



the **BLACK** *bitch*

Linlithgow's news by Linlithgow's people

LINLITHGOW COMMUNITY MAGAZINE ISSUE 62 NOVEMBER 2018 £1.00



UK FINALIST 2018
CATEGORY WINNER

'COMMUNITY CHAMPION' ...SOON, WE'LL NEED MANY MORE RON SMITHS!'

BRITAIN IN BLOOM UK FINALS PAGE 10

**100%
LOCAL**



**YOUNG &
TALENTED** P5



**THE VENNEL
REDEVELOPMENT** P6



**HOCKEY CLUB
HEAD TO HOLLAND** P14

PLUS

New Hopetoun Gardens, Burgh Beautiful, Town Centre BID, Halloween events at the Academy & Narrowboat Farm, Vennel Redevelopment, Police Scotland, Book Review...

READ THE MAGAZINE ONLINE - TODAY!

find us at



www.linlithgowcommunitymagazine.co.uk/publications

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Contact the Black Bitch

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Editor: David Tait, 07767 713024



Copy deadline for next issue is 15 January 2019.

Fundraising initiative for Burgh Beautiful.



Winter Palace by Vinicius Valenca Bianco; Palace in a Bauble by Tamsin Livingston.

These designs are for the Winter Pack: 8 cards, 4 of each + envelopes

for £5.00



There will also be Seasonal Packs with 5 different designs

for £3.50

Both these packs will be on sale at the Advent Fair, 24 November and thereafter in Far from the Madding Crowd and in other shops.

These designs have been produced by S1 pupils at Linlithgow Academy and the project is sponsored by Alan Steel Asset Management and is a fundraising initiative for Burgh Beautiful.

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

Find us on Facebook, Follow us on Twitter. The paper we are using is FSC approved.

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www.linlithgow.com/pride_passion.htm

WHAT'S ON - NOV & DEC

***Note:** These events will run consecutively over several weeks or have weekly sessions confirmed. Check website for further details.

Nov

Sat 24 7:30pm, St Michael's Parish Church, LSO's Advent Concert to raise funds for Lochside Playgroup in Linlithgow (entry by donation).

Advent Fair, Torchlight Procession and Christmas Tree Lighting

Tue 27 Community Council
7:30pm - 9:00pm, Burgh Halls

Wed 28 Indian Violinist: Jyotsna Srikanth, 8:00pm - 10:00pm
St Peter's Episcopal Church

Thu 29 Linlithgow Keep Fit Club, 7:00pm - 9:00pm, Linlithgow Academy - Small gym*

Late night Christmas shopping event - combine your tour of the high street shops with a visit to Linlithgow Pottery to enjoy painting your own ceramic Christmas baubles or yarn bowls, from 3.00pm-8.00pm.

Dec Sat 1 Book signing with local author Chris Long at Far From the MC .

Sat 1 - 15 4th West Lothian Scout Group. We will be delivering your Christmas cards to all EH49 postcodes at only 25p per card!

Sat 1 Scout Christmas coffee morning and craft fayre, 10:00am, Cross House.

Thu 6 Folk Session at the Black Bitch Tavern. From 8:00pm

Linlithgow Keep Fit Club, 7:00pm - 9:00pm, Linlithgow Academy - Small gym*

Fri 7 Variety Concert (Choir & Bands), 7:00pm Linlithgow Academy, Fundraiser for Scout Trip to Namibia *See p24*

Fri 7-9 Festival of Christmas Trees, St Michael's Parish Church December

Sat 8 Ruisi String Quartet, 7:30pm - 9:40pm, Linlithgow Academy

Tue 18 Community Council
7:30pm - 9:00pm, Burgh Halls

LINLITHGOW RAMBLERS WALKING CALENDAR



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

Linlithgow Film Society

CINEMA IN THE COMMUNITY

LINLITHGOW ACADEMY THEATRE: 7.30pm

**** New Members Welcome ****
Guest Tickets / Concessions
FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

T. McKerron: 01 506 844425 Or come on the Night!
www.linlithgowfilmsociety.org.uk

2018/2019

10 DEC The Greatest Showman

14 JAN The Post

21 JAN Finding Your Feet

4 FEB The Midwife

18 FEB Murder on the Orient Express

4 MAR Breathe

18 MAR Death of Stalin

Linlithgow String Orchestra
Advent Concert
St Michael's Parish Church
24th November
7:30pm
Conductor: Robin Foulkes
Mozart - Exsultate Jubilate
Mozart - Sinfonia Concertante
Lloyd-Webber - Pie Jesu
Blake - Snowman Suite
Handel - Overture to Messiah
Soloists:
Helen Greig (Soprano)
Glyn Eggar (Violin)
Frank Glynn (Viola)
Entry by donation
In Support of
Lochside Playgroup

