



the **BLACK** *bitch*

Linlithgow's news by Linlithgow people

Perambulation of the Marches p6

Your invitation to this year's walk round the town's old boundaries.



Music from North American students p9



Get ready for Jousting Spectacular p21



Party at the Palace & Gala Day p23

PLUS

Folk fae Lithgae, Linlithgow Primary School, Rotary Club of Linlithgow Grange, Book review, New Hopetoun Gardens, Meet the Halberdiers, Linlithgow 10K Race...



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What's On....

June

Fri 3 9pm - 5pm, Exhibition:
James Cumming RSA (*all June*)

10:30am, Recitals for Wrigglers

7:30pm - 10:00pm, Dance:
Eve of Marches

Sat 4 10am - 12pm, Burgh Beautiful
Plant Sale

1pm - 2pm, Linlithgow 2nd XI vs
Glenrothes 2nd XI

2pm - 4:30pm, Canal Boat Trips

2pm - 4:30pm, Canal Cruise:
Avon Aqueduct

6:30pm - 7:30pm, 1st Deacons Night

7:30pm - 9:30pm, Linlithgow Jazz -
Swing 2016

9pm, Karaoke at the Star & Garter

Sun 5 2pm - 4:30pm, Canal Boat Trips

2pm - 4:30pm, Canal Cruise:
Avon Aqueduct

5pm - 9:00pm, Open Mic at
the Star & Garter

Mon 6 7:30pm - 9:00pm,
Language Class: Hello to Spanish

Tue 7 7:30pm - 9:30pm, Linlithgow
Speakers Club Meeting

Wed 8 7pm - 9:00pm
Perambulation of the Marches

7:30pm - 9:30pm, String Orchestra
Rehearsals

Fri 10 1pm - 2:00pm
Cryn of the Marches

7:30pm - 10:00pm, Provosts Dinner

Sat 11 1pm - 2:00pm,
Linlithgow 1st XI vs Gala

2pm - 4:30pm Canal Boat Trips

2pm - 4:30pm Canal Cruise:
Avon Aqueduct

6:30pm - 7:30pm, 2nd Deacons night

9pm, Karaoke at the Star & Garter

Sun 12 10am - 12.30, 2pm - 4pm,
Blood Transfusion Service

2pm - 4:30pm, Canal Boat Trips

2:00pm - 4:30pm, Canal Cruise:
Avon Aqueduct

2pm - 4pm, Folk Session -
Black Bitch

5pm - 9pm, Open Mic at the
Star & Garter

Mon 13 2pm - 4pm, 5:30pm - 8pm,
Blood Transfusion Service

Tue 14 5am - 6pm
Riding of the Marches

Sat 18 1pm - 2pm, Linlithgow 2nd XI
vs Selkirk

2pm - 4:30pm, Canal Boat Trips

2pm - 4:30pm, Canal Cruise:
Avon Aqueduct

9pm, Karaoke at the Star & Garter

Sun 19 2pm - 4:30pm
Canal Boat Trips

2pm - 4:30pm, Canal Cruise:
Avon Aqueduct

5pm - 9pm, Open Mic at the
Star & Garter

Tue 21 7:30pm - 9:30pm, Linlithgow
Speakers Club Meeting

Sat 25 11am - 5:00pm, Burgh
Beautiful's Inviting Gardens.

1pm - 2pm, Linlithgow 1st XI vs
Musselburgh

2pm - 4:30pm, Canal Boat Trips

2pm - 4:30pm, Canal Cruise:
Avon Aqueduct

9pm, Karaoke at the Star & Garter

Sun 26 12:30pm - 6:00pm
Falkirk Wheel Cruise

1pm - 5:00pm, Burgh Beautiful's
Inviting Gardens.

2pm - 4:30pm, Canal Boat Trips

2pm - 4:30pm, Canal Cruise:
Avon Aqueduct

3:30pm - 4:30pm,
Hopetoun Grounds Walk

5pm - 9pm, Open Mic at the
Star & Garter

Tue 28 7:30pm - 9:30pm
Community Council

LINLITHGOW RAMBLERS WALKING CALENDAR



With so many exciting walks
pencilled in across the monthly
calendar why not check out
www.linlithgow.com for details
on the type of walk, duration
and your meeting point.

Want to help?
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for volunteers....*

Email: on.a.lead@gmail.com

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For more details and more events
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Contact the Black Bitch

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Editor: David Tait, 07767 713024



LINLITHGOW & LINLITHGOW BRIDGE COMMUNITY COUNCIL INTERIM ELECTION



Your Community Council needs You – Get involved. Come and join us...

The last four-yearly election of members to serve on Linlithgow & Linlithgow Bridge Community Council took place in October 2013. To allow more community members to join an interim election is being held.

If you are interested in joining, all you have to do is complete a short nomination form. You will need to be on the electoral register in the Linlithgow & Linlithgow Bridge community council area.

Request a nomination form from our secretary Aileen aileen.boyle@llbcc.org.uk

**Remember
the closing date
for nominations
is 12 noon
on Monday
20 June 2016.**



Dr John Kelly
“leads on
planning”



Verena
“on health in
the community”



Ian
“the money man”

Aileen
“our brilliant
secretary”



The Linlithgow Community Magazine (aka The Black Bitch) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO): SCO42542

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Folk Fae Lithgae

LIZ PARK

*Na, na ma freen, ye needna fear
Nor need ye fret or worry
The Marches Day, or ah'm mista'en
Will no fade in a hurry
Mair modern fete ye nicht weel plan
Rear big, triumphal arches
An' captivate youth's fancy, but
Auld Lithca likes the Marches!*

To say that life-long Linlithgow resident Liz Park likes the Marches is an understatement. As a great enthusiast for the town's historic traditions, the Marches is Liz's huge passion and her enthusiasm is infectious.

"I just think it's a magical day for the town", she told me, in a voice filled with emotion.

Born at 5 Hamilton Place on May 17th 1959, Liz is a Black Bitch, the daughter of a Black Bitch and has been married to a Black Bitch for thirty six years. She has been employed by the Royal Bank almost since leaving school.

Liz recalls going to the 5am awakening by the fluters on Marches morning from a very early age:

"I must have been about five years old when my elder sister, Jeanette, first took me and I have been there every year since. I encourage as many people I know with young kids to get them out there. They are the future."

Liz is currently in her second year as middle Bailie on the Deacons' Court, the body which organises the Marches, and she will make history in five years time when she becomes Linlithgow's first-ever female Provost.

