the boat take on a new roll, as Scottish Canals asked if we could fill in for their wheel trip boat as it was being converted to electric drive. This proved very successful until near the end when our boat started to lose drive and gearbox oil was found in the bilges. With frequent topping up the boat managed to return to the basin. It appeared that the gearbox had blown an internal seal and due to time constraints a new gearbox and drive plate were purchased. Unfortunately, due to the rear blown water seal the boat had to be returned to dry dock to allow the work to be completed.

The damage to the gearbox was deemed to be in part due to the dual throttle/ gear select system so we converted the controls to a single lever type. We also took the opportunity to move the controller nearer the driver. Another major incident followed a report of black smoke pouring out of the side air vent on a normal aqueduct trip. Investigation showed that the exhaust had parted company with the engine. Repairs were made but future modifications may be required.

The visit of the MCA threw up its usual mystery of their interpretation of the rules as the engine compartment's fire-fighting arrangement was deemed to be unsuitable, despite this being approved as part of St Michael's initial passenger certification. Further issues were the fire alarm system blowing a fuse when it was tested and bilge pump alarm light not working.

This season's winter task will be to remove both side stairs and the first two tables and chairs to replace more delaminating floor. On a positive point this years' aqueduct trips have been more popular mainly due to Cameron's Clayton's blitz on social media advertising. Our afternoon tea cruises continue to be sold out but Halloween was disappointing. The Santa cruises were a great success.



Under the kitchen floor



28th May – in R فهو dry dock for a new gearbox



Falkirk Wheel trip boat

13. Boat Report – St Magdalene



Another bit of a hectic year on St Magdalene with an overheating engine mainly due to a minor leak on the starboard keel cooler discovered during her annual drydocking. This was repaired but failed again under true testing on the run. The centre cabin floor had to be removed, along with tables and seats in the centre area and a temporary internal copper bypass replaced the starboard external keel cooler. This worked well during the season, though the risk of the other 25-year-old external keel cooler failing still needed to be addressed.

To eliminate this risk a pair of internal bespoke cooling chambers were commissioned which were clamped against the inside of the hull with thermal paste. Unfortunately after a few test runs the tanks were not able to cool sufficiently. A new tank consisting of a frame and lid was therefore welded to the hull. However, this has yet to be tested.

During the regular runs, it was noticed that the oil pressure gauge was not functioning. After some tests it was found that the pressure sensor on the engine was at fault. This was replaced. Engine starting problems, especially in cold weather, have now also been eliminated by replacing the mechanical fuel pump with an electric one. This has an indicator light fitted to the dashboard to show it is running and should be switched off with the key when the engine is stopped.

New MCA regulations required audible and visual alarms for bilge pumps to be fitted and the provision of a portable self-powered bilge pump. This is powered by a clip-on battery, one on the unit, with another battery on the charger placed on the worktop. The pump has battery charge level indicator on the unit. If this is not lit, the charged battery should be fitted.

There is also a new MCA requirement for the engine compartment to have a fixed fire-fighting system for which a practical solution is being devised in consultation with the MCA. As a result St Magdalene currently does not have a passenger certificate, although it is expected that this issue will be resolved well before the start of the season.

Work on St Magdalene is, like the rest of the boats, ongoing, so anyone interested in getting involved, please contact any of the committee or myself. Thank you to all who assisted at this years drydock, and compliance with the MCA requirements.

Ronnie Reis

14. Boat Report – Roseann

Victoria's absence from the water this summer threatened our Society's well-deserved reputation for providing short, cheap town trips. Fortunately our neighbours, The Bridge 19-40 Union Canal Society, whilst fitting out their brand new boat, Heatherbell, were unable to use their small vessel, Roseann.

Arrangements were therefore put in place for us to borrow her for the season. Roseann is very similar to our own vessel, Slateford, in having 10-12 seats and being propelled by a 10HP outboard motor. Steve Braes and Stewart Liddle brought her through from Drumshoreland and set about delivering training sessions for all our volunteer drivers.

Whereas many of us already had extensive experience of outboards (even dating back to the Drambuie Marathons), it was felt only right and proper that we should be able to demonstrate to Bridge 19-40 that we were committed to looking after the vessel temporarily in our charge.