Red Door Presents
Indian Violinist:
Jyotsna Srikanth
Wed 28
Nov 2018
8pm - 10pm
St Peter's
Episcopal
Church

CINDERELLA: A FAIRYTALE
THE LINLITHGOW PLAYERS
Performances are 17th - 19th
January 2019 at 7pm (plus the
matinee at 2.30pm on Saturday).

For more details and more events visit the **what's on** page at www.linlithgow.info

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LOCAL CHARITY GROUP 'WALKS' FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

Linlithgow-based charity group, The Walk for Jock, goes from strength to strength and in September embarked on its annual assault on the West Highland Way for the seventh time.

This year, seventeen people tackled the 98 mile path from Milngavie to Fort William and the undertaking raised over £7000 for good causes in Linlithgow and beyond.

The driving force behind the group is well-known local character Davie 'Deep Sea' Paterson, who has organised charity events in the town for many years. Davie walked the West Highland Way for various causes from 2008 onwards, but the loss of his elder brother Jock to cancer led to the establishment of a group set up to honour his memory, as Davie explained:

"My pal David Pudney lost his Mum to cancer in 2007 and that year, he and another friend, Les Pattison, walked the Way in her memory. I joined them the following year and it became an annual fundraising event. In 2011, the biggest-ever group took part, including my brother Jock, who loved the experience and couldn't wait to do it again. Sadly, a few months later, he was diagnosed with cancer and died on the day before the Marches in June 2012."

Davie was devastated by the loss of his brother at the age of only 47 and hadn't the heart to tackle the West Highland Way that year. His friends, however, thought otherwise:

"My best mate, Les Pattison, said 'Do the Walk for Jock, in his memory', and that's how we got the name. My cousin Audrey quipped, 'it's what you do' and we turned that into our motto 'It's what we do!'"

The Walk for Jock is open to anyone who wishes to join the group in walking the West Highland Way. The only rule is that all participants nominate their favourite charity. All the money raised under the Walk for Jock banner goes in to a central pot and is distributed equally. Participants are also encouraged to set up their own fundraising efforts, through 'Just Giving' pages on Facebook and similar initiatives.

The Platform Three pub is the group's main sponsor and fundraising events are held there throughout the year. Members of staff have even taken part in the Walk.

Good causes benefitting this year included the oncology department at St John's hospital, Macmillan, Linlithgow Marie Curie group, Mary's Meals, Linlithgow Day Care Centre, Cycling for the Elderly, Alzheimer's Scotland and the British Heart Foundation.

The cheques were presented in Platform Three on Sunday October 7th by Julia Cross, the former European and World Tae Kwon Do champion, who hails from Linlithgow, and legendary sports commentator, Archie Macpherson, along with Crawford Flint, Deacon of the Fraternity of Dyers, who are great supporters of the Walk for Jock.

Julia commented, *"It was an honour to meet such a lovely bunch of people who give up their time to help others. I had a great day"*, while Archie remarked, *"I got an email invitation to come here and what strikes me is the sincerity of it all. The town should applaud what they do in this group."*

Davie Paterson thanked everyone who had helped, including Billy and Jim Harris from ACL Hire and Brian Kirkwood the driver. Davie said: *"We are going from strength to strength. What made it extra special this year was that Jock's two great pals, Tam Gilmour and Pat Ward took part, proving once again that 'It's what we do!'"*

Murdoch Kennedy



2018 THE YEAR OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND BURGH BEAUTIFUL

Averil Stewart

BURGH BEAUTIFUL
FUND RAISER

See PAGE 2
for details

The Scottish Government spent three years in planning events and creating opportunities to mark 2018 as the Year of Young People. With the guidance of young people who felt 'they were often not listened to' or for whom there were negative images, several themes were identified. These included participation, education, enterprise and creativity. The future belongs to young people and we should be celebrating their achievements.

Burgh Beautiful is no exception in welcoming the involvement of young people. Over the years, they have contributed to litter picks, preparing and planting up hanging baskets, planting and caring for planters and beds, helping with fundraising through bag-packing days and making holly balls for the Advent Fayre.