She first joined the Deacons' Court in 1996, as the Deacon for the Gala Day, and became a full member the following year. Fourteen years later, having chaired the two main committees, Liz was elected as the first woman Bailie and

began what is effectively a nine-year apprenticeship to become Linlithgow's First Citizen on Marches Day.

"I was absolutely blown away", she said, "I just sat there in utter shock. Jokingly, I said I had always wanted to go along the High Street in a carriage, but I never thought I would be doing it in robes."

"I didn't join the Deacons' Court to become a Bailie or the Provost", she declared, "I joined it to do what I could for the Marches and to keep it alive for future generations. I was honoured that the members had such confidence in me"

In their distinctive red ermine-trimmed robes, the Provost and three Bailies are very much the figureheads of the Deacons' Court and with their knowledge and experience, are constantly on hand to offer advice and support to the other members.

"On the Court, we always say that our Marches Day is a working day", said Liz. "We are there to look after the various guests and, fundamentally, to ensure that the Marches tradition is upheld properly and with respect."

Liz is delighted that, in more recent times, the Marches has cleaned up its act considerably and has become much more of a family event for all ages.

"The Marches is for everybody and we are trying hard to encourage as many people as possible to take part, from the children at the local primary schools to the residents of the Brae Court sheltered housing", she told me.

The next few weeks will be fairly hectic for Liz and her colleagues and there will be no time for her favourite hobbies of camping and caravanning. However, all the hard work will be worth it when she dons her robes for the fifth time at the Marches on Tuesday June 14th.

Murdoch Kennedy





PERAMBULATION OF THE MARCHES – LINLITHGOW



The evening of Wednesday 8 June 2016, will see a few of the guid folk of Linlithgow, and maybe a few visitors too, taking part in the third Perambulation of the Marches, organised by Linlithgow Civic Trust. All are invited to this year's walk round the town's old boundaries.

So, what is it all about I hear you ask?

Linlithgow is one of Scotland's most ancient Royal Burghs, and a tradition dating back to the 16th century is the annual Riding of the Marches, on the first Tuesday after the second Thursday in June. This involves the inspection of the extremities of the Burgh's interests, including those at Linlithgow Bridge and at the port of Blackness.

The Perambulation of the Marches complements the official Riding of the Marches, giving townsfolk and visitors alike the opportunity to walk the line of a recorded boundary (or 'marches') of the Royal Burgh - in this case the Parliamentary boundary as established in 1832.

The Perambulation of the Marches is an event open to all. It is, of course, a walk which can be enjoyed at any time.

The walk is four miles (6.5 km) long, and passes by seven out of eight march stones (one original, and seven replicas installed in 2014) marking the old boundary. The walk passes many features of historical and architectural interest.

The Perambulation of the Marches starts at 7pm at March Stone No. 1 in front of St Ninian's Craigmailen Church in Falkirk Road, and proceeds in a clockwise direction round the route. The walk is led by the Provost, flagbearers and halberdiers of the Deacon's Court, plus the Town Crier. At each march stone on the route, a standard is mounted on the stone and a piper plays.

The Linlithgow Union Canal Society (LUCS) will be providing refreshments at the Canal Centre (payment by voluntary donation), and the Linlithgow Reed Band will be there to provide some light entertainment.

The Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Gala Queen and her Chief lady-in-waiting will be present to welcome the participants in Rosemount Park.

Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council has produced a detailed booklet on the route of the Perambulation, and council members

will distribute free copies at the start of the walk. In the meantime, copies can also be obtained at the Burgh Halls, the library and elsewhere in the town. **The route map and description can also be found at www.linlithgow.com/perambulation_trail.htm.**

It perhaps goes without saying, but participants should take great care at all road crossings, as road traffic will be moving as normal. Please co-operate fully with the volunteer stewards who will be on hand to assist at key locations. Participants should also be aware that there are steps in two locations, one set particularly steep.

At the end, certificates will be issued in the back function room of the West Port Hotel (while stocks last) to those who have completed the entire walk, and where well-earned refreshments can also be purchased.

Anyone interested in the other activities of Linlithgow Civic Trust should visit their website at www.lct.org.uk.

Allan Robertson

**Wed
8
June**



Rotary Club of Linlithgow Grange

The Rotary Club of Linlithgow Grange 25 Years Young

The Rotary Club of Linlithgow Grange began in February 1991 with an informal meeting in the West Port Hotel at the instigation of our 'mother club' the Rotary Club of Linlithgow & Bo'ness. It, together with George Montgomery, the district extension officer, gave valuable assistance and encouragement in the establishment of the club.

The interim Rotary Club was set up in June 1991 and the first officers of the club were elected, with Sandy Stewart being our founder president. In that month our charter from Rotary International was granted. It was presented to us in September 1991, at a dinner in the Inchyra Grange Hotel, when 28 founder members became Rotarians and were presented with their badges. Of those, seven are still actively involved as members namely Tom Brown, Jim Chapman, Eddie Crawley, Gerry Keating, Roy Redwood, Thom Riddell and George Stewart. Our first new member was Jack Archibald, who transferred from Haddington Rotary Club, who went on to be our president in 2002-2003.

In 1999-2000 we inducted our first lady member Kate Keter, who was our president in 2004-05 and in 2013-14, was the first woman to be governor of our district. The club had the onerous but enjoyable challenge of organising and running the district conference at Ayr Racecourse in October 2013.

Over the years the club has been involved in a wide variety of social and fundraising activities including canal trips, barbecues, race nights, concerts, wine tastings, musical evenings, school essay competitions, primary school quizzes, auctions, golf and curling. We even played cricket at Boghall on

a few occasions. We are also involved with sponsoring pupils to attend Rotary youth leadership courses and we support sports bursaries for aspiring young sports people.

For more than 15 years we organised the fiddlers rally around Marches week, which provided entertainment for older members of the community as well as raising considerable funds for local and international charities. Since 2001 we have run an annual golf tournament in August with invaluable assistance from Linlithgow Golf Club. Each year the president nominates a major charity to receive the bulk of funds raised from this. In 2015 this was St Columba's Hospice and this year president elect John Reid has chosen Scottish Disability Sport. **We are always very grateful for the support and assistance given by local businesses and neighbouring golf clubs. To date this event alone has raised around £60,000 for our charities and we look forward to having another successful outing on 29th August 2016.**

We will celebrate our 25th Anniversary on 16 September 2016 at a charter dinner to be held at Beancross restaurant, Grangemouth.

