

Eskdale & Liddesdale Advertiser

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BRIEFING

NEWS

Kerry's passion for town lands her a job



THE Langholm Alliance has announced the appointment of its project assistant. Kerry Wonfor will work with its community enterprise manager, Nicol Nicolson.

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FEATURES

Time to browse the seed catalogues



It's either too cold or too wet to work outside, so if there was ever a good time to settle down indoors with a hot drink and a stack of seed catalogues, it's now.

Full story: Page 14

Eskdale & Liddesdale
Advertiser

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More infectious virus forces new lockdown

Measures close schools and businesses as vaccine is rolled out

Big elf and little elf bring us joy



G J Latimer's Les Murray and Katherine Latimer with the elves, down from their shelves

THE top prize for an annual festive competition in Langholm was bigger than ever.

The giant elf, presented to the winner of the Elf on the Shelf hunt, was won by Suhaer El-Khaled. Sam Mitchell won the small elf and Nairn Railton the selection box. The winners of the Shop Local draw were: Kathy Robinson £100; James Ritchie £50; Marion Rodger £25; Lacey Adams £15; and Ann Christie gin hamper. Shoppers, who bought items for more than £10, were entered into the draw to encourage more people to shop in their own high streets and support the businesses through this difficult trading climate.



ESKDALE and Liddesdale, along with all of mainland Scotland, was plunged into lockdown at midnight on Monday as cases of COVID-19 soared.

The lockdown comes with a new legal requirement forbidding anyone from leaving their home, except for essential purposes.

These include essential shopping, education, childcare or to support the vulnerable. Everyone must now work from home where they can.

Schools are closed for at least the rest of the month, except for children of key workers, where required.

In her statement First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said a steep increase in COVID-19 infections and the intensity of pressure on the NHS had created a race between the virus and the vaccines now coming online.

The number of COVID-19 cases in Langholm and Eskdale in the seven days up to last Saturday totalled 27. (See page 5 for more details).

Police Scotland reported that at about 5.40pm on New Year's day officers were called to a house party at a property in Eskdail Street, Langholm.

Six people were offered advice

and dispersed. One man, aged 39, was given a fixed penalty notice.

The surge in the number of cases in the region means it has the second-highest case rate in Scotland.

It has been described as "deeply worrying" by South Scotland MSP Colin Smyth.

The total number of cases here since the start of the pandemic stands at 2,337 compared with 1,499 on December 29.



Colin Smyth South Scotland MSP

Mr Smyth said: "This sudden surge is deeply worrying and takes us to a place we have not been in since near the start of the pandemic.

"It seems easing restrictions over Christmas and the emer-

gence of the new variant is taking its toll."

Mr Smyth highlighted the importance of ramping up the vaccination programme and renewed his call to speed up the delivery of support for businesses.

He said: "People will be dismayed and worn down by the latest news and will ask why, a year into the pandemic, we still do not have regular testing for teachers and senior pupils.

"The lack of mass testing for all key workers is one of the catalogue of failures which means people feel we are almost back to square one.

"It's frustrating that people over 80 still haven't received letters with details of their vaccination appointment and I know many are anxiously waiting."

He added: "Government support for firms is still far too slow. It's not good enough that, weeks after new help was announced for some sectors, applications, never mind payments, haven't even started for many grants."

In the week ending January 3 801 new, positive cases were identified in the region, up from 122 the previous week.

Jeff Ace, NHS Dumfries & Galloway chief executive, said: "This is a worrying situation.

"We know, with the trajectory of cases, things are almost certain to get worse before they get better.

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Eskdale & Liddesdale Advertiser

Deaths

ANDERSON

Suddenly on 29th December 2020 at Cumberland Infirmary, Ellen Anderson, nee McCrindle, Braehead, Langholm, Beloved wife of David, dear mother of Angela and Helen and a much loved granny and great-granny. Funeral private due to current circumstances.

CUTTERIDGE

Very peacefully on Tuesday 29th December 2020, at Westfield Care Home, Lockerbie; David Charles Cutteridge, aged 90 years, late of Billholm, Westerkirk, beloved husband of Megan, father of Clare and Sarah and grandfather of Sebastian and Sophie. Funeral private due to current circumstances. Donations if wished to Langholm Day Centre.

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The Eskdale & Liddesdale Advertiser is part funded by the following organisations along with charitable trusts and individuals from the community of Langholm.

Supported by the Dumfriesshire East Community Benefit Group which is funded by ScottishPower Renewables Ewe Hill Windfarm

Thanks for Sympathy

BELL

The family of Billy Bell would like to thank all those who expressed their condolences after his recent passing. They were comforted to see many friends on the street as he made his final journey from Langholm Mill.

DONALDSON

The family of Joe would like to thank everyone for their kind words, cards, flowers and messages following their recent sad loss. It's very much appreciated by the whole family. Thanks also to staff of the Thomas Hope and doctors from Langholm Medical Partnership. Thanks to David Erskine for his professional care and guidance and the Rev Pickles for his service at the cemetery.

LAW

Isabella (Sybil) Law Frank and family would like to thank all family and neighbours for their kindness, cards and donations to Canonbie Church after the sad loss of Sybil. Thanks also to the Rev Morag Crossan and Hedley and Turnbull undertakers.

Church Notices

CANONBIE UNITED & LIDDESDALE PARISH CHURCHES

Although Covid-19 has meant our doors are closed we remain available to offer support where we can. Please contact the Session Clerks on 013873 25255 or canonbiechurch@gmail.com. Canonbie Treasurer Fiona Smith has received the new weekly offering envelopes. If you would like to receive yours or wish to donate by bank transfer please contact her on 013873 71616 or fionasmith2402@gmail.com for details.

All Services **CANCELLED** until further notice

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All Services **CANCELLED** until further notice

Model dies

SCOTTISH supermodel Stella Tennant, whose parents, Lady Emma and Toby Tennant live on their farm near Newcastleton, has died aged 50.

Stella, who leaves a husband and four children, made her name in the early 1990s on catwalks for designers, like Karl Lagerfeld and Versace, and on the covers of Vogue and Harper's Bazaar.

She married French-born photographer David Lasnet in the small parish church of Oxnam in the Borders in 1999.

They set up their family home in Duns. Her family said: "Stella was a wonderful woman and an inspiration to us all. She will be greatly missed."

They said her death was "sudden" and police said there were "no suspicious circumstances".

Her death came on December 22, five days after her 50th birthday.

The family statement said: "It is with great sadness we announce the sudden death of Stella Tennant."

"Her family ask for their privacy to be respected. Arrangements for a memorial service will be announced at a later date."

Tennant shot to fame after being photographed for British Vogue aged 22 in 1993 and went on to work with designers and fashion houses including Alexander McQueen, Calvin Klein, Jean Paul Gaultier and Burberry.

Aristocratic

Tennant was known for her androgynous sultry looks and aristocratic heritage, being the granddaughter of the 11th Duke of Devonshire, Andrew Cavendish, and Deborah Mitford.

She also starred in the closing ceremony of the 2012 London Olympic Games alongside British models Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell.

Before becoming a model, she studied at Winchester School of Art and embarked upon a career in sculpting, which she described as "my first love".

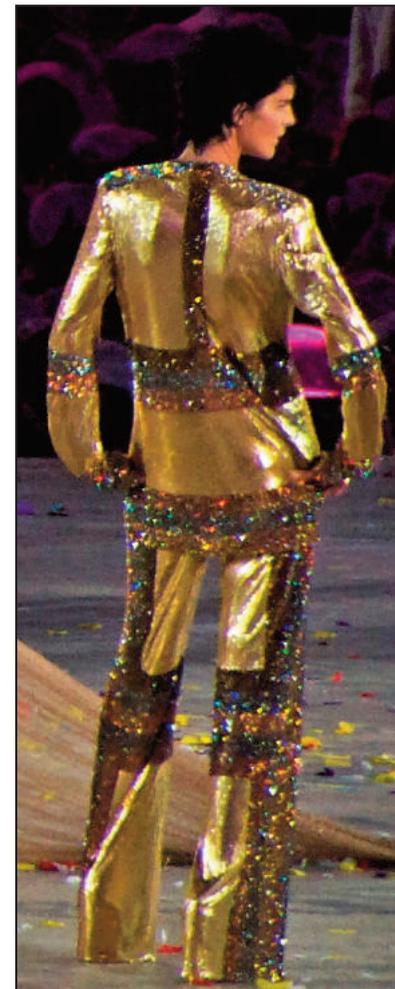
In the late 1990s Lagerfeld unveiled her as the new face of Chanel, noting her resemblance to Coco Chanel.

Tennant retired from the catwalk in 1998 because she was pregnant with her first child but later returned.

She worked on campaigns to promote using less energy and reduce the environmental impact of fast fashion.

She said at the time that she was reusing clothes she had had since the 1990s and buying only about five new items a year.

"At my age I think it's probably quite



Stella Tennant at the London Olympics opening ceremony in 2012

normal you're not that interested in consuming, [and not] loving shopping as much as when you're much younger. We all need to think a little bit harder."

In 2012, she was inducted into the Scottish Fashion Awards Hall of Fame.

Lady Emma is recognised as an accomplished gardener and botanical artist, while Toby is a livestock farmer. They live at Shaws Farm.

Up until a few years ago he was a community councillor for Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage and served a period as chairman.

Stella, along with her brother and sister, Eddy and Isabel, attended Newcastleton primary school.

In August last year it was reported that Stella and her husband had separated.

Limit interaction

> From Page 1

"These current figures don't account for the further rate of increase from increased social interaction on Christmas Day.