This year we wanted to reinforce this involvement by planning some things specifically for young people - namely the **Gardening Competition for Young People in Linlithgow**, and drawing on the creativity of academy pupils in the production of **Greetings Cards**.



Gardening Competition for Young People in Linlithgow - new in 2018

We had no idea how many would respond. Would it be 20 or 120? From a logistics point of view, the lower number proved manageable with four groups plus 11 entrants, including three sets of siblings finally completing the challenge. They began in spring with planning and sowing, while keeping a scrapbook as eventual evidence for the Burgh Beautiful Judges. Come judging in August, after the school holidays, their enthusiasm was infectious with the frequently repeated question: 'Will there be

another competition next year?' A lot was learnt by entrants and organisers, but judging was difficult - all were so different. The range in ages was considerable, as well as choices of what to grow. One group grew flowers from seeds in a tyre, while another pair chose to convert their former sandpit into a productive bed. There were flowers in tubs to delight, and potatoes to enjoy. All entrants received certificates and personal book tokens, thanks to sponsorship from Far from the Madding Crowd, while the three primary schools were presented with the beautiful book by Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris - *The Lost Words* - which captures images of acorns, brambles, bluebells, conkers ...and a wren. How could these words be allowed to slip from the Oxford Junior Dictionary and the awareness of children?



Greetings Cards and Creativity

This initiative was put forward by Burgh Beautiful. The brief was to produce four seasonal designs for cards which will be unique to Linlithgow and with a floral component. Eight S1 Linlithgow Academy pupils rose to the challenge. The final designs however are their own. This project is sponsored by Alan Steel Asset Management and cards should be available for the Advent Fayre on 24 November as part of our fundraising activities. We hope you will like them.

New Fruit Trees thanks to Enterprising Pupils

In January, Linlithgow Primary School P4 & P5 donated over £300 to Burgh Beautiful, raised from creating fridge magnets. With expert input from Jon Brown, this money is being used to

plant fruit trees at Learmonth Gardens during National Tree Week at the end of November. They will mark the Year of Young People and provide a legacy for all to enjoy.



Wild flowers and Education

At Learmonth Gardens, behind the Doocot, Low Port Primary School pupils have participated in planting wild flowers and clearing vegetation and, in the process, learning a lot about the plants and insects to be seen there. Now, thanks to West Lothian Council, there is a handsome interpretative panel for all to learn from. Do step down into this wilder area and explore.

Linlithgow Academy a would-be Eco-school with Empowerment of Pupils - 2018

This project not only works towards green credentials for the school but at the same time enables pupils to achieve individual Saltire awards. A mentor from Burgh Beautiful is working with a group of Linlithgow Academy pupil volunteers. The project is in its early stage when the pupils produce their ideas - what is possible in the short-term and what might long-term aspirations be. It could have far reaching impact. Will parents and other significant adults come on board to help move beyond the Academy boundaries? Let's listen to what these young people have to say, and embrace the changes they would wish to make to the environment.

How can their activities inspire the wider community; to what extent might Linlithgow become a campaigning town to be one of the cleanest and greenest?

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE VENNEL?

COMMUNITY COUNCIL/PLANNING FORUM

“The Vennel is central to Linlithgow, one of Scotland’s most attractive historic towns. Any redevelopment has the potential, if well designed and executed, to be an outstanding success and to reflect well on those involved as responsible stewards of our historic heritage.”

Alan Corrie of Images Above Ltd



Readers with long memories will remember the flurry of activity during the summer of 2017 when the Community Council, Linlithgow Civic Trust and others responded to West Lothian Council’s consultation on its plans for the proposed Vennel redevelopment. On 6 September 2017 the Community Council sent to West Lothian Council a 31 page document summarising the hundreds of comments received from Linlithgow residents. Receipt of the document was duly acknowledged by West Lothian Council with a statement saying that the consultation would be considered by the Council Executive. To date the Council Executive has not discussed the redevelopment of the Vennel.

The October 2017 issue of the Black Bitch magazine described the consultation activity which ended with two important conclusions:

>> It is the wish of the Linlithgow community to be actively involved in all the stages leading up to and including the preparation of a properly detailed development brief for the redevelopment of the appropriate parts of the Vennel and we believe

that the clear results of the public consultation give such a mandate.