Many thanks to all our previous members who will be invited to purchase a ticket for the event. Our remaining 44 members look forward to the next 25 years.

Roy Redwood
(President 1992-93)

Eddie Crawley
(President 1999-2000)

Photo caption:

The founder members of the Rotary club of Linlithgow Grange, September 1991

Back Row:

Hector Woodhouse, John Cadzow, Ian Morrison, Ian Bainton, Eddie Crawley, Harry Ness, Douglas Cook, Neil Millar, Jim Cowie.

Middle Row:

Billy Aitken, George Stewart, John Barrett, Stuart Young, Tom Brown, Duncan Meek, Thom Riddell, Bob Twiggins, Bill Millar, Jim Clark, Mike Boyle.

Front Row:

Alex Linkston, George Montgomery (District Extension Officer) Sandy Stewart, Roy Redwood, Colin Galloway

Absent from Photo: Jim Chapman, Gerry Keating, Archie Rose.

**Fri
16
Sept**



STRING PLAYERS WANTED: DUST OFF THE COBWEBS AND JOIN LINLITHGOW'S VERY OWN LSO!



Linlithgow is a very musical town – the Reed Band, RFC male voice choir, Ladies Choir, LAMP, the Folk Festival, the Jazz Club and a fantastic music department at the Academy. But until now there's not been a group for adult string players.

The aptly named **Linlithgow String Orchestra** or LSO (a great acronym for any budding orchestra) does exactly what it says on the tin. It's a string orchestra, based in Linlithgow, and looking for string players aged 18+, minimum standard Grade 5, to join with a view to putting on regular concerts.

As a string player, I've always felt that it was a shame Linlithgow didn't have an adult orchestra and I wanted to see if others felt the same way – back in March this year I posted a message on the Linlithgow Facebook page to gauge interest and the response was really encouraging. Within a matter of hours a closed Facebook group was created and musicians from Linlithgow and the surrounding areas started to join. By the end of April a committee was formed and dates for our first rehearsals were set.

It's all moved very quickly due to the motivation of the committee members - we're really fortunate to have **Lucy Creanor** from the music department at the Academy on board as our interim conductor and voice of experience.

Wed
8
June

This is such an exciting new venture for Linlithgow and we hope that the community can be involved in our evolution – particularly small businesses looking for sponsorship opportunities or local venues/charities who want to host our concerts.

LSO have a 'come and play' rehearsal on **Wednesday 8 June, 7.30pm**, in St Peter's Episcopal Church on the High Street. We will be easing players who may not have picked up their instruments for a while gently back into orchestral playing. If you want to come along, either let us know in advance or just turn up on the night – with a music stand if you have one.

If you are interested in playing, would like details about forthcoming concerts or would like to contact the group, email: linlithgowstringorchestra@gmail.com or find us at www.linlithgowstringorchestra.org or on Facebook.

Helen Greig



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LINLITHGOW WELCOMES STUDENTS FROM NORTH AMERICA

Linlithgow Academy
Saturday 9th July 2016
at 7.30 pm



Look out for an evening of high energy music, brought to Linlithgow by Music School students from North America! Saturday 9 July is the date for your diary.

Earlier this year Linlithgow Arts Guild received an enquiry from "Culture Path", a promoter of international educational and performance tours, based in Calgary, Alberta. The enquiry came through their Scottish Agent, who was aware that Linlithgow has a thriving Arts scene, and asked whether Linlithgow Arts Guild could organise a concert for the touring group. The 90 students will be based at Stirling University for a week, and performing in the evenings under the banner of "Stirling Bridge International Arts Festival" at venues ranging from St Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh and venues in Glasgow and Ayr, to Perth Concert Hall.

Keen to bring the event to Linlithgow, the Arts Guild felt that this should be an event for all of the town, and enlisted the joint support of Linlithgow Grange Rotary Club and Linlithgow Folk Festival Association. We hope that the whole of Linlithgow will live up to its reputation for the Arts and for being "Kinde to Strangers" in welcoming these visitors to our town.

The visitors who will perform on 9 July are:

STRINGENDO

A school for string players in Michigan. They focus from a very early age on learning to play by ear, and they often dance while playing. These dynamic young performers are much sought after in their home area and will show how much fun you can have while learning music theory and performance! Some parents who picked up on the enjoyment and have now become their back-up band, known as the "Papas and Mamas." Their programme includes a potpourri of North American music including bluegrass, western swing, blues and jazz.

BRITISH COLUMBIA BOYS CHOIR

A large organisation which has won international acclaim on tour in Europe, Australia, New Zealand, China, South America and of course at home in Canada. Singing in 4 parts the tour party will range in age from 12 to 24 and are based in the Vancouver area. They have made over 20 recordings. Their music extends from Medieval through classical and popular song to contemporary pieces.

CHELSEA HOUSE ORCHESTRA

"Celtic with a Kick" from Michigan includes string instruments, flutes and clarinets as well as djembe and cajon. The music of these senior high school pupils is lively, featuring Scottish and

Irish traditions, Celtic renditions of American folk songs, with a little Hungarian and Rock and Roll thrown in for fun.

It is hoped that the town will turn out to make this an evening to remember for the performers. Tickets (£10, concessions £8, students £5) are available at Linlithgow Burgh Halls, The Line Gallery, Far from the Madding Crowd, and online at www.LinlithgowArtsGuild.co.uk

David Lunt

Submitted for Linlithgow Arts Guild, Linlithgow Grange Rotary Club and Linlithgow Folk Festival Association by David Lunt
t. 01506 842628 m. 07821 017099
Davidalunt@aol.com



35 IS THE GARDENER'S BIRTHDAY!

Since 2004 we have been practising what we preach about 35 being the Gardener's Birthday. At the start of the new century we realised that sometime around their 35th birthday folk were most likely to discover gardening. By then they might have started a family, have their own home with outside space and could even have stopped burning the candle at both ends!



We had little success in getting the rest of the world to adopt 35 as the Gardener's Birthday despite our best efforts. So in 2004 we started offering 35-year-olds a £35 Voucher to spend at our garden centre. Parents, siblings, friends and the 35-year-olds themselves wrote in asking for vouchers and so the 'Class of 1969' joined us as serious customers. Since then we have given away hundreds of Birthday Vouchers, but also gained loyal and enthusiastic young customers.