"What the current situation means is we all have to limit our interactions because this is how COVID-19 spreads and we know the new variant doesn't allow any margin of error."

On Monday the First Minister said: "It's no exaggeration to say I'm more concerned about the situation we face

now than I have been at any time since March last year.

"The advice of our clinical advisers is very clear. The increased transmissibility of the new variant means the current level 4 measures may not be sufficient to bring the R number back below 1.

"It is essential that we further limit interaction between different households to stem the spread and bring the situation back under control while we vaccinate more people."

share the news of any.....

- engagements
- marriages
- anniversaries
- births
- thank yous
- congratulations

Contact us on 013873 80012
 catherine.greer@eladvertiser.co.uk

Kerry's passion for town lands her the dream job

Assistant's role will give her the chance to shape town's future

THE Langholm Alliance has announced the appointment of its project assistant.

Kerry Wonfor will work with its community enterprise manager, Nicol Nicolson.

Kerry, who has lived in the town for 13 years, previously worked for Edinburgh Woollen Mill, initially at its headquarters in Langholm and later in Carlisle.

Nicol said: "Kerry demonstrated her passion for Langholm, its people and its ambitions from the start of the recruitment process.

"Like so many of our residents, Kerry hails from elsewhere but has made a firm decision to call Langholm home.

"She has all the fundamental skills we need to progress the community plan to make Langholm a better place to live in, work in and visit by 2030. "As someone affected by the recent collapse of Edinburgh Woollen Mill, Kerry understands and empathises with the challenges facing the community.

"In her role as a garment technologist, she was, above all, a key communicator with people operating on all levels, demonstrating an ability to negotiate, compromise and get things done.



Nicol Nicolson, community enterprise manager, welcomes Kerry Wonfor, project assistant, to the Langholm Alliance office in the High Street

"We're hugely fortunate to have her on the team.

"I would like to say to residents to not hesitate to talk to her as we aim for fruitful and happier times ahead for the community and its people."

Kerry said: "When I came to work and live in Langholm, I was instantly attracted to the amazing community spirit and friendly atmosphere we have here.

"Sadly, over the last few years I have watched businesses fold

or move out of the town, my previous employer included.

"I have seen first-hand the impact this has had on Langholm so I feel very passionate about the regeneration of this fantastic place.

Appreciative

"I truly believe there is no better place to live than Langholm, which makes me passionate about the work I'm helping to implement.

"I'm very appreciative of having

a job in the town and I'm excited about my new role and look forward to the challenge ahead. "I would love to see real change and see Langholm thrive in being an even better place to live in, work in and visit."

Denis Male, Alliance chairman, added: "I'm delighted to welcome Kerry to the team.

"It is unfortunate that it is during the current circumstances but, thankfully, there is work which can be done from a distance." Denis highlighted a message

sent to the Alliance to share with the public from the chairman of South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE).

Denis said: "The message is for all the organisations in Langholm and it's very heartening that our organisations and their efforts are being recognised by SOSE at this very trying time.

"It gives real hope for continuing development in the community."

Diversity

Professor Russel Griggs, SOSE chairman, said: "Our communities are at the heart of everything in southern Scotland.

"As the new economic development agency in the south, we are here to build upon the passion, diversity and experiences in our communities.

"Here in Langholm there is an abundance of this passion and vision and you should all be very proud of your achievements so far.

"Things can only get better for Langholm. You have created great momentum and we're delighted to support the Langholm people, businesses and community into the future. "We look forward to working with you in the coming months and years."

Fly-tipping warning

INFURIATED residents in Canonbie had to remove a large amount of rubbish dumped on the outskirts of the village.

The fly-tipping was along the Forgebraehead road between the Cross Keys hill and the Hollows.

It consisted of leylandii hedging, 40 litres of roof resin, plastic garden tubs, fencing wire, barbed wire, polystyrene, a TV and canisters.

They were infuriated that someone thought it acceptable to dump this when half of it could have gone in their wheelie bin.

They believe someone knows where this came from.

One resident said: "We have disposed of it and put up signs saying fly-tipping is punishable with large fines.

"We were lent some motion-censored CCTV cameras which we have deployed in the area to catch any future fly-tippers.

"A mattress was dumped in one of the bypass laybys opposite where all this rubbish was dumped.

"We contacted Dumfries and Galloway Council but it's not responsible for the A7. It contacted BEAR Scotland for us and they uplifted it, thankfully.

"If the paper can publish this incident, it will send the message that such behaviour is unacceptable and it may deter others."

Treatment is timely

FIGURES published for July to September 2020 show that Borderers with cancer, or suspected of having cancer, who were treated locally, experienced some of the timeliest care in the country.

More than 97 per cent of eligible patients, who were given an 'urgent suspicion of cancer referral' received their first cancer treatment within the Scottish government's 62-day target.

This was 10 per cent above the average for Scotland as a whole.

All Borders' patients received their first treatment within the government's target of 31 days from the date of the decision to treat which, again, was higher than the average for Scotland.

Lewis, scooting champ



Left: Lewis Barnfather raised nearly £700 for the charity Walking with the Wounded

Above: Lewis' mum Eilidh Macgregor and her partner Alan Warwick joined in the effort by walking 14 miles dressed as Christmas puddings

LANGHOLM lad Lewis Barnfather powered his scooter round the streets of Langholm in the run-up to Christmas to raise money for a charity.

Lewis, eight, was fundraising for Walking With The Wounded and its campaign Walking Home For Christmas which supports veterans and their families.

His mum, Eilidh Macgregor, said: "Thank you everyone from Lewis for every single donation, especially in light of how financially tough a year it has been and still is for many.

"The total raised is £686.47 which will undoubtedly make a difference to those who have served and their families."

Lewis scooted around 77 streets, some several times over, and also did a stint in Buccleuch Park, went around the primary school grounds and crossed the suspension bridge.

Eilidh and her partner Alan Warwick joined in the effort

with a 14-mile walk, dressed as Christmas puddings and holding a cream jug and serving spoon all the way from the Eskdalemuir Hub to Langholm war memorial.

She said: "It was ideal weather and took about four hours.

"We had a lunch stop at Bentpath where Margaret Sanderson generously gave us some home-made soup, tea and scones which was hugely appreciated.

"We took off our pudding costumes out of respect before we got to the memorial itself."

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EMERGENCY NUMBERS

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COUNCILS

Dumfries and Galloway Council
.....030 3333 3000
.....www.dumgal.gov.uk
Fault reporting (potholes/streetlights etc.).....0800 042 0188
Langholm Town Hall/Library
.....013873 80255
Dumfries and Galloway bus timetables
www.dumgal.gov.uk/timetables
Scottish Borders Council
0330 100 1800
out of hours 01896 752 111
Scottish Borders bus timetables
.....www.scotborders.gov.uk

UTILITIES

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.....www.scottishpower.co.uk
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BEAR Scotland (A7)
.....0800 0281414
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POST OFFICES

Newcastleton 013873 75361
Canonbie ...013873 71348
Rowanburn 013873 71542

HOSPITALS

D&G Royal Infirmary
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Cumberland Infirmary
.....01228 523444
Borders General Hospital
01896 826000
Thomas Hope Hospital
.....013873 80417

DOCTORS

Langholm ..013873 83100
Newcastleton 013873 75100
Canonbie ..013873 71313
NHS24111

CHURCHES

Langholm, Eskdalemuir Ewes and Westerkirk Parish churches
Ms Joy Lunn
Session clerk 07584 357180
Canonbie United Parish church
Session Clerk..013873 25255
Liddesdale Parish church
Session Clerk..Glynis Cambridge
07469 397065

SCHOOLS

Langholm Primary
.....013873 80900
Langholm Academy
.....013873 80418
Newcastleton
.....013873 75240
Canonbie
.....013873 71336

CHEMISTS

Davidson Chemist, Langholm
.....013873 80220
Monday to Friday
8.45am -1pm; 2pm-5.30pm.
Saturday 8.45am-12.30pm.
Boots Pharmacy, Longtown
.....01228 792859
Monday-Friday 9am - 6pm.
Saturday 9am-5pm.

DENTISTS

Mark Buddy 013873 80521
Emergency - outside opening hours

01461 202508

Letters to the editor

Have your say on the issues affecting our area. You can write to us at Eskdale & Liddesdale Advertiser, 54 High Street, Langholm DG13 0JH or email your comments to rachel.norris@eladvertiser.co.uk

Whatever next?

WELL, we're finally out of the EU, bar a few technical trade hitches.

It remains to be seen the effects of the withdrawal over the coming years.

Since the UK joined the Common Market in 1973, naturally there have been many dramatic changes.

There is no doubt it has cost an awful amount of finance and many other pains to join, stay in and, ultimately, leave.

The question is, was it worth it? History: in 1973, when the British and their representative government finally agreed to join the Common Market, they didn't quite make up their minds whether it was for the best and, to this day, still don't.

Part of the British character, perhaps?

Meanwhile, the rest of the world wonders, whatever next?

A D Gray
Henry Street
Langholm



While Scotland slept

This uniquely unconvivial Hogmanay found me abed and up again at my usual early (ish) hour so I was privileged to experience a more pleasing unusual phenomenon, a traffic-free Langholm.

While Scotland slept, I surreally walked the length of the High Street down the centre of the A7, encountering only a single pair of joggers.

Not only did this induce relaxed joie de vivre but the Langholm air was as sweet as up on Whita's top.

Not only was the usual shocking stench of diesel and petrol absent but the coal fires and wood burners were also yet unlit.

Incidentally, Asthma UK and British Lung Foundation Partnership are asking people with log burners to use them only if they have no other source of heat.