>> The draft planning guidance issued by West Lothian Council mentions a forthcoming “master plan” for the proposed redevelopment of the Vennel which would, presumably, follow-on from the development brief. We would also wish to be involved in the forthcoming master plan, the scope of which should be extended to cover the wider town centre so that the redevelopment of the Vennel can be seen in its full environmental, social and economic context.



The Vennel story to date can be accessed from the Community Council’s website <https://llbcc.org.uk/planning/>

During the past year the planning subgroup of the Community Council – the Linlithgow Planning Forum (which includes organisations with an interest in planning matters such as Linlithgow Civic Trust, Linlithgow Community Development Trust and Transition Linlithgow) has been preparing itself for the invitation from West Lothian Council to become a member of the project briefing team. This preparation has included an investigation of the background to the 1960s redevelopment and an economic viability analysis of new development options.

After holding several meetings in which the same question was asked namely “and how much would that cost” it was decided to approach an Edinburgh quantity surveying organisation for help. From this organisation the Planning Forum obtained very approximate costs per square metre of various types of construction. The options appraisal considered six development options from one that would make the highest financial return to one that would include the community facilities and social housing requested by respondents to the 2017 consultation.

The proposed project was broken down into seven modules of work with each module considered separately for each of the six development options. The modules considered are:

1. Demolition.

2. Car park. Options considered were the refurbishment of the existing to a new two-storey car park with a plan area of 72 m x 31 m (space for six coaches, 10 motorhomes/vans and 100 cars).

3. Landscaping and surface paving. It was important to retain the existing Vennel garden and a significant budget was allocated to the refurbishment of this area.

4. Shops. Notwithstanding the oft repeated statement that there is unlet shop space in the High Street an important feature of the new development would be a Piazza from the High Street to the Loch with shop units on either side.

5. Hotel. This module was a feature of two of the options considered.

6. Housing. There is a balance between residential properties for sale and for rent. Clearly property for sale gives an immediate return and offsets the amount of borrowing that would be required for the remainder of the development. However, it is important that the West Lothian Council target of 25% affordable/social housing is exceeded.

7. Community building. This building will house those community and visitor facilities requested by a significant majority of those responding to the public consultation including space for LYPP or similar youth provision.

The planning forum are satisfied that it’s document represents a logical description of the options. It has been sent to several organisations for comment. Comments received to date have been complimentary. It has been sent to West Lothian Council for consideration. We await their reply.

HALLOWEEN SPOOKY BOAT RIDE



This Halloween season, newly opened Narrowboat Farm transformed into a magical pumpkin land. Located just, 2 miles East of Linlithgow the farm backs onto the canal, which sparked the idea for the 'spooktastic' Halloween boat rides and pumpkin picking.

2018 marked the end of Narrowboat Farm's first growing season. Produce was grown and sold locally – something we can expect even more of next year. It took two years of set-up, and experimenting, but now, the farm is ready to plough on with sustainable farming and the use of traditional, unindustrialised farming methods. And, as a team of young farmers, they hope to bring a youthful, modern approach to the farming industry, to ensure a bright future in food production.

Iain Withers, better known as 'Pumpkin Iain', is part of the team at Narrowboat farm. He explained that the pumpkin picking idea came by accident. *'We planted around 300 pumpkin seeds in April, and we were surprised to find we had so many later on.'*

A single Pumpkin seed can grow up to six pumpkins, and they grow along 10-20ft long vines. By October the farm had about 1000 pumpkins in their patch, which were later picked, carved, and cherished by many families.

Along with the team at Narrowboat, Linlithgow Union Canal Society (LUCS) organised roundtrip boat rides from the canal basin to pick pumpkins at the farm. The 2.5 hour trips ran on the 27th and 28th October, with two journeys both days – though they quickly sold out.

Linlithgow boat to market transportation may have died out after the railways were built in the 1840s, but this trip revived the practice for one weekend only. Narrowboat hope to extend this, however, by transporting their locally grown veggies into town via the canal next year.

In regards to the Halloween boat rides, the small boats were decorated with spooky decorations and were filled with excited families, gathered round cosy tables. Children were dressed in witch hats, cat ears, zombie masks and, undoubtedly, excited grins.

Skipper Stuart and Captain Willy, navigated east, during which time, vivacious storyteller, Bronwyn (Eureka Edinburgh), read a chilling children's Halloween tale, and engaged us with Halloween jokes and songs.

After a 50-minute journey, the boat docked at the farm, where guests were greeted by 'Pumpkin Iain' who was, of course, dressed accordingly. Around an hour was given to visit the farm.