During the season Roseann carried some 959 passengers over 93 town trips, duties being shared amongst 18 volunteer drivers.

Our Society's grateful thanks go to Bridge 19-40 Canal Society for the loan of Roseann and to our drivers for "keeping the show on the road".

Stewart Liddle



15. Boat Report – Leamington

During winter maintenance we were grateful for Tam McPhie's help to get Leamington pulled up the slip so that we could attend to the trickle of water coming from the prop shaft housing. Welding was not possible owing to the inaccessibility of the location of the trouble so rather than 'bandaging' it again we decided to effect a repair using a metal based filler and this has held up very well so far.

In July we had a simultaneous failure of the water pump and the toilet. The water pump pressure switch had failed so the pump had to be replaced. The toilet was a bit more crafty. It transpired that the 12v supply cable had worked its way into a narrow gap between the hull and a bulkhead and the vibration of the boat had gradually allowed the bulkhead to 'saw' through the insulation. During the fault finding for this one we discovered the control board for the toilet to be in a poor state due to years of damp behind a panel, so that was remedied.

In September, we had a complete gearbox failure to deal with and it was decided to replace rather than repair the box in order to minimize the number of lost hires. Tam McPhie took the lead on this one and will also at a mutually convenient time lead the repair activity on the two faulty gearboxes from Leamington and St Michael.

In order to charge the batteries and not rely on hooking up to St Magdalene for mains power we decided to make a shore power connection to Leamington like the 40 seat boats have. We have installed an intelligent battery charger in the engine bay which is connected to the engine battery and are in the process of installing wiring to both monitor the batteries and switch the charger from one to the other as required without having to keep removing the cockpit flooring.

Ian Walker

29th March – Leamington being lifted off the slip back into the water



16. Boat Report – Colin G

Our work boat, Colin G, has had limited operations this year. Initially due to some leaky bits on the hull, she was pulled up the slipway with the generous aid of Tam McPhie's forklift and some welding and plating was done on the stern port side.

Once back in operation she was used several times in the work lot of chopping, cutting back trees and bushes until the engine parted company with the boat at the basin, due to the transom giving way. Fortunately, Ken Duerden managed to catch the engine, and although submerged it was resurrected after a good service, but the top cover was lost in the basin. The transom has been rebuilt with steel reinforcement, and although she has been out again since this, some difficulty with the remote-control lever has meant this had to be replaced.

During the last outing there was some difficulty with the gear control and the motor pitch jamming in an unsuitable position. The sortie had to be abandoned and unfortunately the hold is still loaded with the last operation. The engine has been removed, the pitch fault rectified, but the engine still needs attention before further use.

Unfortunately, the hull still has a minor leak. To deal with this a fully automatic bilge pump has been fitted on the port side, but the onboard battery needs top up charging weekly.

Ronnie Reis



17. Victoria Project

Victoria was lifted out of the water and into the Yard back in November 2024.

Since that time we have spent circa 1500 Volunteer hours working on her refurbishment (This is hugely approximate!!)

After taking out the Diesel engine and stripping out the internals, leaving only the cabin Bulkheads we progressed to the refurbishment of the hull plating. By the middle of this year we had the hull plating replaced based on a thickness survey by a marine consultancy. Following the replacement hull plating we had the hull sandblasted inside and out followed immediately by the spraying of primer – zinc phosphate inside, chlorinated rubber outside.

All this work was carried out by specialist subcontractors. Since that time, we have just about completed the paintwork to the hull and are well progressed on the superstructure giving us a hull fit for many years' service. All the preparation is complete and ready for the imminent installation of the new propulsion motor and power system courtesy of Mike Smith and Joe Walker. The roof is now watertight and with a day of dry - not freezing weather - will be completely finished.

Les Duff is making good progress on repairing the starboard cabin side and Craig Thomson is doing a lovely job of the gunwales now we have procured enough Iroko to replace the rotten pieces. Victoria will soon look like new.

Up to the end of 2025, £38,358 has been spent on the Victoria project for which final total cost is expected to be around £55,000. Taking account of donations received , it is expected that the Victoria project will have cost LUCS about £44,000.