They can triple the level of harmful particulates inside the home as well as create dangerous levels of pollution in the surrounding neighbourhood, as reported by the Daily Telegraph last Saturday.

Both indoor and outdoor pollution caused by the stoves caused serious health issues from breathing difficulties to an increased risk of heart attacks, strokes and lung cancer.

Researchers measured the fine matter and found it "flooded" into the room when the door of the stove was opened to add more fuel.

Air pollution from all sources

is a more deadly danger than the COVID-19 virus (so far).

It is ironic that 10,000 delegates plan to fly to Glasgow (in their private jets?) for COP26, the UN climate change conference in November when the city has not reduced its air pollution levels to the legal limits set by our erstwhile EU masters.

To return to the matter of traffic in and through Langholm.

Not only does it cause air and noise pollution and the ever-present dangers of 40-tonne behemoths loaded with logs or gravel thundering along a road built for the horse and cart.

But my New Year's morn reverie struck me how much prettier Langholm looked without the ugly brutes which are modern cars.

For instance, I can think of no popular modern cars to match the elegant style of, say, the old Citroen with pneumatic suspension, the Saab 2-stroke or even the charming quirkiness of the Citroen 2cv or even the VW Beetle.

The well named Chelsea Tractor, or Langholm tank, just intimidates which, with names like Defender and Warrior, is what they are supposed to do.

All in all, the UK's coincidental exit from the EU would be a good time for Boris Johnson to make good his election promises to lever up the north and spend some of the billions previously shovelled to the EU on long overdue boons like a Langholm bypass. Over to you Boris.

Richard Lennox
Henry Street
Langholm

Is Nordic Council an option?

THE Nordic Council, formed in 1952, currently comprises Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and the Aland Islands.

The main purpose is to facilitate agreement to manage shared interests.

The UK, of which Scotland is currently a very junior and subservient part, has left the EU against the declared wish and votes of the Scottish people.

On January 1 the UK finalised this exit. Our MP, David Mundell, will no doubt swallow his previously declared principles, easily done I would guess, and he will Rejoice!

Incidentally, I wonder, did he ever explain to the school pupils in his constituency the "benefits" which the loss of free movement in Europe would provide for them? Maybe not.

My proposition is this. Scotland should liaise with the Nordic Council, based in Copenhagen by the way, and initially seek observer status to promote Scottish interests.

Since 2016, Schleswig-Holstein, part of Germany, has had this status. So, I ask, why not Scotland?



Reykjavik, Iceland. Iceland is a member of The Nordic Council

Why should Scotland not be a part of this wider world community?

Just look at a map. Scotland is geographically part of the Nordic group. It's nearer to the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Norway and Denmark than London.

It follows that I would like to see Scotland open an office in Brussels and Copenhagen and maintain and expand contacts with our European friends, partners and allies, with an equivalent EU and Nordic Council presence in Scotland.

Let's face it: crashing out of the EU with whatever Prime Minister Boris Johnson declares will not be good for Scotland, especially because we are being dragged out against the will of the Scottish people.

We lose our freedom to travel and explore our continent of Europe without hindrance and with the security of accessing free health care should it be needed. This will affect ordinary citizens.

So, Scotland's government should declare itself willing to forge alliances.

Why not start with courting the Nordic Council of nations? We have much to offer and much to gain. What's not to like?

Michael Clarke
Hillside Crescent
Langholm

End of trade dispute helps Borders' mills

A NEW and independent approach to long-standing trade conflicts which resulted in Borders businesses being slapped with heavy export tariffs by the USA has been announced by the UK government.

Borders' textile mills are heavily penalised by the US government when exporting cashmere products to the country.

This is because of a long-running trade dispute between the USA and the EU about aeroplane manufacturing.

However, as the UK leaves the EU, the UK regains control of its trading policy.

The new approach will mean

the UK suspends retaliatory tariffs resulting from the Boeing dispute to help bring the USA towards a reasonable settlement.

The move is part of the government's strategy to de-escalate trade tensions so the US and UK can draw a line under a dispute which harms industry on both sides of the Atlantic.

Knitwear industry leaders have repeatedly called for MP, John Lamont, to do what he can to remove the damaging tariffs.

Mr Lamont, who represents Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk, said: "I am under no illusions about the difficulties this causes for Borders businesses.

"Industry bosses have made it very clear to me that the knitwear industry is being hit hard.

"This is welcome news and should mean the USA sees sense and removes its tariffs.

"It is very frustrating that the dispute between the US and the EU leads to iconic Scottish products, like cashmere and Scotch whisky, being hit so hard.

"I recently met the US Ambassador to the UK, Woody Johnson, to make the case for the removal of these tariffs.

"As the UK regains control of its trade policy, we can shape it to suit the needs and interests of our economy."



John Lamont MP visits a textiles mill in the Borders where companies have been affected by high tariffs on goods exported to the USA

New variant causes leap in COVID cases

Annandale and Eskdale experienced a notable rise last week



THE number of COVID-19 cases in Langholm and Eskdale in the seven days up to last Saturday totalled 27.

Based on a population of 3,742, that means the seven-day rate per 100,000 is 400+.

There were 62 cases in Gretna (400+) and in Annandale East 12 cases (200 to 399).

Moffat had six cases (100-199), Lockerbie nine (100-199); Lochmaben four (100-199); Annandale West (six (200-399); Annan East 25 (400 plus); Eastriggs 36 (400 plus); and Annan West 10 (200-399).

In Dumfries and Galloway 798 new cases were reported in those seven days, a rate of 536.1. The seven-day test positivity rate was 18.2 per cent.

In the Scottish Borders 499 new cases were reported, a rate of 432 and the seven-day test positivity rate was 15.9 per cent.

Denholm and Hermitage, which includes Newcastleton but excludes Hawick, recorded 31 new cases (400+).

In Scotland on Tuesday 2,529 new cases were reported.

Of the 18,336 new tests, which reported results, 14.8 per cent were positive.

Eleven people, who had tested positive, died and 93 people were in intensive care.

Another 1,347 people were in hospital with COVID-19.

NHS Dumfries & Galloway says the new variant of COVID-19 is suspected of playing a role in the rise in cases here.

This is the biggest increase in cases it has seen since the start of the global pandemic.

There has been an exceptionally rapid rise in Wigtownshire and Stranraer since the start of December and, notably, a rise in Annandale and Eskdale.



The mobile testing unit returns to the Kilgreen in Langholm today

Potentially, any part of the region could experience a rise in cases at a similar pace if people did not exercise extreme caution as they went about their lives at work and home.

While it was already a highly-transmissible virus, the variant is understood to be up to 70 per cent more transmissible.

More testing capacity with the mobile testing unit is now in place at various locations.

<https://www.nhs.uk/test-booking/> Booking slots open at 6pm every day for appointments the next day.

People should continue to self-isolate if they are symptomatic until they can book a test.

An NHS spokesperson said: "We continue to work to increase capacity to support rising demand because of the outbreak.

"The booking slots are available only through the national testing programme."

People can also use the postal test kit service. Find out more at <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

Along with the rest of mainland Scotland, Dumfries and Galloway is now at Level 4.

Valerie White, interim director of public health, said: "The region has suffered tragedies as a result of COVID-19 but has not been as badly affected as some other areas.

"If this new B117 variant is quickly establishing a foothold, it has the potential to significantly alter the outlook.

"It's more important than ever that everyone follows the national directions, including the FACTS guidance."

IN BRIEF

Row over court move

A CALL has been made to reverse the decision to move sheriff and jury trials from Dumfries and Stranraer Sheriff Courts to Ayr.

South Scotland MSP Colin Smyth raised the matter with Humza Yousaf, justice secretary, in the Scottish parliament.

Mr Smyth told members: "The reality is these plans will increase travel for some people.

"For example, in some cases, solicitors will have to make a 200-mile round trip daily.

"To propose a solution which asks people to travel from Dumfries and Galloway to Ayr (during the pandemic) is the height of irresponsibility.

"I appeal to the cabinet secretary to intervene to find a more local solution, even at this late stage."

Mr Yousaf said: "I have raised this with the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service. To give him the short answer, yes, we will keep these decisions under review."

After the question session, Mr Smyth added: "Regardless of the restrictions, we shouldn't ask people to travel between low and high COVID-19 preva-

Bridge is vandalised



Parts of the safety barriers of Whithaugh Bridge were dumped in the water by vandals

THE footbridge over the Liddel Water in Newcastleton has been vandalised.

The safety barriers at the entrance to Whithaugh Bridge were removed and dumped in the river nearby.

This has been reported to police and recorded as vandalism. If anyone saw anybody at the bridge behaving in a suspicious manner, they are asked to report it to the police or Crimestoppers.

The bridge connects locals and visitors to the forest and has been a huge asset to the community since it opened in 2014.

It enables people to enjoy the Two Bridges walk and acts as the funnel to feed footfall and cyclists into the village.

A spokesperson for Copshaw Community said on Facebook: "It is our bridge. For someone to do this deliberately is heartless."

The safety rails have been temporarily replaced to enable the route to remain open.

The E & L Gallery

Send us your photographs!

Every week we publish a reader's photo on our Gallery page. This can be taken on a phone or a camera. Submit your photos to the Editor who will select the best for publication. Let us know what camera or phone you took it on.

Email them to sharon@eladvertiser.co.uk or drop a printed copy into our office at 54 High Street, Langholm.

Photo by: Caitlin Weatherstone

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The appliance of science

SCOTLAND'S Rural College (SRUC) has teamed up with NVIDIA, the world's leading AI company, to accelerate the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning in the agrifood sector, including livestock genetics and bacterial diseases.