The prices of the pumpkins varied with size, from £3-£9. This included a free pumpkin carving class, which also ran free to the public. Pumpkin Sarah led families through the steps to carving the perfect pumpkin – utensils, stencils and candles were all provided. 'Carving your pumpkin here works really well, because people don't like the mess carving a pumpkin creates at home, so you can get it all done here... we also compost the 'gunk' for next year,' Iain explained.

The farm itself was decorated beautifully. There was a mini-cinema, excellent photo opportunities and fun carnival-style family games. Guests could also wander to the vegetable plot, walk along to the Park Bistro for a cuppa, or warm up in the yurt.

When asking Iain if he anticipates the return of this spooktacular event next year, I was given a definite 'yes!'. After the success of sell-out boat trips, innovative carving workshops, and beloved pumpkins, it can be safely said that this new event will make the calendar for the years to come.

Alice Ferguson, MSYP
S5 Linlithgow Academy



CINDERELLA: A FAIRYTALE

THE LINLITHGOW PLAYERS

from
17-19
JAN

JANUARY IN LINLITHGOW WOULDN'T BE THE SAME WITHOUT THE LINLITHGOW PLAYERS' EVER POPULAR FAMILY SHOW.

AND THIS YEAR, THE PLAYERS ARE BRANCHING OUT WITH AN EXCITING NEW PRODUCTION OF CINDERELLA: A FAIRYTALE BY ADAM PECK. AND A NEW VENUE TOO.

Cinderella is one of the oldest and best loved fairytales of all time but this production will bring it bang up to date. Gone are the ball gowns and glass slippers, replaced by some jazz and sparkly black boots!

When Ella's mother dies, her loving father brings her up and introduces her to the woodland birds that surround their home. Ella's world is then turned upside down when her father remarries and she is introduced to her stepmother, brother and sister. But the birds remain the one constant, who watch over her and help her out, just like a fairy godmother would.

Director, **Liz Drewett**, is delighted to bring this dynamic production to life. "This version of Cinderella is a magical mixture of comedy, romance, movement, music and drama. I love this Ella. She has lost

everything but is strong and feisty and beautifully kind-hearted. Her prince is a wonderfully geeky bird-watcher and so it is their mutual love of our feathered friends that brings them together"

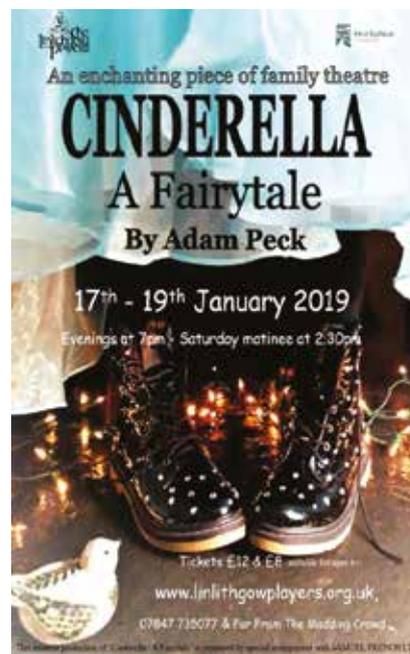
"I really want the audience to feel part of this story and so we have chosen a more intimate space to stage it in. The play will be performed 'in the round' in the Provost Lawrie Hall in the Burgh Halls. That means the audience will be sitting around the four sides of the performance space, so will be close to all the action. They will also enjoy some toe-tapping live music throughout the show. We're delighted to be working with a musical director who has composed an original musical score for the production. The 'gypsy jazz' style of music he has created really brings the production to life."

And if you have loved the Players' pantos in the past, rest assured that there are some nods to panto in this more contemporary version of Cinderella. Audience participation and baddy-boosing are still in store for you!

So, will Ella's friends who roost in the trees, help her find the magic of love? Come along to this enchanting piece of family theatre to find out.

The show is recommended for ages 6+

Performances are 17th - 19th January 2019 at 7pm (plus matinee at 2.30pm on Saturday).



Tickets (£12 and £8 concession) go on sale at the Advent Fayre on 24 November and are then available online at

www.linlithgowplayers.org.uk,
box office 07847 735077 or
Far From the Madding Crowd
Bookshop, Linlithgow.



WHAT'S ON AT THE ROSE...