Nearly everyone who wrote in agreed that it was around that age that the gardening bug had kicked in – we were so delighted that our theory was proving correct. Our 35-year-olds are into all sorts of different gardening activities but a common theme is that they all enjoy being in their gardens and find gardening a great way to express their creative skills as well escape the hubbub of 21st century living.



Those with young kids, like our grandchildren, keep planting things with them. Dougal's experience is what they most want to do is water things, including Grumpy, their grandfather. Many grandparents are

having great fun introducing their grandchildren to miniature gardening, and it seems that 35-year-old mums can get quite addicted to this too.

Growing their own food, especially herbs and salad crops, remains an essential activity for most of them and we believe that these 35-year-olds are really into cooking as well. Not for them are instant meals and takeaways. They are as creative in the kitchen as they are in the garden.

One thing is really holding some of them back: having to rent their homes because of house prices and the high deposits required for mortgages can make them reluctant to invest in their landlord's garden. We are promoting the Removable Garden this season: wall and floor coverings, seating and planting containers that can all be taken with you when you move on. You can still enjoy a stylish garden, but it is also removable.

If you are 35, or know someone who is, write in with their name, address and date of birth and we will send them a £35 Gardener's Birthday Voucher! (info@newhopetoungardens.co.uk)

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and Lesley Watson**



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'Carefree Plants for Pollinators'

NEW
HOPETOUN
GARDENS

GARDEN PARTY FOR THE QUEEN AT ST MICHAEL'S

On Sunday 12 June there will be an unusual one-off event in Linlithgow. A Garden Party will take place in St Michael's Parish Church (in the Manse grounds and the Kirk Hall) to celebrate the 90th birthday of The Queen, who is Royal Patron of the Society of Friends of St Michael's. Guests will include the Deputy Lord Lieutenant and local councilors.

The Queen is Patron of some 600 organisations and charities, large and small, throughout the country. They have all been invited to take part in a huge event, the Patron's Lunch, in the Mall, London, on that day.

Organisations, like the Friends, which are not able to attend, have been invited to celebrate in their local community, hence the Garden Party in Linlithgow.

Friends of St Michael's was founded as an act of faith and hope during the dark days of World War II, its aims being the care of the church and its further adornment.

Like the adjacent palace, St Michael's has held a central position in the town and the community for centuries. Membership of the friends is not limited to church members - anyone 'who holds the Church in their affection and is willing to take some part in its loving care' can join: leaflets are available inside the church or see www.stmichaels-parish.org.uk.

The Queen herself is no stranger to St Michael's, having visited in 1955 and again in 1989. She has contributed to the church with suggestions about its lighting and the gift of a silver alms dish which is used every Sunday.



Her statue, carved by John Donaldson, occupies one of four niches on the pulpit, in company of Queen Margaret, Mary Queen of Scots and Queen Victoria.

Tickets are available for the Garden Party on 12 June (2-4pm), priced £10 each, from the Secretary, Gillian Grant, on 01506 844611.

Gillian Grant

Sun
12
June



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ENJOY A WHISTLE STOP TOUR OF OUR ROYAL BURGH

Sun
25
Sept

Linlithgow 10k race

aerial photograph by Alan Corrie



There cannot be many races that follow a route as steeped in history as that of the Linlithgow 10k.

> **1.** Standing proudly at the town centre is the Burgh Halls, where runners register and pick up their bib numbers on race day. The building, renovated and rejuvenated over the years, was primarily erected as the Town House in the late 17th century replacing the tollbooth that had been demolished in 1650 by Oliver Cromwell's troops. It was home to Linlithgow Town Council and has also housed the Sheriff Court and the town jail. It was gutted by fire in 1847; the ensuing restoration was driven largely by Provost Adam Dawson. The steps were a 1906 addition, replacing a series of arches which would have given protection for the town's market stalls. The pre-race brief would be delivered from these steps.

> **2.** We all know Linlithgow is a pretty safe place these days, however in 1570

James Stewart, 1st Earl of Moray and at the time Regent of Scotland, became the first head of state to be assassinated by firearm, shot in a period of political unrest by James Douglas Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh. Hamilton fled to exile in France and was later to be found guilty of murder and treason in his absence. As runners head towards the start line, they can look left towards the old Sheriff Court building (now a boutique hotel, the Court Residence) to see the Regent Moray tablet recording the ghastly deed. The start of the race (by klaxon, rather than gun) is almost exactly where the assassination took place.

> **3.** As runners reach 100 metres they pass the town's museum, Annet House. The house, originally private but now owned by West Lothian Council, was built in the 18th century. The museum tells the story of the town's industries such as leather, linen, distilling and chemicals as well as a

display dedicated to Mary Queen of Scots. The rigg at the back has been redesigned to demonstrate how it may have looked when the house was built – with a mixture of plants, vegetables and fruits. There is also a statue of Mary Queen of Scots by Scottish sculptor, Alan Herriot.

> **4.** At 150 metres is the first place of worship on the route, St Peter's Scottish Episcopal Church. This Byzantine style building was first dedicated to St Mildred in 1928 by George Walpole, Bishop of Edinburgh, who assisted the establishment of the church as a memorial to his wife, Mildred. It was rededicated to St Peter in 1978.

> **5.** Just before the 2km mark, stands the bench where old Jock Mason's Romany caravan stood back in the 1960s. The inscription on the bench is the phrase "cuckoo my love" – how Jock would greet passers-by.



Less mention is made of the birth of her father, James V, born there in 1512. There have been unhappy moments too, such as when Queen Margaret waited in vain in 1513 at a high lookout post hoping to catch sight of her husband James IV returning. Sadly he had been killed at Flodden, becoming the last British monarch to be slain in battle.

The footpath to the North of Linlithgow Loch transforms to a running track between 4.5k to 6.5k. The loch is really just a big puddle, having been formed by a large block of ice from a glacier following the last Ice Age and during a harsh winter the loch can freeze over again. The Grand Match, an outdoor curling game between two teams representing the North and South of Scotland, was held here in 1848, with 5000 spectators turning up to watch the 680 curlers on the day. *Thank you to Linlithgow resident Alan Corrie for the aerial photograph.*

> **11.** St Michael's Roman Catholic Church greets athletes at around 9.5km. The church was dedicated in 1993; for some time before that, however, the enthusiasm for a permanent place of worship by Linlithgow's Roman Catholic community led to its being used whilst only partially completed. During this time, it was particularly popular with the migrant Irish workers seeking employment in West Lothian's expanding shale oil industry.