We hope to launch at the start of next season – but there is no shortage of work for volunteers as we progress towards completion. Please contact me if you fancy helping out.

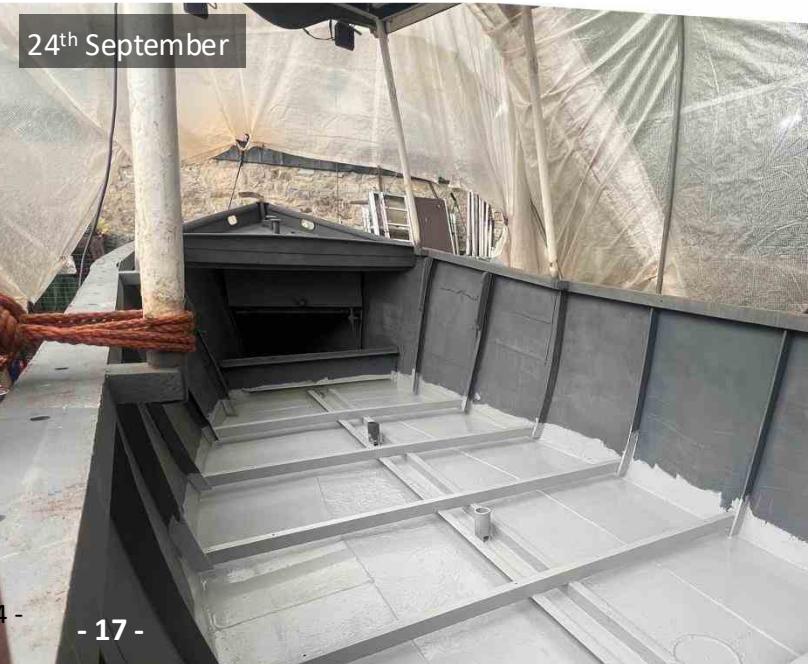
Andy Eaglesfield

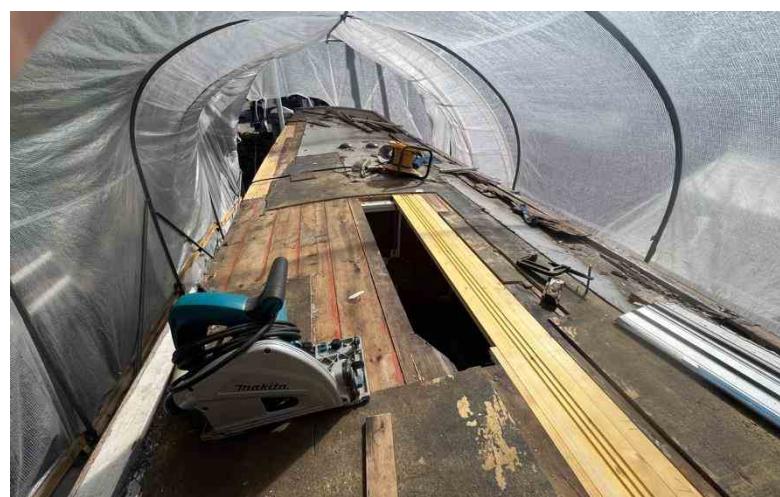
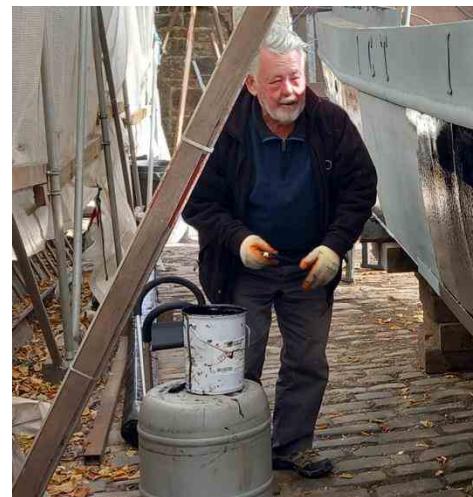
| VICTORIA PROJECT COSTS | Spend to 31.12.25 | Estimated further costs | Total Project costs | Budget Costs as at April 2025 (3) |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Boat Lift | | £2,800 | £2,800 | |
| Hull plating & welding | £16,582 | £100 | £16,682 | |
| Blast cleaning | £3,500 | | £3,500 | |
| Paint | £278 | | £278 | |
| Bodywork | £436 | £400 | £836 | |
| GRP Roofing | £755 | | £755 | |
| Propshaft seal | £752 | | £752 | |
| New Anodes | £235 | | £235 | |
| Floor Repairs | | £250 | £250 | |
| Auxilliary electrics | | £500 | £500 | |
| Total Repair costs | £22,538 | £4,050 | £26,588 | £26,100 (2) |
| Add Sunk Costs (1) | £3,826 | | £3,826 | £3,826 |
| Electrification system | £11,994 | £11,944 | £23,938 | £24,500 |
| Total | £38,358 | £15,994 | £54,352 | £54,426 |
| Contingency | | | £1,000 | |
| TOTAL PROJECT COST | | | £55,352 | £54,426 |
| DONATIONS | Corporate £8,500 | Individual £2,814 | £11,314 | |
| NET PROJECT COST | | | £44,038 | |