Edinburgh-based SRUC researchers are using an NVIDIA DGX Station in the fight against bovine tuberculosis (bTB) which affected about 37,000 animals in 2020 and costs the country about £176m a year.

Mid-infrared (MIR) spectral data can now be analysed at 10 times the speed it could previously, screening more cows for bTB.

The increase in speed allowed SRUC to test more models more quickly and achieve results comparable to the current skin test.

Its researchers will work with NVIDIA to enhance SRUC's new Challenge Centre for Digital and Data Innovation.

Led by Professor Mike Coffey, the virtual centre applies digital and data technology to plant and animal health, welfare, breeding, image and spectral data analysis, phenotype production, genomic evaluation, genotype and sequence analysis and weather data analysis.

Professor Wayne Powell, principal and chief executive of SRUC, said: "A key goal for

artificial intelligence, machine learning and digital innovation in the agri-food industry is to provide trusted evidence that its activities can have a positive impact on climate change, improved animal health outcomes, natural economy profitability and resilience and be more broadly valued in society.

Expertise

"We look forward to working more closely with the team at NVIDIA, whose world-leading expertise in AI technology will help us to develop and deploy innovations to improve the lives of farmers, consumers and society as a whole."

Tony Paikeday, senior director of product marketing for AI systems at NVIDIA added: "AI is transforming every industry, using data to drive insight, and SRUC is using AI supercomputing to speed up data analysis and improve milk safety for consumers without the need for data centre infrastructure.

"With NVIDIA DGX Station, in combination with development resources like pre-trained AI models available through the NVIDIA NGC software hub, SRUC will be able to advance its world-class research, improving the agri-food industry with leading-edge AI."

Farmers fear lack of commitment



Andrew McCornick, NFUS president, is frustrated by a lack of a long-term commitment by both governments to agriculture

THE absence of any future funding commitments from the UK and Scottish governments beyond 2022 is eroding confidence of agricultural businesses which face the prospect of a potentially chaotic and turbulent post-transition period.

The UK has left the EU and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which consistently delivered significant financial support to agriculture for

decades.

A fully adequate and effective funding settlement for Scottish agriculture beyond the CAP, which was promised in two Conservative election manifestos (2017 and 2019), remains a priority for NFU Scotland.

Such funding is critical to ensuring the sector continues to underpin Scotland's high-quality food and drinks sectors which are so important to the

economy and post-COVID-19 recovery, while enabling farmers to deliver on environmental and climate change ambitions.

While the UK government's spending review in November confirmed the same funding, which Scotland received via the CAP in 2019, would be available to the Scottish government for 2021/22, this fell short of previous pledges to commit funding annually.

There is no commitment from 2022/23 onwards which would uphold the Bew Review recommendations.

Equally, the union believes the Scottish government should guarantee its own financial commitments in its forthcoming budget.

A frustrated Andrew McCornick, union president, said: "Farmers must have access to the same funding as they had under the CAP, as promised in the Conservative manifestos and should not be disadvantaged financially by Brexit.

"We need clear, long-term commitments from the Treasury to honour promises made for at least the rest of the UK parliamentary term to 2025.

"The absence of such commitments will threaten the stability of Scottish farm businesses entering an uncharted period.

"But it is not all about sums of money; it is just as much about how funding is used.

"Agriculture and related policy are devolved so that lies entirely within the gift of the Scottish government.

"Assurances that it will continue to play its part in funding existing schemes will give stability and continuity.

"Commitments are also needed to initiate transformation, not least in the face of climate change challenges.

"Budgets may enable change but it is how money is spent which is key to agriculture thriving and delivering on everything expected of it.

"Responsibility rests with both governments and we'll continue to ensure those responsibilities are met.

"Investment in Scottish agriculture now will deliver a green recovery in the rural economy, the national economy, jobs, the environment, biodiversity, climate change and our national well-being post-Covid-19."

Around the marts

C&D Auction Marts Limited had forward 6,446 sheep comprising 4,520 prime lambs and 1,926 cast ewes and rams at the weekly sale at Longtown on Tuesday, December 29.

A much larger show of prime lambs was forward, with light lambs and commercial export lambs again the trade of the day. Demand outstripped supply and ensured a blistering trade. Topping the sale at 337p was a pen of 10 Beltex lambs from R & J Lines, Killoccraw, Campbeltown, whose run

of 40 fantastic lambs went on to average 38kg, 321p and £122.80.

Heavy lambs saw a slight rise in the week, with many good runs of commercial heavies averaging well over £105 and sold to a top price of £145 for Texel lambs shown by EJC Dean, Kirk House, Brampton. Overall average of 232.3p (SQQ 239.2p).

Principal prices (per head): Texel £145, £142, £139 Kirk House, £137, £134 Tercrosset, £132 Howgillside, £128 Westcote, & Kerfield, £124 Rigfoot,

£120 Killoccraw & Lingey Field. Beltex £137 Kerfield, £132 High Hall, £130 Killoccraw & Kerfield, £128 Killoccraw, £127 High Stenries, £126 Breckon Hill, £124 High Hall & Killoccraw, £123 Breckon Hill & High Stenries, £122 Breckon Hill, £120 High Hall. Suffolk £124 Riddings Hill, £114 Dunjop, £110 Outertown, £109 High Machriemore, £108 Dunjop & Breckon Hill, £106 High Cattadale & High Machriemore, £105 Rigfoot. Charollais £123, £122 Breckon Hill. Mule £107

Miller Hill, £103 Breckon Hill, £101.50 Cara View, £101 High Crubasdale, £100 Heathery Knowe, Low Dumashery & Thomship. Cheviot £104.50 Rigfoot, £103 Cara View, £102 Rigfoot, £100 Kirkton, £99 Catslackburn & Kilnford Croft, £95.50 Mainside, £97 Elwick, £96.50 Roughet Hill, £95 Laundry Cottage. Cheviot Mule £100 Guardsmill, £97.50 Brisco Meadows, £97 Whitchester & Guardsmill. Herdwick £100 Breckon Hill. Lleyl £98 Cleongart. Blackface £97.50 High

Crubasdale, £97 Glendearg, £95.50 Fingland, £95 Breckon Hill, £93.50 Canina Gardens, £93 Silloans & Brisco Meadows.

A similar entry of cast ewes and rams was forward. All classes of ewes were firmer on the week as numbers tighten. Heavy ewes were £3-£4 a head sharper and can be sold to vendors' advantage.

Heavy ewes topped the sale at £182 for a pure-bred Texel shown by T Illingworth, Howgillside, Eaglesfield.

Suffolk ewes sold to a top of £130 from Messrs Wales, Thackwood, Raughton Head and Mule ewes topped at £97 from Marygate.

Hill ewes to £88 for Cheviots from J Lamb, Ingleston, Ayr. Blackface ewes topped at £85 for a penful from DA & MA Teasdale, Grindon Hill, Haydon Bridge.

Cast rams saw a big rise on the week, being very good to sell. Rams sold to £150 for Texels from D McGregor, Longrigg, Roweltown.

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Let's get on with 2021

Politicians pass on their thoughts for the coming year

Colin Smyth

South Scotland Labour MSP

2020 was a year like no other and one we'll all remember for a long time.

COVID-19 has dominated every part of our lives since March and I pay tribute to everyone in Dumfries and Galloway for pulling together and doing all they can to help stop the spread of this terrible virus.

As we look to 2021, we must all remain vigilant, especially in light of the very serious news from the past couple of weeks.

It is of some consolation that a vaccine has been approved and, by now, many of our key workers and vulnerable people will be well on the way to being vaccinated.

Hopefully, you and your family will receive it by the summer and you can start to move forward.

"One aspect of 2020, which I hope we can continue when COVID-19 is finally suppressed is that increased sense of community spirit which I've seen in our region.

People really have pulled together to help each other and

keep one another safe.

That goodwill and generosity remind us of the real values of this time of year: love for your neighbour, working together, hope and compassion.

Heroes

The real heroes of 2020 have been our fantastic key workers, from teachers and social care workers to all those in our amazing NHS and many more.

For far too long our key workers have been taken for granted by our governments but I hope this can finally change and they can receive the pay and support they deserve.

There have been many other unsung heroes in our community from those running foodbanks to those just taking time to look out for their neighbours. I want to say a heartfelt thank you to you all.

I hope all readers had a happy and safe New Year and 2021 heralds a renewed effort to build the kinder, more compassionate society and world we all want to live in.



John Lamont

Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk MP

2020 was a really tough year. The coronavirus restrictions have taken their toll on residents and businesses.

In some ways, we are lucky to live in a rural area where we can get out for a walk in nature when those in cities or suburbs cannot.

I know many people have been grateful for this both for their physical and mental health.

Being unable to visit a loved one in a care home or meet a friend for a coffee and a chat has been hard.

With the new restrictions, I fear the worst of the economic hit might still be ahead.

Businesses have done their utmost to keep people in work and stay afloat. It is important we all continue to support them as much as we can.

Before coronavirus, we had the horrendous flooding in Newcastleton.

It is easy to forget the devastating effects of Storm Dennis hit less than a year ago, given all that has gone on since.

I heard from a lot of locals when I visited shortly after the floods. Their experiences were

terrifying and it is a huge relief that no lives were lost.

Despite being a good distance from Hawick, Carlisle or Langholm, Newcastleton and the surrounding areas always cope well when the going gets tough.

Community

Not only is there a strong sense of community but there are also dedicated groups of people who ensure they remain ready for whatever comes around the corner, be that localised flooding or a global pandemic.

There are reasons to be hopeful for this year. Coronavirus is by no means over.