>> >> Friday 14 December
Full Xmas Dinner & Show
Under 60's £35 / Over 60's £30

>> Saturday 22 December
Hot Supper & Show £15.00

>> Hogmanay Show
December
9pm - 2am. Two Acts,
Piper, Buffet £15.00

>> Saturday 2 February
Robbie Williams Tribute Show,
Three Course Dinner. £25.00/pp
BOOKING NOW BEING TAKEN

*** £2,500 PRIZE MONEY ***
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6 HEATS - COMMENCES FRIDAY 1 FEB
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LINLITHGOW'S SUCCESS IN THE BRITAIN IN BLOOM UK FINALS



UK FINALIST 2018
CATEGORY WINNER

As readers will be aware, Linlithgow was visited by the Britain in Bloom judges on 9 August. In preparation, the main emphasis was of course on ensuring that the floral displays were in prime condition for the judges, and much time was spent on upgrading certain beds and repairing the damage wrought by the preceding period of drought. We also had to implement a carefully planned clean-up of the town so that the judges would see Linlithgow at its best – something which is unlikely to have been required on such a scale in any of the other towns with which we were competing.

The community really did rise to the occasion, with innumerable Burgh Beautiful volunteers, members of churches and other community groups, business people, families and individuals spending many hours removing weeds and dirt from the streets over June and July. Council staff helped as they could, and Community Payback provided assistance with painting street furniture and weed removal in the Vennel area. This enormous communal effort resulted in a massive improvement by the time of the judging.

The judges, Mel Henley and Jon Wheatley, arrived the afternoon before and we entertained them in the evening, with an enjoyable meal followed by a visit to Linlithgow Palace in response to a kind invitation by the organisers of the summer Scotch Hop event. The dancing, the piper and the experience of viewing town and loch from the top of the Palace at sunset must have made a lasting impression on them, and set the scene

for the following day.

The judging started with a presentation at our Clarendon base, followed by a 2.5 hour tour round the town, aiming to show off Linlithgow to its best advantage and emphasising the three main judging criteria relating to floral displays, environmental responsibility and community involvement. It ended with a get together at The Cross, entertainment by the Reed Band, then lunch.

There was a long time to wait, with fingers crossed, until the awards ceremony in Belfast on 19 October, where Burgh Beautiful was represented by Chris Gunstone, Marj Lochtie and me. The presentations were made by Chris Bavin (the presenter of the BBC2 'Britain in Bloom' TV series). The first part of the evening's awards ended with the presentation of nine Community Champion Awards "presented to individuals who have gone above and beyond to make their Britain in Bloom campaign a success." It came as something of a surprise to hear my name read out, but I joined the others on stage to receive a certificate and a lovely glass paperweight award. I felt a little shocked but very honoured to be considered worthy of such an award! We had to wait until after dinner to hear how our town entry to the competition, involving so much hard work by so many people, had performed.

The tension rose while we lined up below the stage with the eight other competitors in the 'Town' category to receive our awards ... Amersham got Gold, City of London got Gold, Immingham got Gold, Linlithgow got ... GOLD!! Marj and myself received the certificate; then we waited nervously below the other end of the stage ... the 'Town' category had been extremely competitive with a total of six Gold awards, so who would be the category winner? After the customary pause,

the winner was announced – and it was ... LINLITHGOW! Up on the stage once again, we were presented with a very handsome glass trophy, but it took a while for everything to sink in – we had done better than we had dared hope!

The next morning, having already been issued with our judges' report, we met the judges for feedback on our entry. They said that we had won the category 'fair and square' and that the quality of our entry was so high that we should consider aiming at competing at a higher level in the future! Here are some of their comments:

>> *"Many congratulations on an outstanding community-led entry ... as a team, you have demonstrated the finest values and outcomes of the Bloom campaign ... you are a real credit to your community and Scotland"*

>> *"Outstanding gardening achievement was demonstrated throughout the judges' route ... the business partnerships with New Hopetoun Gardens (and Binny Plants) and almost all of the shops are making a real difference ... the standard of maintenance and impact of the displays in Learmonth Gardens, along the canal, the historic railway station, the crocodile garden at Water Yett and other areas was excellent ... the residential/community garden at West Port flats was exceptional and would have been worthy of a Gold at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show". (Also admired was the precision of the planting making up the World War I display in the Vennel bed).*

>> *"Exceptional cleanliness was demonstrated right through the tour. This was almost entirely achieved by volunteers who worked incredibly hard to achieve the standard and should be congratulated on their achievement"*

>> *"The community management of*



your street furniture is excellent”

>> “Congratulations on not just taking on the challenge of reduced maintenance budgets through your Bye Bye initiative, but also achieving the excellent results you have with so many dedicated and skilled volunteers. This is an exceptional example of overcoming adversity, indeed, the best that either of the judges have seen”.