1. Sunk costs of survey and initial lift out not included in initial Budget

2. As reported to Membership in 21st January Basin Banter

3. Sunk costs added to Budget





18. Training

Having handed over the baton of the Training Group at the beginning of this year to Steve Braes and Scott Castel I was all ready to drift off into the sunset but life rarely works the way we expect and due to unforeseen circumstances, I have agreed to take back the administration of the Training Group pro tem, working with Steve, until we can make a more permanent arrangement.

We have completed the year without running any Boatmaster Ancillary Safety Training courses as neither we nor any of our client organisations had any candidates to put forward. We are planning to run a course in March 2026 as we have some candidates of our own. If we don't have any takers for an October course next year, we will likely offer refresher training to existing Boatmasters or Initial training to small boat skippers.

We have had one volunteer, Cameron Clayton, gaining his RYA Inland Waters Helmsman certificate, and a new member, Bridget Colam, who arrived complete with her brand-new Helmsman certificate.

This means that we have five volunteers who are in various stages of preparation towards their Boatmaster assessment by the MCA.

As usual, we are always on the lookout for new members or existing members who would like to try their hand at driving or crewing on our boats.

Ian Walker

Social media posts showing the work done by our volunteers



Our summer season is now over. However that doesn't stop our volunteers! We are still maintaining our boats and premises.



Our volunteers are down every Wednesday and Saturday morning helping to maintain our fleet of boats and making sure our premises are ready for next season and our special events!

If you would like to volunteer just come down to the basin or email info@lucs.org.uk



Volunteer Spotlight

Our volunteers have been out cutting the trees along the canal. This is an essential job to ensure that our drivers can drive the boats without getting attacked by the branches!

19. Designated Person Ashore (DPA)

The DPA role has been particularly active throughout the 2025 season. The year commenced with our annual meeting of boatmasters in March, where participants shared insights and reflected on key lessons learnt from the prior season. Notably, the Safety Management Plan governing our 40-Seater boats underwent a comprehensive revision and was subsequently introduced to our BMLs during the summer months. In September, the DPA conducted a self-assessment audit aligned with the updated Safety Management Plan.

Throughout the year, the DPA and other stakeholders were engaged in various incident investigations as well as reviews of onboard emergencies and exercises. These efforts led to several operational enhancements, including an expanded inventory of emergency equipment for managing passenger illness events.

September and October saw the annual out-of-water and in-water inspections, alongside Safety Management System audits performed by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) on both 40-Seater vessels. This inspection cycle was among the most rigorous LUCS has experienced in recent years. Although time-intensive, the process will yield significant improvements such as upgraded engine compartment firefighting systems on both boats and enhanced bilge pumping capabilities aboard St. Magdalene.

This year also saw extensive discussions regarding medical standards for LUCS BMLs. The existing "ML5" medical requirement had become a considerable operational expense. After evaluating alternatives and consulting with the MCA, the "ENG1" medical standard has now been adopted. This is a stringent standard for seafarers, it is valid for two years and the associated fee is capped at a more reasonable level by the MCA.