> **12.** Having outgrown its previous home at the Longcroft Hall, Linlithgow Academy moved to the Low Port in 1902, with 102 pupils taking the short walk from West Port. The academy continued to thrive and in 1968 moved to its current location in town, and now has 1200-1300 pupils. The original building now houses Low Port Primary School.

> **13.** If there was a competition for finest finishing area the Linlithgow 10k would certainly be rated alongside the best. The palace has connections to the Jacobite rebellion having been visited by Charles Edward Stuart (more often referred to as Bonnie Prince Charlie) in 1745. The following year, his pursuer, the Duke of Cumberland also stayed here. The Palace was seen ablaze (it is not known whether this was deliberate or not) as the Duke and his troops left and has remained roofless ever since.



> **6.** From 2k to 3k competitors will be running on the John Muir Way, a 215km coast to coast route from Helensburgh in the west to Muir's birthplace, Dunbar, in the east. The route, linking up many existing paths and trails, was designed to connect Muir's birthplace to Scotland's first national park, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs and the town from which he departed for America. It was opened in 2014, the centenary of his death. A committed preservationist, Muir gained his fame in America where he helped establish a number of national parks.

> **7.** At 4km runners pass St Ninian's Craigmailen church. It was built in 1874 as the Free Church, but its unusual name dates back to the first half of the 18th century when worshippers met regularly at Craigmailen Farm, 4 miles to the south of the town.

> **8.** A few steps on is the Longcroft Hall,

built in 1869 as an infant school however on 8th January 1894 it opened its doors as a secondary school with 13 registered girls and 4 boys. By October that year the numbers attending had grown to 65. The building is now the church hall of St Ninian's Craigmailen.

> **9.** On the other side of the road stands Katie Wearie's tree. This tree is actually the third generation, having been grown from a sapling taken from the second tree, itself nurtured in a similar fashion from the original willow of Katie's time. Katie was a 19th-century drover who regularly stopped here on her way to market and to drink from the well formerly there. The statue (2011) also doubles as a sundial.

> **10.** As the competitors reach lochside they will catch their first view of Linlithgow Palace which, as most townsfolk will know, is famous as the birthplace in 1542 of Mary Queen of Scots.

Entries to the 10k are still available via <http://www.entrycentral.com/CCW-Linlithgow-10k-2016>. Details for the Junior Fun Run can be found at <http://www.linlithgowac.org.uk/linlithgowfunrun>.

Graeme Lawson
Race Director, Linlithgow 10k



HALBERDIERS ARE ALL SET FOR THE MARCHES



OYEZ! OYEZ! OYEZ!

Linlithgow Halberdiers, Colin Johnston and George Wilson, are really excited about this year's Riding of the Marches celebrations.

When I met up with them recently, they told me, "We're counting down!". Colin (44) is approaching his fourteenth Marches as Halberdier, while George (65) will this year notch up his tenth appearance in the distinctive black coat with big gold buttons, top hat, and carrying the menacing-looking Halberd.

The main official role of the Halberdiers is to be the ceremonial guard for the Provost on Marches Day and to accompany the Town Crier at the Crying of the Marches on the preceding Friday. These days, the job also includes turning out at the two Deacons' Nights and the Gala Day, as well as the recently-established Perambulation on the Wednesday before Marches Day. The new duties can have a down side, as George explained:

"The problem is getting the heavy serge coats dried if it's raining. They smell like dogs when they're soaking wet. After one Deacons' Night, we had to get the hairdryers out to make sure they would be ready for the next outing."

The Halberdiers and Town Crier also accompany the Provost and Bailies of the Deacons' Court when they visit local Primary schools in the weeks before the Marches. Colin told me this is something they really enjoy:

"It's great going round the schools. The children learn all about the Marches

and how they can take part in the procession. They are also encouraged to turn out at the Crying of the Marches, which for us is really the highlight of the whole thing. We remember how we used to run down from school at lunch time to take part in it ourselves."

In a ceremony which is often described as Linlithgow's very own version of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, the schoolchildren follow the Town Crier, punctuating his summons of OYEZ! OYEZ! OYEZ! with hearty shouts of "Half a pound o rotten cheese!"

"We now have a new custom", George explained, *"where we finish up at Linlithgow Bridge school and are welcomed by young musicians from the various schools in the town."*

Colin and George have lived in Linlithgow all their lives and the latter can trace his roots in the town back to 1765. They are both steeped in the Marches and all it stands for. Colin took part with the Boys' Brigade and played in the procession with Bathgate Band.

George, for many years, was the driving force behind the decorated vehicles organised by the local Cricket Club. Always with a topical theme, these often proved quite controversial. George still helps out with the float from the 41 Club and aims to return to their ranks

at the Marches when his stint as Halberdier is over.

On Marches Day itself, the Halberdiers greet the guests at the Provost's breakfast at the Burgh Halls, ride on the horse-drawn carriages and help to dispense hospitality at Linlithgow Bridge and Blackness. Over the years, they have both developed their own very personal Marches traditions. Colin meets up with his brother Derek before the 5am flutes for a dram at their Dad's graveside, while George and his extended family get together at the end of the day for a fish supper down by the Loch.

Both Halberdiers wish the townspeople a good Marches and, given that they wear heavy coats and top hats, a dry, but cool day!

Murdoch Kennedy



PROVOST JIM GIVES MARCHES DETAILS

LONG LIVE THE MARCHES



Linlithgow's Provost, Jim Carlin, has announced details of the arrangements for this year's Riding of the Marches on Tuesday June 14.

In time-honoured fashion, the big day will get underway at 5am, with the awakening by the fluters and drummer. When the early-morning procession arrives at the Provost's house on Clarendon Road, **Jill Old** will follow in her Father's footsteps and deliver the toast to My Lord Provost. The Marches breakfast for the Civic Party takes place at the Burgh Halls at 8.15 am. **Rev Richard Houston** will say Grace and the reply to the Provost's welcome will be given by Shetland native, **Charles Rosie**, who is well versed in the rituals of the Up Helly Aa festival.

Ten bands will be appearing, including the same military band as performed last year. Leading the way will be our very own Reed Band, celebrating its 60th anniversary. Supporting them will be Unison Kinneil and Bo'ness & Carriden, as well as Bathgate Band and West Lothian Schools Pipe Band. Completing the line-up are Alloa Bowmar Pipe Band, Tulliallan Pipes & Drums, Forth Bridges Accordion Band and Sambalistic.