But, with vaccinations well underway in the Borders and the UK, there is a real sense that normality is within reach. Before then, there is a lot of hard work for us all to do to keep our communities safe.

I hope 2021 can be a year of recovery for Liddesdale. Most of all, I hope you and your family have a safe, healthy and prosperous year.

David Mundell

Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale MP

WHEN I wrote my 2020 New Year message, few of us realised we were so close to a global health emergency which would transform all our lives.

The last 10 months have been dominated by coronavirus which, despite the welcome development of a vaccine, will likely remain a concern for some time.

Difficult times, however, bring out the best in people and I have been impressed and heartened by how our communities have come together in adversity.

It is a great privilege to live in and represent this constituency where stoicism and compassion have long been evident.

For both myself and my son, Oliver, Dumfriesshire MSP, it has been our busiest time yet, including helping hundreds of constituents, businesses and organisations by providing information, making contacts and, where possible, facilitating practical support.

My thoughts remain with those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19 or have been

touched in other ways such as the impact on jobs, businesses and general well-being.

I wish to praise the dedication of our frontline NHS staff, care community, emergency services and the army of key workers in the public and private sectors who have worked often in extremely difficult circumstances.

Achievement

Obviously, the arrival of a vaccine so quickly was a great achievement and I hope the roll-out goes smoothly, locally and nationally, so we can put the pandemic behind us, with the key task then rebuilding the economy.

I hope the Borderlands Growth Deal I championed as Scottish Secretary can play a significant part in that by creating new jobs and businesses.

From a political perspective, the Scottish parliament elections are due on May 6.

I've no idea what form the campaign will take but hope there will be some opportunity to get out and about and meet people. It's that personal contact I've missed most this year.

I wish readers a Happy and, above all, Healthy New Year.



Oliver Mundell

Dumfriesshire MSP

AS WE move into a new year, I'm grateful for this opportunity to wish all my constituents the very best for 2021.

The last 12 months have been memorable for all the wrong reasons, not least the global pandemic, which affected to a greater or lesser extent on the lives of most people and, sadly for some, brought the pain of losing a loved one.

My thoughts remain with those who have been bereaved or were negatively affected in other ways through the impact on employment or businesses.

Those difficult months, however, have also brought out the best in our communities.

Through my work as constituency MSP, I've seen first hand the efforts of so many in assisting in the community and encouraging those most vulnerable through this unexpected and life-threatening crisis.

In particular, I pay tribute to our selfless frontline NHS staff, the wider care community, emergency services and other key workers, together with the many organisations and indi-

viduals who have gone above and beyond to help.

As we embark on what looks like another eventful year, the vaccination roll-out appears promising but the virus remains a serious threat to many and I urge readers to continue to closely follow all the latest health advice and guidelines.

Rebuilding

My firm hope for the coming year is that coronavirus is finally brought under control and we can focus on rebuilding the country and bringing people back together.

Time will tell but, perhaps, we can even move on from Brexit and leave the division of Scottish independence behind us.

Happy New Year and my best wishes to you and your family for a brighter 2021.



IN BRIEF

Ready to support

NEWCASTLETON Community Outreach Team are reminding villagers that the team are here and ready to support them and their loved ones in any way they can during this time of lockdown.

With so little opportunity for spontaneous human interaction, the team have to be pro-active and creative to ensure everyone stays connected and stays well.

Residents can access their help and support at support@newcastletoncommunitytrust.co.uk or call 013873 75723.

Calls to this number are being redirected to the team and it takes a few rings to get through.

The First Minister Nicola Sturgeon announced a new lockdown for mainland Scotland earlier this week.

By law, everyone must stay at home as much as possible.

People can leave home only if they have a reasonable excuse to or if it is for an essential purpose.

There is no limit on how many times they can leave home to exercise.

Adults can meet only one other person from another household outside.

Everyone must work from home where possible.

Those, who were previously shielding, are being advised not to go to work.

It is essential that everyone follows the updated guidance to stop the virus spreading further and to protect vital services.

A spokesperson said: "We remain focused on making sure the most vulnerable people in our communities receive the support they need in these challenging times."

Stay alert for crime

A concerned member of the public contacted Police Scotland in the Borders on Monday to report a suspicious blue vehicle being driven about residential streets in Kelso. Two men were inside.

The registration number was given and related to a blue Ford Transit Drop side lorry.

The vehicle is registered to a man known for his involvement in rural crimes of dishonesty in Scotland and northern England.

Police are asking people to remain vigilant, check the security of their property, out-buildings, sheds and garages and report any suspicious incidents on 101.

2020~A cheerful look back on a cheerless year~2020

JANUARY

2020 began much as it had always done, with little hint of what was to hit the country only a few months down the line.

People looked forward to their season of Burns suppers and fans of hit TV show Dancing On Ice admired the skills of para-athlete Libby Clegg who made it all the way to the final.

Cross-border traffic was disrupted when part of the parapet on Longtown bridge crashed into the river below after an accident.

One lane of the road was quickly opened but to light traffic only so HGVs experienced many months of long detours.

Archie Dryburgh, an Annandale East and Eskdale councillor, was made an MBE in the New Year's honours in recognition of his work as Dumfries and Galloway Council's armed forces champion.

After six years of driving the Langholm Day Centre bus, Billy Scott hung up his keys and retired. He was also a regular in-house singer.

The Townfoot Sports Centre working group appointed the architect to design the new centre, Robert Potter and Partners of Dumfries.

The top table at Ewes WI Burns Supper in January 2020



FEBRUARY

A plan to build a medicinal cannabis oil farm got the go-ahead from Dumfries and Galloway Council. The enterprise will create up to 50 jobs.

Langholm Chilli Club, through its Langholm Digs For Victory project, proposed creating a community allotment, garden and eco-project at the Dump.

In the second week of the month both Eskdale and Liddesdale were battered by Storm Ciara.

Newcastleton came close to being flooded after the Liddel Water burst its banks but the following weekend, when Storm Dennis hit, dozens of properties were flooded as water swept through the streets.

Some river gauges showed a rise of 1.5m in fewer than three hours and a couple had to be rescued from their car, stranded in floodwater at Kershopefoot.

Mairi Gougeon, Scottish environment minister, visited the village a few days later to meet community representatives and flood victims.

A group of textile students from Carlisle College, including Ben Ewart of Langholm, organised a fashion shoot in the dyehouse.

Old Habits - Never Dye showed clothes they had made from scrap fabrics, which would otherwise have gone to landfill.

Langholm P4/5 pupils raised £700 at their Valentine's day coffee morning.

The £8m flood protection scheme for Langholm was presented to the public at an event in the Buccleuch Centre and there were many diverse comments about the plan to line the Esk and Wauchope with walls and embankments.

Roger Maxwell, Langholm Common Riding chairman, announced his intention to step down as officiating magistrate after the 2020 event.

Canonbie SWI's team won gold at the Ruralympics in Dumfries.

Langholm's Ben Ewart took part in a fashion shoot at FTS Dyers



MARCH

Newcastleton and District Community Trust started the month with news of a windfall from Buccleuch.

The landowner gifted a number of amenity sites, including the Polysport, golf course and showfield.

Both Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders councils raised their council taxes by 4.84 per cent.

Langholm Academy pupil Cameron Greer was elected a Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament for Dumfries and Galloway.

The weather observatory at Eskdalemuir confirmed that the previous month was the wettest February recorded at the station. More than 16 inches of rain fell.

By the end of March, COVID-19 was taking hold and many events were being cancelled, including Langholm Common Riding, and schools were closed.

The message Stay at Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives became the mantra during the national lockdown.

Volunteers clean up the banks of the Liddel in March



Michelle and Leanne Duncan turn their skills to making PPE for the NHS



Ryan Milligan of Langholm Co-Op takes part in a fund-raiser in June



APRIL

By the start of April, communities affected by the lockdown were pulling together, with many volunteers going shopping for those shielding and businesses doing deliveries and offering take-aways.

The Scottish government declared that all school exams would be cancelled and employees were furloughed through the job retention scheme.

Those with talents for handicrafts helped the NHS and care workers by making scrubs, bags and pyjamas.

Langholm Day Centre, unable to open, delivered meals to its members, while Newcastleton's resilience team, having had to cope with the flood in February, was now looking after people confined to their homes.

There was bad news for Drove Weaving after it was announced that 16 jobs were at risk while Lochcarron of Scotland considered the Langholm company's future.

Jean McKie of Canonbie celebrated her 100th birthday with a socially-distanced garden party.

A price tag of £6m was put on the 10,500 acres of Langholm Moor which the Langholm Initiative hoped to buy from Buccleuch and turn into a nature reserve.

Langholm's rugby lamb lifts the spirits in lockdown April



MAY

Residents of Eskdale and Liddesdale described their lives in lockdown - from home schooling to lambing.

They also voiced their fears of being put at risk of catching the virus after the UK government relaxed travel restrictions in England and visitors were able to cross the border into Scotland.