A BML meeting is scheduled to take place prior to the start of the next season to review lessons learned from incidents, emergency responses, inspections, and audits. A key objective for the upcoming season will be to boost participation in emergency exercises. Although minimum requirements were met this year, greater engagement of BMLs and crew across a broader range of scenarios is needed to further strengthen our preparedness.

Graeme Simpson



20. Buildings and Premises

Happily this years premises report is short and unremarkable. Most of the work over the year has been simple repairs and continuous maintenance. The biggest task has been dealing with Victorias ongoing refurbishment in the yard. This has created limited space for storage and repairs. It has also contributed inevitably to a lot of mess in the yard and surrounding buildings. Minor adaptations include more hygienic toilet roll dispensers and and additional shore power for Leamington.

Following a surprise visit from Scottish Canals building auditor, who was tasked with valuing the premises to enable an up to date assessment of canal assets, we were informed that the newly appointed property manager would be visiting to ensure we comply with necessary guidelines/regulations. To this end we have updated the electrics, labelling all the fuses and trips accordingly.

All buildings are now covered by necessary smoke and heat alarms. Each building has instructions in the event of a fire and signed fire exits. A fire evacuation point has been identified and signed at the slipway. No doubt after his visit further work will be required to try to make 200-year-old buildings comply with modern regulations. No report would be complete without the mention of our amazing gardeners who make the basin a colourful and welcoming place to visit.

Allister Mackie

21. Health and Safety

Over the course of this last season 2025 we have had a couple of serious incidents of which one had the potential to be serious and highlighted the need to have a good lookout on the big boats with restricted forward visibility; the other was a medical emergency on board that was managed in a professional way and we were complimented on how we dealt with it. Otherwise we had no serious incidents to people or boats largely due to the hard work and commitment of all our volunteers. We have recorded all Accidents/Incidents and we have incorporated the lessons and improvements from this process into our operations.

The Boat Safety Management System for our 40-seater boats has been updated by Graeme Simpson and successfully audited this season by the MCA, with all comments resolved.

All our Fire fighting and First Aid equipment has been checked at the recommended intervals and replaced where necessary, by Gordon Hewit. We have had all our lifejackets tested recently – this will be an annual event.

LUCS has maintained our accreditation as a RYA Training centre, although we haven't run any courses this last year due to a lack of candidates. We have courses planned for next season.

We strive to maintain a safe volunteering environment at LUCS. It is our wish to consolidate our procedures into a coherent whole that is easily accessible to all volunteers. Graeme Simpson is well through this process and we hope to have it complete and available before the start of next 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 safety can only help us maintain our enviable Safe Operations record.

Andy Eaglesfield

22. IT

I took over the LUCS IT Convener role at the end of 2024 with the aim of getting to grips with each of our IT systems. It is going to take me quite a bit longer than I originally thought!

The management of our Microsoft 365 account was my initial task. This provides email distribution lists for our members and enables them to collaborate using SharePoint. Members with a Business Basic licence have access to email, online storage and web-based versions of many applications including Word, Excel and PowerPoint. A Business Premium licence allows users to download these applications onto up to five devices.

Most LUCS members are on 365 as “guest users” under their personal email addresses as the IT Group decided last year. Roles such as LUCS_Chair and LUCS_IT have lucs.org.uk addresses so that the correspondence address stays the same when someone new takes on the role. I now administer such changes to make them much smoother in the future. The Document Management System is now on SharePoint and can be accessed by any member on our 365 users list. Links can be created for each document so that any member can see them.

The on-line Booking System works reasonably well. It does occasionally need to be restarted if there are server problems. There have also been many PayPal timeouts which must be frustrating for our customers and bookings may have been lost as a result. On one occasion, a booking was paid for but not recorded which is clearly not acceptable. John Aitken has identified that the issue is the booking system not effectively communicating with PayPal. It is hoped that the original system developers will be able to fix this. If not, a costly amendment to the booking system to enable it to use the Stripe payment system may be required.

The Wordpress website lucs.org.uk and our Facebook page provide useful information to the public and the LUCS Digital Archive museum.lucs.org.uk makes thousands of images fully accessible to everyone. Our WiFi provides an Internet connection for anyone visiting the basin and connects the museum and tearoom payment systems. These run on iPads using iZettle software which allows payments by cash, card and PayPal.