When the procession reaches the Brig around 11.30am, well-known local restaurateur **Acki Mohammed** of "Ashmaan Tandoori" will propose the Toast to the Brig and West Lothian Provost, **Tom Kerr** will reply. Senior Bailie **John Cunningham** will propose the Toast to

the Dyers and other Fraternities and the new Deacon of the Dyers, **Crawford Flint**; will reply. Crawford is the third generation of his family to hold this office.

At Blackness, Junior Bailie **Derek Green** will toast the Baron Bailie and the principal speaker at the marquee lunch is Provost of Fife Council, **Jim Leishman** MBE

For the children, Linlithgow & Bo'ness Rotary are once again sponsoring the decorated bicycle competition (Pop Brown Trophy) and book tokens worth £100, £50 and £25 will be awarded to the top three entrants. Children are also encouraged to take part in the Crying of the Marches on Friday 10 June, setting off from the Star & Garter Hotel at 1pm.

Further dates for your diary include Saturday 4 and 11 June, when the traditional installation of Deacons will take place from the West Port at 6.30pm prompt on each evening.

Speaking to the Black Bitch Magazine, Provost Carlin said:

"Everyone on the Deacons' Court is committed to facilitating another wonderful celebration of our ancient traditions and ask that as many of you as possible participate responsibly, whether that be as part of the various processions or as enthusiastic spectators."

Finally let us not forget that none of this would be possible without the generous donations made by those who ride the Marches with the town, supplemented by the shops, businesses and general public who support the Court in all our fund raising ventures throughout the year.

To you all our heartfelt thanks and that includes Hunters of Linlithgow and Ian Gibson of Platform 3 whose support has been invaluable.

As always the hope is for good weather and that this enables everybody in the Royal Burgh, including the many who return to the town from far flung quarters, to celebrate the town's heritage in the company of their family and friends both new and old.

"Long live Linlithgow, Long live the Marches."

Murdoch Kennedy



THE LION KING AT LINLITHGOW PRIMARY SCHOOL



Primaries six and seven at Linlithgow Primary School delivered two show-stopping performances of 'The Lion King' in April.

The upper classes of Linlithgow Primary are no different from any other; hardworking yet fun-loving; conscientious yet easily excited. They were about to find out that all these traits were the perfect recipe for a show cast...

It was winter 2015, the second term, when the pupils were asked if they would like to perform 'The Lion King' as a school project. Of course, they said yes, (wouldn't you?) but little did they know how much work and time would go into it. And so 'The Lion King Junior Show' began.

Casting and auditions took place before Christmas. Armed with only an extract from the script held in nervous, shaky hands, the children performed to their best ability in the hope of getting a part. Some did, some didn't, and in the end two full casts were formed.

All the children who weren't part of the main cast were part of the ensemble and were either an animal, a pack hyena or a lioness. There were many rehearsals to get the animal movements just right, and countless song practices for the lionesses and the chorus.

As with any musical, there had to be props. From grass to giraffe heads, rocks, and Rafiki's staff; you name it, they made it. And, of course, there were costumes, so many costumes! Around 120 children, each needing a costume for their individual part. This couldn't have been accomplished without the tremendous effort put in by the parent helpers.

"The props were well designed", a pupil commented. "At art club after school we made some of the props; it was fun and useful", said another.

Indeed, a huge amount of time and hard work was put into creating many amazing outfits and sets.

Sooner than expected, the show was fast approaching. Now every spare minute of class time was Lion King; may it be singing, dancing, acting, or even artwork. One main cast member, Rafiki, remarked, **"I felt nervous, but excited, when I realised the show was not going to be a small assembly, but an unforgettable performance."** And maybe that's what it would be, but not without more time, effort and rehearsing!

By the time the show was three weeks away, the realisation was sinking in: we're performing in less than a month, to more than 500 people, and we're still in the mid-rehearsal stages. So by the end of those 21 days, there wasn't one person in the upper school who hadn't become a perfectionist.

'Lion King Week', as it is now known, had arrived. It involved two afternoon dress rehearsals for pupils from the rest of the school, and two evening shows for family and friends. Each was better than the last. By now every child in primaries six and seven could recite the lines of any main cast character, due to endless rehearsals, which we can guarantee is no exaggeration!

The show evenings were tense yet full of life. Everyone seemed to have butterflies floating around their stomachs, but some were more hyper than others. It was a great success, with one audience member commenting, **"It was better than the West End."** Surely that is a sign that the children pulled it off?

Both casts made the show memorable, and the ensemble did a fantastic job, singing their hearts out and putting the soul into the show. And as the curtains drew, for the last time, everyone was exhausted, yet exhilarated, for this truly was a royal show.

The Friday after the final performance was full of mixed emotions. Everybody came into school tired after a week of excitement, some happy it went well, some sad it was over.

"I'd definitely do it again", one pupil said. "I loved the music, and it was really fun", remarked another.

One feeling everyone shared, though, was the relief; no more stress, no more endless rehearsals, and best of all, no more Lion King songs running round their heads, day and night!

Even now, several weeks later, we walk around the playground hearing calls of, "Hey, Simba!" or repeated choruses of the 'Circle of Life'. We guess it's one of those things you don't forget in an instant, after months of hard work it isn't something the children of Linlithgow Primary School are willing to leave behind.

None of this could have been possible without the enormous help of the parents, parent helpers, staff and, of course, the pupils of primaries six and seven of Linlithgow Primary School, 2016.

So now we are at the end, but don't worry, the Circle of Life will always keep moving!



Robyn Speight and Rebecca Stewart,
Linlithgow Primary School

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BOOK REVIEW I LET YOU GO

BY CLARE MACKINTOSH

**A tragic accident.
A past you can't escape.**

Clare Mackintosh's novel begins with a dramatic, fast-paced prologue that sets the tone for a novel that is gripping and emotionally charged. The novel is narrated in bursts from the perspectives of different characters which ensures we are drawn quickly into the action. Mackintosh cleverly builds each thread of the story, adding layers gradually so that the motivations and feelings of the characters are authentic and clear.

The principal protagonist, however, is Jenna. She is deeply affected by events at the start of the novel and feels the only way to move on from the horror is to walk away, leaving her old life behind and disappear without a trace. We know she is vulnerable and under emotional strain; she is in a great deal of distress and shock. We understand she is a victim of trauma and Mackintosh expertly provides a window of empathy into her jumbled thoughts and feelings.