It was wonderful that the judges had so much appreciated the hard work and support from everyone involved, including our donors and sponsors. And so say the many people who had expressed their appreciation on Facebook (over 2,000 ‘likes’ and 250 comments)! And, at our celebratory evening on 31 October, we were delighted to receive additional presentations from Provost Tom Kerr on behalf of West Lothian Council.

Our Thanks to All!

We are just so grateful for everyone’s help! We are indebted to the many other local groups with whom we work on all kinds of activities, ranging from floral displays to litter picks – both our local Rotary Clubs, youth organisations including Beaver Scouts and Guides, all the local schools, Transition Linlithgow, Linlithgow Civic Trust, the Linlithgow Union Canal Society, the Community Council, the Town Management Group, the Linlithgow Business Association, the First Step project and most of the local churches. This year, we greatly increased our involvement with local businesses through a Business Liaison Working Group with wonderful results in the form of floral displays and, partly as a result of this, Linlithgow was shortlisted in the Scotland’s Most Beautiful High Street Competition. We are also increasing our involvement with the Linlithgow Town Centre BID from whom we have recently received a very welcome, much enhanced, grant

towards our watering and grass-cutting costs.

Our fantastic community gardeners at Water Yett, St Ninian’s Way/West Port and elsewhere deserve special mention and praise! And we literally could not do without the fantastic financial support of our sponsors, listed, as always, in our Floral Trails booklet. They all have our heartfelt thanks, as do all who support us through our fundraising activities, whether at the Advent Fayre, the making of holly balls and wreaths, our Plant Sale, can collections/bag-packing at supermarkets or our Inviting Gardens event.

Other 2018 highlights have included the unveiling of the ‘Dudley’ cat sculpture at the Canal Basin by Fiona Hyslop MSP, the World War One commemorative bed at the Vennel, the refurbishment of the shrub bed at the north-west corner of Linlithgow Bridge crossroads with the help of Billy Carruthers of Binny Plants, clearing and planting of neglected areas behind the former County Buildings with support from Ian Gibson of Platform 3, formation of a new rockery bed at the top of Station Road, the re-assembly of a kindly-donated greenhouse at our Clarendon base, our children’s gardening competition, our first Autumn Fair, the work of a new neighbourhood team on upgrading neglected land at Boghall, the renewal of the rather dilapidated barrels in front of the Star & Garter Hotel and also working with the pupils of Linlithgow Academy on the design of all-seasons’ greetings cards which are being produced with much-valued financial support from Alan Steel Asset Management Ltd.

Already we are planning for next year with a ‘golden’ floral display envisaged to celebrate this year’s success in

Britain in Bloom! We are planning a second public art project to follow the success of Dudley the cat. Fruit trees will be planted at Learmonth Gardens using a very generous donation from Linlithgow Primary School. We are working with Linlithgow Academy on an Eco School Plan and we intend to promote a tree planting initiative.

How you could help!

Volunteering – As always, we need more volunteers; currently, we seek new gardeners for the two planters outside Taste, for the Physic Garden (the two raised beds outside the Health Centre) and a further team member for the Serpentine bed. Help is also needed to help with fundraising and publicity – please email us at bbl@lbt.scot. We would love to hear from you.

Sponsorship – If you are interested in sponsoring any of our floral displays, including part of our Serpentine bed which will have an exciting new colour scheme next year, please contact us at sponsor@lbt.scot.

Advent Fayre Stall – Support us at our Advent Fayre stall by taking part in our raffle with a good selection of prizes; also please consider buying a Rotary calendar @ £7.95 in aid of Burgh Beautiful and three other local charities, plus packs of Christmas and seasonal greetings cards designed by Linlithgow Academy pupils.

Ron Smith,
Convenor,
Burgh Beautiful Linlithgow

LINLITHGOW ACADEMY'S S1 HALLOWEEN DISCO



It was 6:00pm on the 25th of October. The streets were dark and hordes of S1's raced into Linlithgow Academy wrapped in thick duffle jackets to hide their somewhat unusual attire. Once inside they hung up their jackets to reveal brightly coloured costumes, some terrifying, others comical. Tonight was the night of the Halloween Disco, a much awaited date in every first year's diary.