The webcam provides a sequence of live public images 24/7 through Camstreamer, YouTube and the LUCS website. Four CCTV cameras monitor the basin area and the system records 30 days of activity.

The hub for all this is in the chalet, where the router is located, with ethernet connections to the Museum, Tearoom, Mel Gray Centre, CCTV and the webcam. The LUCS desktop computer handles controlled documentation and is used for printing passenger manifests and boat & room booking lists for display in the Tearoom. The computer runs on Windows 10 which is now out of support so will soon be replaced with a Windows 11 one.

The Membership Secretary’s laptop and the one kept in the Mel Gray Centre will also need to be replaced as neither is capable of running Windows 11. The old Mel Gray Centre laptop has been converted to a Linux operating system and is now being used by the Document Controller.

An Access database helps keep tabs on membership and assists with managing subscriptions and annual report distribution. Some work was needed this year to make this database available on a different laptop. This was time well spent as the database will need to be moved again to a Windows 11 laptop in the near future. Members are kept regularly informed by Basin Banter which is produced using Mail Chimp.

One of my priorities for 2026 is to find a solution to a problem with a number of our distribution lists where emails are not being sent to some of the names on the lists. Another is to complete a process to interrogate our iZettle reports and produce relevant figures for our treasurer.

I am grateful for John Aitken’s ongoing support and for the patience of those who have had to wait as I’ve learned and will have to wait some more as I continue to learn.

David Morrow

23. Marketing

The key aspects of LUCS's marketing this year were new leaflets, a revamped website and greater use of social media.

Before the start of the season Ian Gray produced Visit Us, Join Us and Support Us leaflets which each provided the necessary information for visitors, potential new members or those wishing to make a donation to LUCS.

Ian also revamped the website which now provides a greater focus for membership and donations. This revamp also removed the duplication of information on the website and booking system and so enabled customers to book cruises with fewer website clicks.

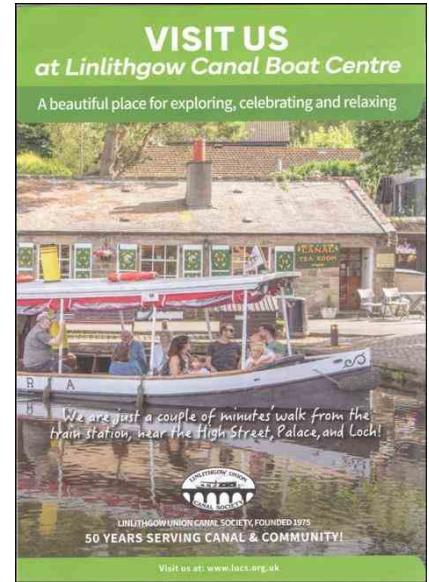
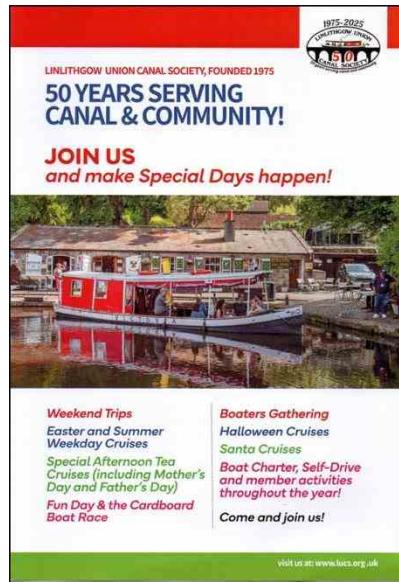
The Society's social media presence was managed by Cameron and Karen Clayton who kept LUCS's Facebook page up to date and responded to Facebook queries. The LUCS Facebook page has had 325,000 views with 4,000 interactions.

A new Instagram account, started this year, has had over 10,000 views so far. Cameron also produced some great drone photos for his postings including one of St Michael on the Avon Aqueduct.

With passenger numbers on Aqueduct and Falkirk Wheel cruises being respectively 17% and 9% greater than last year, it would seem that this year's marketing has been effective.