Slowly Jenna begins to recover from her initial shock and shake off feelings of guilt and shame that she could have done more to prevent the tragic accident from ever occurring. As she begins to take notice of her new surroundings and make connections with the strangers around her we get the sense that this is an awakening. It is an opportunity to shrug off the shackles of an old, tired life and emerge from the ashes of human and emotional destruction a brighter, stronger, more resilient being.

Just as we glimpse the potential for a happy ever after, events from the past rapidly catch up with Jenna and she is brutally forced to confront the very things she is running from. The warm, safe regenerated cocoon of a life she has tentatively created for herself is ripped apart - her dreams for the future are shattered. We are left to hope that the novel's resolution will be one in which Jenna can find the resolution and inner peace she so desperately seeks.

This novel is Clare Mackintosh's debut as a writer and the fact that she has spent over 10 years as a police officer lends an authenticity to this powerful psychological thriller.

Lisa Nettleton *Lisa Nettleton is a teacher who lives in Linlithgow and enjoys reading on her daily rail commute into Edinburgh.*



INTERESTED IN WRITING YOUR OWN BOOK?

Local author **John Dodds** is running creative writing classes from 2 April 2016. Beginners classes are fortnightly (Wednesday evenings) and intermediate monthly (Saturday mornings). More details from 07419275473 / jtmaddods@gmail.com.



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Chernobyl Nuclear Disaster 30 Years On

HOW FRIENDS OF CHERNOBYL'S CHILDREN IS HELPING



The visits have a positive effect on the children – on their health, domestic circumstances, confidence and outlook on the world.

Families in Linlithgow and other nearby towns have – for years now – been helping children from Belarus through the charity Friends of Chernobyl's Children.

On Saturday 26 April 1986, one of the reactors at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the Ukraine overheated and exploded, sending a plume of highly radioactive fallout into the atmosphere. Chernobyl lies close to the Ukraine/Belarus border and 30 years ago, the health, prosperity and dreams of hundreds of thousands of people were irrevocably changed as their world fell into the shadow of Chernobyl's nuclear poison.

The explosion devastated a huge area around the plant and the ensuing radioactive contamination spread over neighbouring countries and throughout Europe (including the UK). Around 60-70 per cent of this fallout settled onto the agricultural lands of Belarus to the north.

Once known as the 'Bread Basket of Europe', these lands are now totally contaminated, and what little agriculture remains is used to feed the local population. Poverty ensures that these people, including an estimated 700,000 children, continue to be exposed to radiation through the food chain. Chernobyl's children will continue to suffer for 24,000 years; the time it will take for the land to be clear of radiation.

Consumption of contaminated food and water results in chronic health effects - cancer (leukaemia and thyroid), birth defects, respiratory diseases, mental disabilities, stomach and intestinal problems, and immunity issues are common. With little proper equipment and medicines in Belarus, effective treatment and care becomes impossible. Even simple medicines like aspirin, paracetamol and

antibiotics are expensive and difficult to obtain. Vitamin deficiency affects more than 90 per cent of children in the contaminated zones. People suffer social and psychological problems and alcoholism is rife. The Chernobyl families often feel that the world has forgotten them.

The main objective of Friends of Chernobyl's Children is to bring Belarusian children (typically aged 7 to 12 years old) away from the contaminated environment in their own country, to detoxify their immune systems and give them a break from their (often desperate) domestic conditions.

Every child is hosted by a volunteer family who care for them in their own home. Host families vary from single parents to retired couples, with the only condition being that they are able to provide the love and care that the children deserve. The host families invite the same child to return to them for between three and five years, thus building a very special relationship.

In 2013, the Forth Valley group was formed and welcomed their first group of 17 children. For 14 of them, this was their first visit and most of them were only seven years old. 11 of the children stay with Linlithgow families, as does one of the interpreters.

During the visit, the children are based at the Longcroft Halls, very kindly loaned by St Ninian's Craigmalen Church. They've done this every year, which makes the whole visit much easier to organise.

The visits have a positive effect on the children – on their health, domestic circumstances, confidence and outlook on the world. In addition, each child is sent home with a big bag filled to the airline's



weight limit with winter clothes, vitamins, basic medicines, toiletries, stationery and treats for them and their families.

The Forth Valley group is lucky to have many wonderful supporters in Linlithgow and further afield. Hundreds of individuals give their time and money and organise events on our behalf. Friends of Chernobyl's Children – Forth Valley would like to say a huge 'thank you' to all the organisations who support us. There are too many to name here but a complete list of our supporters is on our Facebook page.

Friends of Chernobyl's Children is a completely voluntary organisation and every penny raised is used in our work with the children and providing for them. Each local group raises the funds for their own group of children and interpreters to come to Scotland. To find out more, to support us or find out how to become a host family please take a look at our Facebook page.

Alison Parkinson

PETS' CORNER

In the first of a regular column in the Black Bitch, Stuart and Suzi from the Westport Veterinary Clinic tell about one of their regular customers. This month it is Sako Arthur.

Sako is a four-year-old Short Haired German Pointer.

Favourite walk: 15km run around Beecraigs or up Dumyat Hill.

Likes: Anyone's attention, playing with other dogs, running, lying by the fire and sunbathing.

Dislikes: Being left on his own and the cold, particularly cold water swims.

Naughtiest habit: Standing by the car and refusing to get into the boot after a fun walk. Also jumping over cattle grids - luckily he always clears them!

Sako came into Westport Veterinary Clinic recently in preparation for his holidays. Lucky Sako is going abroad so he needed a rabies vaccination. A pet in poor health will not respond reliably to vaccinations so we make sure that every pet is given a full clinical examination as part of their vaccination appointment.

Sako is in superb health and now all set for his holiday.

If you are travelling within the EU with your pet you need to be aware that:

>> Your pet must be microchipped and this must be done before your pet gets a rabies vaccination.

>> Your pet must be vaccinated against rabies 21 days before travelling.

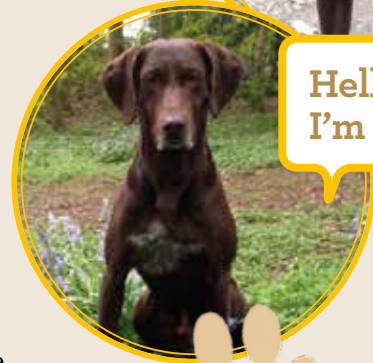
>> Your pet must have a pet passport or third-country official veterinary certificate.