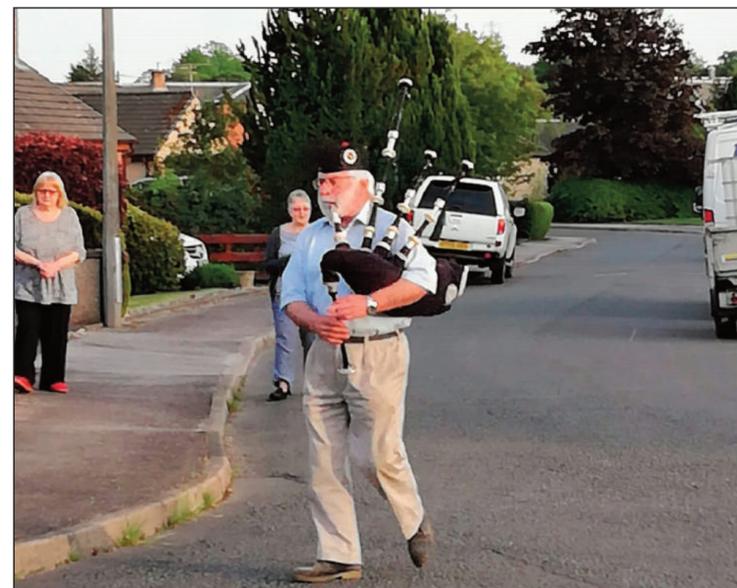
The mobile testing unit arrived in Langholm and three groups, Langholm Day Centre, OutPost Arts and Langholm Covid support group shared £34,000 from the Scottish government's supporting community fund to help them run their services.

The Townfoot Sports Centre working group announced it was preparing to show three potential plans to the public.

Appreciation for key workers, particularly the weekly applause for health and care workers, became established.

In Langholm this culminated in lighting up the monument, an event masterminded by Calum Graham and Chris Jones and Glen Cavers of Centre Stage Community Theatre.

Copshaw's Pauline and Nicol Elliot make sure the isolated get their deliveries



JUNE

The Met Office revealed that less than an inch of rain fell in Eskdalemuir during April and there were 18 days without rain. The Observatory recorded 192 hours of sunshine.

The Langholm Moor community buy-out was offered £1m by the Scottish Land Fund but was given a deadline of October 31 to raise the other £5.4m.

Meanwhile, the Newcastleton and District Community Trust heard it had been awarded the full £850,000 to buy 750 acres of Holm Hill from Buccleuch.

Scotland's environment watchdog, Scottish Natural Heritage, warned of the significant adverse effects on the Esk and Ewes valleys from the proposed Faw Side windfarm.

The Castle Craigs Club announced all the ride-outs were cancelled. It said that with no Cornet elected, the ride-outs would not go ahead.

Deputy First Minister John Swinney said schools would return full time in August if Scotland continued to make progress in suppressing COVID-19.

Scottish Borders Council, which has the contract for and manages the X95 between Edinburgh to Carlisle, via Langholm, began a consultation on the proposed withdrawal of a number of services.

Jock o' the Hollows pipes in support of the NHS in Riverside Park, Canonbie

See next week's E&L Advertiser for a review of July to December 2020

Picturesque pictures



The Esk valley from Over Dumfelling
Chrissie Coburn-Krzowska



Winter view from Warblaw

Mairi Telford Jammeh



Well-fed Bullfinch
Gavin Graham



Fascinating fungi
Bruce McCartney



Canonbie postie, Jen Grieve



New Year's Day walkers on Potholm Bridge

Gavin Graham



Louise Tait and Mika on Warblaw



Rockin' Robin
Mairi Telford Jammeh



Zak at Castle Craigs
Stan Wilson



Mist rolling in up the Esk
Sharon Tolson



A Kiwi Christmas

Langholm lass sends positive vibes from a land down under

By Rhea Cavers

AFTER leaving Bonnie Langholm on December 28, 2019, I would never have predicted my next Christmas being a Kiwi one.

The twists and turns of 2020 laid out my path and kept me in New Zealand for all the right reasons.

To have met friends, who have become family, all around the country is the best feeling.

Coming to New Zealand last December has been the best decision I've ever made.

I'm still loving every minute of being in this beautiful country and feel incredibly lucky to be here throughout this whole pandemic.

I'm so grateful to have Elspeth Zemla, a cousin of my late granny Joan Armstrong, and Joe Zemla in Cromwell as my 'Kiwi' parents.

Their house has been a second home. It's been my base since the day I arrived here: My go to for help, advice, a comfy bed, a good feed, a familiar welcoming face and a Langholm accent.

Experience

To have this pair at the other side of the world has made my experience so enjoyable. I'm sure it puts my mum and dad's minds at ease, too.

To spend Christmas in Cromwell with the Zemlas was the next closest thing to coming home.

In the run-up to Christmas myself and my boyfriend, Sam, went on a three-week road trip round the South Island in a camper van.

We saw some amazing sights and had fabulous weather. It didn't feel Christmassy in the slightest, though.

On the 23rd Sam and I headed to Cromwell ready for the festivities to begin. We put up some Christmas decorations at Elspeth and Joe's to try to get in the spirit of things.

Peculiar

It felt so peculiar and seemed as though it should have been mid-July.

A friend of mine, Jen MacLeay, from Inverness, who I met in June, also spent Christmas with us, which was great.

Christmas morning was beautiful with blue skies all around. We had breakfast cooked on the barbecue, then drank champagne in the sun - the dream.

Another couple, who were friends of Joe and Elspeth's, joined us for a delicious Christmas dinner.

Great food, drinks and lots of laughs were had. Hospitality at the Zemlas is always amazing.

My first experience of a Kiwi Christmas was a special one, even though I missed my family dearly and a few tears were shed.

I'm always thinking of everyone back home in these horrendously hard times.



Rhea with her friend Jen MacLeay, help prepare for a slightly different Christmas dinner

I hope the new year brings health and happiness to all my fellow Langholmites.

Sending lots of positive vibes home from NZ for better days to come in 2021.



Elspeth and Joe Zemla, originally from Langholm, with their young guests Rhea, Sam, Alicia and Ben



Rhea and Sam drink a toast to their New Zealand Christmas

IN BRIEF

MP votes for EU deal

ESKDALE'S MP voted in favour of the government's Brexit deal in the House of Commons last Wednesday.

David Mundell, who represents Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale, welcomed the deal, which was secured with the EU on Christmas Eve.

Mr Mundell said: "I consistently argued that every effort had to be made to leave the EU with a deal rather than a damaging No Deal because that was the best outcome for my constituency, Scotland and the UK.

"I welcome the fact we have secured what is a good trade agreement, protecting EU-UK trade with no quotas and tariffs, while allowing us to strike new trade deals around the world.

"It also takes us out of the Common Fisheries Policy which has done so much harm to Scotland's fishing industry.

"It contains many other important provisions such as co-operation on security and law enforcement issues, which was a concern for many.

"Of course, any such deal is a compromise and there will inevitably be some people who will be unhappy with parts of the deal.

"But that was no reason to vote it down and face leaving with No Deal and the disruption that would bring.

"We really now need to grasp the opportunities, which come from this deal, and work together to overcome any challenges.

"It's time to put the Brexit divisions behind us and move on, with defeating the coronavirus pandemic the priority."

Job Start Payment

YOUNG people, who are starting work or have started a job in the last three months, including temporary Christmas jobs, are encouraged to check whether they qualify for Job Start Payment.

The one-off cash payment of £250 is open to 16 to 24 year olds who have been out of paid work and on a qualifying benefit for at least six months. The payment rises to £400 if the person has a child.

The job must average 12 hours a week over four weeks but doesn't need to be permanent.

The money can be spent on anything they need like travel costs, lunches, tools or new clothes.

People can find out more and apply through mygov.scot or by calling 0800 182 2222.



Langholm with the Lid Off

We continue our serialisation of Wattie Bell's book.

Good old Rugby Days

(continued)

As a matter of interest Anne Barnfather, daughter of Jimmy and Nancy who now lives in Edinburgh was in an art shop in Edinburgh and saw one of Fitba's paintings on offer for £200.

However, I deviate back to 1938. Come the 12th August each year Mr Elton of the dole office would despatch this motley crew to the beating for "tofs" at the shooting behind Whita. The idea was that the beaters form a line armed with a white flag and drive "the birds" over the butts where the toffs were waiting with guns. At the end of the forenoon drive they were told to go to a shepherd's house where the wife had made sheep's head broth. The threesome ate half a panful and the shepherd asked if they would like to take the rest home. They had nothing to carry it in but the shepherd, an enterprising man made them a haversack out of brown paper and string which they hung on John Hood's back. They were on their way home when they were caught in a cloudburst and the brown paper haversack began to disintegrate. They held the tails of John Hood's coat up and the broth began to slosh about in the sort of trough it formed.

Broth

When they arrived back home they lowered the contents into a pan. For good measure they scraped the back of John Hood's coat with a knife, wrung the broth out into a pan, boiled it and ate it. Sheep's head broth was a speciality of shepherds' wives in the Eskdale Valley. The story goes that the present Queen Mother was on a shoot behind Whita when she asked the shepherd's wife how she made the sheep's head broth. "Weel!" said the shepherd's wife, "you take a sheep's head - deed of course, and boil it. You then pit peas intilt, then pit turnips intilt, then pit carrots intilt, then pit barley intilt - " "But excuse me," interrupted the Queen Mother, "where can one purchase intilt?"

Author of this book, Walter Bell

Bogey Loads of Logs

I have always been keen on the rugby and at the age of 10 I would carry the oranges up to Milntown. I also had to pump the water out of the dam for the bath. The pump was in the only toilet in the changing rooms and the ref had to change in there. There was no light and the pump had a long-curved handle. I couldn't stop pumping or the water ran back and as I pumped, I struck the ref in vital parts of his anatomy. He would Oh! Ah! Ooo! Etc. People sitting in the stand could hear this and ask in some alarm as to what was going on. "Oh it's nothing", the man taking the money would say "It's just the ref in the toilet with a little boy."