In addition to external marketing, it is also essential to keep the membership informed about LUCS activities and committee decisions. LUCS uses the Mailchimp system for such internal communications. In the financial year ten Basin Banter were distributed to the membership and others who expressed an interest in receiving it. In addition, there were two membership surveys and eight general notices to members,

David Shirres



Basin Banter

Your e-newsletter from The Linlithgow Union Canal Society



Flotilla edition



In this issue ...

- Winchburgh Flotilla and Boaters Gathering
- Bonfire BBQ & Flotilla of Light
- Forth and Clyde cruise invitation
- Membership survey
- Weekend opening
- Fun Day Results
- Victoria project
- Committee deliberations



LUCS Facebook page

24. Webmaster

The website continues to be well used. We have over 24,000 "virtual" visitors every year now. The most popular pages are the welcome page and the webcam. So we have plenty of folk looking to visit and watch the goings-on at the basin. I do know the webcam is well used by our own members, so I would like to think it is a useful way to keep in touch with the progress of the work and the many projects of our volunteers.

We also have many website visitors looking at our trip options and charters. We have visitors to our website from all over the world, primarily from the UK, but many from the USA, Canada, Australia and Europe.

Many thanks to Ian Gray for his work on changes to our website, especially the welcome page to increase its impact and appeal.

I would also like to encourage LUCS members to keep an eye on the member's pages (accessible from the front page under the "membership" 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

25. 2024/25 in pictures

26th & 27th October 2024 - Halloween cruises

220 people were carried on seven 1 hour long cruises the weekend before Halloween on a suitably decorated boat. These cruises offered family activities, Halloween goodies and a story teller.



7th November – Victoria lift



8th & 9th November – Almond

Aqueduct bonfire party and Edinburgh flotilla of light



14/15 & 21/22 December 2024 – Santa cruises

Around 800 people were carried on 32 Santa cruises on which Santa and his Elves gave out presents to 363 children. This was a great team effort by all concerned, especially by Maureen O'Donnell and Lynne Nelson who procured and wrapped all the toys.



11th April – 50th birthday party



6th May – 25th anniversary of M8 bridge opening



11th June

Within 30 minutes the Tea Room served around 150 of those on the Perambulation of Linlithgow's Marches during its refreshment stop at the basin



Marches float - This superb float of a canal scow was produced by Martine Stead and Ellie Gilbert was also on display on Fun Day and the party after the flotilla on 6th September.

Dismantling it was a sad day.



17th June - Linlithgow Marches when our “horse drawn” float won 1st prize in the unpowered float category.



6th September – Flotilla from Winchburgh and party at basin



Victoria cake baked by Claudia McPhail of Bridge 19-40 Society

11th September

On this day Kirsteen Sulliven, Member of Parliament for Bathgate and Linlithgow name checks LUCS in the House of Commons and visits the basin soon afterwards

"Last Saturday, the Linlithgow Union Canal Society celebrated its 50th anniversary with a flotilla from Winchburgh to Linlithgow, marking five decades of volunteer-led preservation and promotion of Scotland's inland waterways. Will the Leader of the House join me in congratulating the society and its volunteers on that milestone and wish them all the very best for the next 50 years?



26. Events – Fun Day

Fun Day is one of LUCS's biggest days of the year with around 700 people around the basin for the cardboard boat race. It requires over 30 LUCS volunteers on the day with much work done during the preceding months by those organising the event.

The afternoon started promptly at 1:30 pm when Gala Day Queen Daniella Griffin and Chief Lady Cara Woolley aboard Leamington cut the ribbon at the entrance to the basin after which Councillor Tom Conn formally opened the event. Boat trips were offered prior to the cardboard boat race, the Tea Room and a BBQ offered refreshments and burgers. In Learmonth Gardens there were usual stalls as well puppeteers for the younger children.

Of the 11 entries for the cardboard boat race only one capsized and another sank. The entries included some impressive designs. It was a little sad to see them end up as soggy cardboard.

Peter Lewis



2025 Fun Day Results





St Magdalene in the Flotilla of Light in Edinburgh on November 8th 2025



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

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