>> Dogs must have had a tapeworm treatment no less than 24 hours and no more than 120 hours (five days) before entry back into the UK.

Westport Veterinary Clinic can provide a full pet travel service, call 01506 844165 to make an appointment.



Stuart and Suzi



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Linlithgow's Inviting Gardens are opening to visitors by Jean Long

Burgh Beautiful's Inviting Gardens is offering you an exciting opportunity to visit a diverse selection of gardens in the town.

Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 June are dates for your diary when you can be guests at Linlithgow's Inviting Gardens. Once again Burgh Beautiful is arranging for around twenty gardens in and around the town to be open to visitors over two afternoons. These gardens are cared for by people who truly enjoy them. There is an amazingly varied range of styles on offer from an alpine enthusiast and knowledgeable plants people, to those who like a space to relax, to others whose design incorporates a touch of idiosyncrasy, and more. So whether you like to see what other people do with their gardens or are looking for ideas for your own or perhaps you are simply curious to see what happens behind a particular wall then this is your opportunity.

Entry is by programme which is on sale from the beginning of June at The Line Gallery and Far from the Madding Crowd, both on the High Street and both open at weekends as well as weekdays, at £5 per adult. On each of the open days programmes are also available at 59 High Street and in all other participating gardens. Tea or refreshments will be available at some of the gardens as indicated in the programme. Please note that some gardens are open on both days while others are available on the Saturday or the Sunday – all bar one from 1pm till 5pm; details are in the programme.



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Sunday 25th Sept	Travelling by Tuba <i>Farewell Tour</i>

The music starts at 7 p.m. and doors open at 6.30 p.m.
Full details of all concerts are available from
www.torphichensummernights.org.uk and on
Facebook

Tickets are £12, £9 concessions and accompanied
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Mum Sharon, Gala Queen Millie, Gran Marion and Gran Lynne

On 18 June this year, when Millie Snedden is crowned Gala Queen, she will be following in a proud family tradition.

Millie will be the third generation of her family to play key Gala Day roles. Maternal gran Lynne Garnett (Barrie in those days) was a fairy around 1950. Some sixty odd years on, Lynne can still remember the thrill of walking through the town on the day in her dress, and of being on stage with the other girls. *“My mum made my dress by hand”* recalls Lynne, *“it had sequins and scalloping, and netting on the sleeves.”*

Paternal gran Marion was a bower girl in 1960, and Marion remembers clearly her lime green dress made by her aunt, and taking part in the parade with her friend Myra Steele (then Duncan). Marion returned to a starring role in the Gala day in 2012, when she was asked to crown the Queen. *“I was delighted to be chosen to crown the Queen”*, said Marion, *“it was a real honour.”*

And Millie’s mum Sharon was a bower girl in 1981. Lynne and Sharon took a last minute decision the night before the Gala Day to make an arch, working late into the night.

Millie explained the process for choosing the Gala Queen. After her name was drawn out of the hat, the Mistress of the Robes called at the Snedden house to formally ask Millie

if she would accept the honour – which of course she did. *“I was really surprised to be picked, and so excited”* said Millie *“the first thing I did was phone everyone to tell them – my grans and my friends. Then we went to look at dresses as soon as we could, and started planning the arch – which is what I’m most looking forward to.”*

All the women are thrilled that Millie will be this year’s Gala Queen, and are taking an active role in the preparations. Choosing Millie’s dress was a family affair. She arrived at the shops in Glasgow with an entourage truly befitting a queen – consisting of her mum, two grans and her aunt. Gala Queen Millie knows how to keep a secret though, and won’t reveal any details of her dress.

And the biggest secret of all is the arch. *“We left it to Millie to choose a theme. She knew what she wanted so we went for it. It’s coming together really well now, with lots of help from the family”* said Sharon.

Dad Richard is busy working on the arch, as evidenced by the tools and planks of wood scattered around the garden. None of the family will reveal any details thought – the theme is a closely guarded secret. We did notice that Richard’s jeans were splattered with red paint but don’t tell anyone!

Linda Martin

Restoring our Town Bus Service: The Journey Continues

Widespread cuts to subsidised bus services were put into effect across the whole of West Lothian from April this year. Public outcries, including in relation to Linlithgow’s town bus service, and dwindling passengers figures, have given cause for West Lothian Council to undertake a review of these bus cuts.

The Linlithgow bus study, commissioned by Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council, is providing invaluable evidence to feed into the Council’s review. Thank you to all those who participated in the community survey as part of this study. Early analysis suggests the restoration of a decent regular town bus service is both desired by the community and can be financially viable. Full study findings and recommendations will be published next month so we can move towards making this goal a reality.

Pamela Barnes Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council

For more information go to www.facebook.com/SaveourLibus

Linlithgow drugs bust

More than £1,000 worth of illegal drugs has been taken off the streets after Police Scotland raided a Linlithgow property last month.

They seized diamorphine and cocaine worth £1,100, plus cash, in the bust on a High Street flat. A 35 year old man was arrested and charged, and will be appearing in Livingston Sheriff Court in due course.

Detective Inspector **Steven Bertram** of Livingston CID said:

“Local officers successfully prevented a substantial amount of illegal drugs from reaching communities in West Lothian. We will always act on information that is passed to us and I would encourage anyone who has information relating to drug crime in their community to contact police on 101 or the charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.”

COMPETITION

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1. 14th century
2. 15th century
3. 16th century



**Issue 41 Family
Ticket Winner:**
Lisa Bryce

One lucky winner will receive a family ticket courtesy of Party at the Palace. Email the editor, David Tait: on.a.lead@gmail.com

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THE COMMUNITY AND THE PARTY...

AT THE PALACE

PARTY AT THE PALACE SUPPORT GALA DAY



Party at the Palace organisers and ticket and community reward partners Loop Connections have made a generous donation to this year's Gala Day. John Richardson from Party at the Palace and Derek Halden from Loop Connections handed over a cheque for £1,000 to current Queen Isla Calvert and this year's Queen Millie Snedden. **The Gala day is on Saturday 18th June.**





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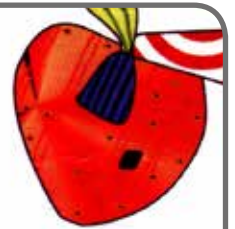
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