Hornby

About that time, we had three policemen in Langholm. The Sergeant was Potter and the two Constables were Boyes and Hornby and at Christmas, Latimers had a display of Hornby trains on the window and a huge placard reading Hornby trains for Boyes to Potter about with. Tommy Irving where Tom Calvert is now had a greengrocer shop with a fully dressed father Christmas in the window that kept nodding 'yes' from morn till night. I went along to that shop window several times a day during Christmas week just in case he began shaking his



head. The co-operative store, where Spar is now got the first bacon slicing machine in Langholm and we would stand in wonder at the window watching it in action. We would get an empty apple box from the grocers in the town shouting "Any empty boxes?" until we got one. We would also shout into Milligan's the joiner and undertakers in Buccleuch Square "Any empty boxes?" and they would chase us.

Husbandry

Yes, Langholm was a pretty exciting place for we boys in the early 1930's. Towards the end of the 1930's great improvements were made in the husbandry of the land. Artificial Insemination was introduced to improve bovine stock. One farmer near Langholm had ordered the vet to administer artificial insemination to his cow. As the farmer had business in town on the day the vet arrived, he told his wife to look after the vet. The wife who shall be nameless to spare her blushes showed the vet the particular cow that was to be treated and asked the vet if there was anything he required. "Could I have a bucket of warm water?" asked the vet. The farmer's wife brought the bucket of warm water into the byre and set it down and as she was leaving she said to the vet "Now there's a nail behind the door if you want to hang up your trousers." A jovial red faced farmer who lived not a mile to the south of Langholm had a constipated pig. The vet, a slim young man, took out a long glass tube and placing a capsule in the tube inserted one end in the pig's rectum. He huffed and puffed but was unable to blow the capsule up the tube into the pig. Seeing the vet's discomfiture, the jovial farmer snatched the tube from him, turned it end for end and with one mighty puff blew the capsule into the pig. The vet thanked the farmer profusely but asked: "Why did you turn the tube end for end?" The farmer glared at the vet and replied: "you don't think I wanted it in my mouth after it had been in yours, do you?"

Times Past

100 years: The New Year

The New Year was ushered in in quiet fashion. Hogmanay Day was a day of pouring rain, but exceedingly mild. The usual bands of children paraded the town in the early hours of the morning making the air ring with their long-drawn-out cries of "Hogmanay" accompanied by the music (?) of tin cans. The day was observed as a holiday by the mills, which was spent by stress of the weather mostly indoors. The evening proved rather better and there was a fairly large gathering at the 'clock' to give a parting cheer to the old, and a welcome to the new year. The crowd, however, was good natured and orderly, among the birth-hour past, quietness speedily settled on the town. On New Year's Day the Band paraded the town in the morning and the chief attractions were the carpet bowling tournament and a football match.

75 years: Ewes Rural Institute

At the monthly meeting of Ewes WRI held on Thursday 20th December, Mrs G Morrison, Langholm, demonstrated the making up of a shirt blouse so popular at present. Paper patterns of the blouse were cut out by Mrs W Morrison and distributed among the members. An interesting report on the National Conference in Edinburgh was given by Mrs J B Robertson, the delegate from Ewes. After tea was served by the hostesses for the evening - Miss Aitchison, Miss M Crozier and Mrs Craig - parcels from the Country Women's Association of Victoria, Australia, were opened. Members names were put in the hat and the contents of the parcels drawn for. The competition for this month a small Christmas present was won by Miss M Crozier, with Mrs J Scott, Bogfoot, second and Mrs Craig third.

50 years: New Year in Langholm

A bitterly cold night could be blamed for there being fewer than present in the Market Place to usher in New Year on Thursday night. Those who did brave the elements quickly acknowledged the brief handshakes and good wishes of their fellow revellers along with the traditional "nips" from numerous bottles and the square quickly emptied as the few dispersed on their first footing rounds. On New Year's morning the meet of Mr Harry Erskine's Holmwood Beagles in the Market Place brought out a few hardy spectators who stayed to listen to the Town Band play their way up High Street and round the town wishing "A guid New Year to ane an' a'" in the traditional manner. So far as we can ascertain the various dances on Old Year Night and New Year's Night were rather poorly attended and on the whole 1971 slipped into Langholm and district with very much less fuss and noise than usual.

25 years: Readers give thanks to Good Citizens

It was your opportunity to say thanks to local Good Citizens and we were delighted with the winners. For Langholm it was a whole family that won the award for their services to the community. The Scott family of Langholm have long been involved in all aspects of community work, but none more important to them than youth work. There were several nominations, all of which included John, Mary and daughter Shirley of High Street. John's involvement with youth work simply grew out of his own interest as a teenager in the youth Fellowship.



E&L Editor Joy Chatters presents the Eskdale award to Shirley, John and Mary Scott in January 1996

The E&L Gallery



A wintry Tinnis Hill and Copshaw road photographed by Tom Hutton of Langholm

Camera: Lumix TZ 90

Country Concerts on the Couch

THERE'S no need to go without seeing your favourite Irish Country stars at the Buccleuch Centre in Langholm this new year.

The centre has collaborated with promoter JMG Music Group to beam their fantastic musicians and singers straight into your own home.

There are two brilliant Concerts on the Couch shows this weekend with Gary Gamble, aka Daniel O'Double, and Keltic Storm.

Tomorrow Stephen Smyth, Elaine Boyle and Shauna McStravock will be your entertainment, while this Saturday enjoy The Legends of American Country Show with Joe Moore, Tracey McAuley and Anthony McBrien.

Keltic Storm are now one of the UK and Ireland's most popular and liveliest backing bands on the circuit.

They are a four-piece Country, Folk 'n Roll band and have three studio albums released to date.

Tickets are £7.50 for each show. They are available now from the PayPal link

www.paypal.me/KelticstormCD Please reference which show you want to view.

Join the fun and let them bring some live music to the comfort of your own home.

The concerts continue every Friday and Saturday this month.



Your host for the concerts, Gary Gamble



Honour for Copshaw author

A NATIVE of Newcastleton has been awarded an OBE in the New Year's honours list.

Broadcaster and writer Eric Robson, who lives in Wasdale, Cumbria and is honorary president of Cumbria Tourism was honoured for services to tourism.

Eric was, for many years, the host of Gardeners' Question Time which visited both Newcastleton and Langholm during his tenure.

He was passionate about the border country and collaborated with Alistair Moffat, historian and author, on an ITV series about walking the English Scottish border.

Quilter

Two women, who are known in Langholm, were also honoured.

Ann Hill, 70, of Dumfries, received a BEM for voluntary and charitable services to the community in Dumfriesshire.

Ann, who has done workshops with Textiles Eskdale, was behind the Hampden Park Quilt Challenge which took 3,000 quilters making 5,012 quilts four years to complete.

It raised £100,000 for Alzheimer Scotland, while raising awareness of dementia.

She is the quilter in residence for Alzheimer Scotland and has exhibited locally, nationally and internationally.

One of her COVID-19 projects is face coverings. Together with the People's Project, she made and organised the distribution of facemasks to keep people safe. Currently, more than 2,000 masks have been issued for free.

Patricia Holt of Annan was also awarded a BEM for services to poetry. She is the secretary of the Will H Ogilvie Memorial Trust.



The Will H Ogilvie Trust placed a cairn in the poet's memory at Harden Glen in the Borders

David Mundell, Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale MP, congratulated all the recipients from his constituency.

He said: "Every name on the list helps highlight the commitment, endeavour and public-spirited efforts of so many people in our area and beyond."

"Whatever the reason for the nomination, I know the New Year honours awarded here are all very well deserved."

It's time to browse the seed catalogues

It is either too cold or too wet to work outside. **By Helen Knowles**

HAPPY New Year and happy new lockdown.

If there was ever a good time to settle down indoors with a hot drink and a stack of seed catalogues, it's now.

I was struggling to get any gardening done in December because of the combination of short days and the poor weather.

The ground was just too wet and, with the soil in the borders so saturated, it would have done more harm than good to set foot on them.

Now everything has frozen solid so I'm limited to working in the greenhouses and poly-tunnels or browsing seed catalogues.

On the plus side we are now past the shortest day and, although it will still be a few weeks until there is a noticeable difference in day length, it's good to know we are heading towards the light and warmth of summer.

In the meantime, I'll spend these dark evenings planning what to grow this year.

There are the reliable old favourites I go back to year after year such as the hardy annual Sweet Pea 'Matucana', an old-fashioned sweet pea with very strongly-perfumed maroon and purple flowers, half-hardy annual Cosmos 'Psyche White' which has attractive, fresh green, ferny foliage and produces pure white, slightly-ruffled blooms and another half-hardy annual

Nasturtium 'Orchid Flame' which has rich red flowers which gradually change to yellow, giving the most wonderful effect as the colours blend and change on each bloom.

Sungold

I often try different varieties of veg but I always stick with Tomato 'Sungold'. It produces the most delicious orange super-sweet cherry-sized fruit.

It's always good to try something new so this year, in addition to the usual white cosmos, I'm going to try Cosmos 'Apricot Lemonade' which produces soft apricot-coloured flowers which fade to pale creamy yellow.

I'm used to growing cosmos so these shouldn't be too much of a challenge but I do have a poor track record with some of the brassicas, apart from kale and broccoli.

I'm going to give Brussels Sprouts another go and this time it's a new variety 'Red Bull' which, as the name implies, produces red sprouts which will look fantastic on the dinner table next Christmas.

I've been doing okay with cauliflowers and have been growing a variety called 'Snowball' which produces small, snowball-sized heads, although, for some reason, they were more ping-pong ball-sized last year.

They were ready for picking mid-summer and it would be nice to have more home-grown



Sweet Pea 'Matucana'

produce during the winter months so I'm trying a variety called 'Aalsmeer'.

Hardiness

It has good winter hardiness so I hope we will have not only larger cauliflowers but can also keep cropping them much later.

Every gardener has their Achilles' heel and mine is cucumbers, a plant so many people can grow so easily and so well, yet I am very good at killing them.

It doesn't matter whether I try growing them from seed or if I take on a perfectly healthy plant; a few days in my care and the result is the same.

A few years ago I got so fed up with the depressing sight of dying cucumber plants I stopped even trying to grow them but it's time to give it another go.

I'll try a smaller fruiting variety called 'Diva'. I just hope the plants don't live up to their name and are a little more easy-going.

My winter salad crops haven't been as successful as I had hoped. I think lack of light was the issue because the first batch became quite straggly.

It was certainly warm enough for them in the polytunnel but the short, overcast days in the

run-up to the solstice resulted in the plants becoming a bit drawn.

The second batch, sown slightly later, is doing much better and benefiting from the recent sunny days.

While there may not be a bumper crop of salad leaves in the next few weeks, there will be enough for us all to enjoy.

I've always been reluctant to grow crops under lights because of the running costs but it might be something to consider.

Our short winter days are definitely a limiting factor and the advances in technology have probably resulted in more affordable lights.

Another project for me once I've finished looking through the seed catalogues.



Cosmos 'Psyche White'



Nasturtium 'Orchid Flame'

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COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Canonbie & District Community Council

The next community council meeting is on
Thursday 14th January 2021
at 7.00 pm via Skype.
Members of the public wishing to join the meeting should email
carolamidwood@gmail.com
before 12noon on the 13th Jan when arrangements can be made to enable them to join the meeting.

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Empire de Maulde wins for Ewart

Horseracing

RACHAEL McDonald and James Ewart teamed up with Empire De Maulde to land the feature race on the behind-closed-doors card at Kelso last Tuesday.

The meeting had two inspections to ensure it was given the green light after overnight frost and the going was officially soft.

Sent off at 12-1, the Langholm raider appeared late on the scene to pip Gipsy Lee Rose by a length and three-quarters in the novices' limited handicap chase over two miles, six and a half furlongs.

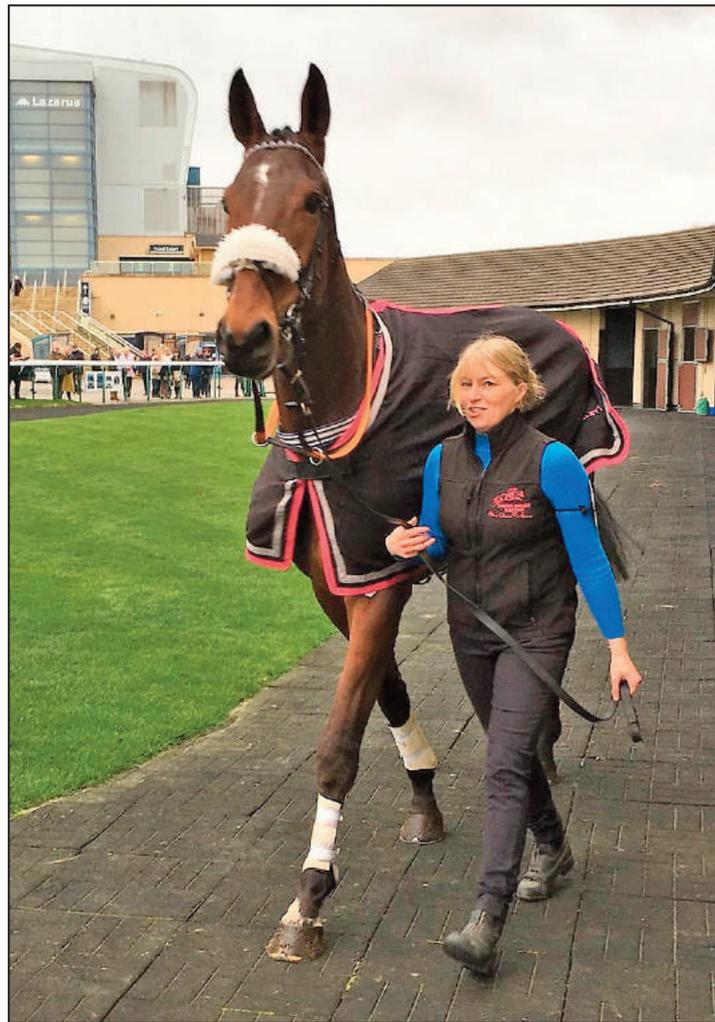
McDonald, who is based with the winning stable, said: "We were genuinely concerned about the soft and holding ground because it was only good when he won at Hexham last September.

"Otherwise, the race went to plan. I knew he is a horse you have to deliver quite late and I gave him a wide berth, too, because he can sometimes jump out to his left."

Sandy Thomson and Lucinda Russell were both on the mark with promising novices Deluxe Range and Bollingerandkrug, ridden by Derek Fox, with the latter lowering the colours of hot favourite Elysian Flame in the two-mile event.

In a race affected by omitted fences because of the low sun, Monsieur Co, trained by Keith Dalgleish, reeled in Cedar Hill in the closing stages of the two-mile, one-furlong handicap chase.

A fifth Scottish winner came in the shape of the Sandy Forster-trained Charlie Snow Angel who held off Scoop The Pot by a neck in the concluding handicap chase for conditional jockeys and amateur riders.



Empire de Maulde wind the feature race, behind closed doors, at Kelso on Tuesday

Carl wins the Whisky Run



Caption: Carl Heaven with his whisky prize for winning the New Year run. He is being congratulated by the 2003 cornet Ian Earsman and one of the organisers, Mike Tinker.

Sports Nostalgia

From E&L 8th January 2004

Thirty-eight runners braved the tricky under-foot conditions of snow, ice and slush for the annual New Year's Day whisky run around Langholm.

The fastest this year in the remarkable time of 48 mins 24 secs for the eight-mile course was Carl Heaven of Annan & District AC.

Langholm's Charlie Borthwick, who runs for Border Harriers, was second in 58.30 and third equal were Roger Irving of Langholm and Mark Whitelaw of Annan in 58.34.

The run was organised by Charlie Graham, who was helped by Mike Tinker and his wife, Alison. A number of walkers also took part.

The bottle of whisky for fastest

time was presented by Mike Tinker to Carl Heaven and the whisky raffle for the competitors was won by Ray Baird.

A surplus of £35 will be given to Age Concern Langholm.

Other times and placings: 5 Wattie Borthwick 60.00; 6 Jim Buchanan Annan & District 66.36; 7 Ian Warwick 68.00; 8 David Little 70.00; 9= Ray Baird, Nigel Priestley (Lockerbie), Owen Brown 71.00; 12 Caroline Legg Annan & District 71.2; 13 Paul Warwick 79.00; 14= Robert Hogg, Robert Warwick, Carol Johnstone 79.00; 17 Billy Graham 80.00; 18 Rob Mitchell (Hawick) 92.00.

The Langholm Five Hills race will take place this year on Saturday, April 3, when runners and walkers are welcome to have a go.

Morebattle race moves to March

Horseracing

THE £75,000 bet365 Morebattle Hurdle will move from mid-February to become the headline event on a bumper £209,000 programme at Kelso Racecourse on Saturday, March 6.

The seven-race card already features the bet365 Premier Novices Hurdle (Grade 2) and the bet365 Premier Steeplechase (Listed Race).

In addition to the increased prize fund the winner of the Morebattle Hurdle will be eligible for a bonus of £100,000 if going on to win any race at the 2021 Cheltenham Festival.

Four of the seven races scheduled on March 6, all of which will be sponsored for the first time by bet365, will be broadcast live on ITV1.

Pat Cooney, spokesman for bet365,

said: "We are delighted to sponsor Kelso at their most valuable meeting and can expect a very competitive day's racing.

"The £100,000 bonus will really add interest to what will be an exciting race and we look forward to having a talent-packed card."

Planning

Jonathan Garratt, managing director, added: "The Morebattle reverted to being a handicap hurdle last season and this development has been a long time in the planning.

"We are indebted to our sponsor bet365 for its generous support which has helped to bring the idea to fruition.

"Our intention is to create a flagship day which will become a major feature of the National Hunt season in 2021 and for many years to come."

On 2020, a year in which the race-course was forced to abandon 40 per cent of its fixtures and run all but two race days behind closed doors, Garratt said: "While it has been difficult for all businesses in all sectors, we have been determined to maintain prize money and as much business activity as possible.

"We know how vital it is to the wider racing industry, the rural economy and our local supply chain.

"We remain optimistic that we will be able to get some spectators back in the first half of 2021, even if the number is very restricted at first.

"In the meantime, we are really grateful for the financial underpinning provided by the Levy Board during the last few months and we will continue to do everything we can to keep the ball rolling.

"It's essential that we keep owners and trainers in the game so we have horses to enjoy when racegoers return to the track."

There are 13 days between the Morebattle Hurdle and the final day of the Cheltenham Festival, a gap which was bridged by Master Tern when completing the Premier Hurdle/County Hurdle double in 2000.

Large Action won the Morebattle as a handicap hurdle in 1995 before going on to finish second in the Champion Hurdle to Morley Street.

The race was staged as a conditions event for 10 years between 2010 and 2019 and Peddlers Cross accomplished the same feat as Large Action in 2011, while 2019 winner We Have A Dream was second in the County Hurdle, beaten by one and a half lengths.

Simonsig won the Morebattle, with a BHA rating of 146, as a novice hurdler before going on to win the Neptune Investment Novices Hurdle at the Cheltenham Festival in 2012.

E&L SPORT