The assembly hall had been transformed, fake cobwebs were hung over railings, multi-coloured spiders decorated the windows and the centre of the room was now a dance floor. Little did the first years know that this event had been in the works for weeks and only a few hours earlier the hall had been filled with the S6 buddies (the seniors who had been acting as guides for the S1's during the transition period) who were revelling in the excitement of finally getting to plan the event they had loved so many years ago. The music had also been the responsibility of the buddies and judging by the crazy dance moves it was going down well. Refreshments were readily on offer outside the hall – crisps and fizzy drinks to give the kids enough energy to keep dancing all night long (or at least until 9:00).

In the foyer, queues had begun to form for the notorious Haunted Tour – which this year; was supposedly scarier than ever. The tours, which took place every ten minutes, were limited to 15 people, so many disappointed kids were turned away and headed back to the hall to engage in some spooky themed activities.

The tour began beside the elevator where they were met with a horde of clowns which chased them up the stairs. Before they could catch their breath they stumbled upon a group of masked seniors which pursued them down the corridor. The tour managed to get away but now the tour guide was 'injured' and luckily for them there was a 'hospital' just along the corridor.

As the pupils entered the former English corridor there was a doctor waiting for them who guided them through the corridors until they reached a darkly lit classroom. At the furthest end of the room something (an S6) was lying under a sheet. Many of the kids feigned bravery and marched over to the sheet whereas other, arguably wiser, kids stayed close to the door. The more cautious children were in luck as suddenly the senior girl sprang out from under the sheet, wailing and screaming and heading straight for the tour. Led by their tour-guides, the group raced out of the room, taking cover in a seemingly empty class. They were wrong. On a collection of desks an operation was taking place (well-lit by a phone hanging from the ceiling) When the 'doctors' began to operate, the 'patient' suddenly woke up and started to scream, accompanied by the loud beeping of a heart monitor (courtesy of a small speaker hidden underneath the desk).

The tour-guides quickly raced the group out of the room and straight towards the art department which had been transformed into a circus. The journey was perilous, filled with hauntingly jovial music, clowns with wide painted smiles and nervous laughter as some of the S1's recognised their buddies. The tour reached its climax in the final room where a group of 'haunted dolls' were dancing (sometimes to 'Dancing Queen'). The dolls chased the kids back down the stairs, where they escaped to the safety of the hall. There were lots of S1's who chose to go through this 'ordeal' many times so maybe it wasn't as terrifying as previously thought.



Sadly, the night went quickly and before long the prizes were being handed out to those who had the best costumes. Luckily we had a chance to speak to one of the winners. He was dressed in a very authentic 'Chucky' costume and he said;

"IT WAS GREAT! I WENT ON THE TOUR LIKE EIGHT TIMES. THE WHOLE THING WAS SCARY – BUT IN A GOOD WAY!"

The night ended on a high, with a wild dance off between two students competing for the title of "Best Dancer," there was no clear winner so both were awarded prizes. Soon the S1's were heading home, leaving behind the exhausted seniors to tidy up and rest their voices after hours of screaming as tour attractions. It could be easily said that the night was a great success, and although it couldn't last, the S1's memories of that fateful night definitely will.

Written by the Linlithgow Academy Newspaper Club
(directed by Iona Allam and Tabitha Cargill)



CONGRATULATIONS ALL ROUND...

Congratulations to our Community Champion Ron and his huge team of volunteers for their Britain in Bloom Gold award and winner of the Best Town category. How fantastic the town looked all summer as a result of all their hard and sustained work and we find it difficult to underestimate the huge difference it makes to the lives and happiness of our townsfolk and our many visitors. What we mustn't forget is that the work goes on all year and now preparations are already complete for Spring displays like this one in our St Johns Avenue bed.



We have to declare an interest because we have judged displays over the years at RHS flower shows with one of the Britain in Bloom judges this year, John Wheatley, and know him very well. Mind you, we are sure that we could have had no influence over John's independent judgement especially as we had no part in the judges being marched up to the top of Linlithgow Palace and down again after their dinner the evening before judging! The two judges did tell us what a lovely time they had being shown the wonderful displays throughout the town on that sunny day in August.

Seeing the enthusiasm of the Burgh Beautiful team reminds us that gardening can bring out the best in everyone, whether in their energy, creativity or friendships.

We recognise this same fulfilment in the many Oakwell Allotment holders we meet and in the past in the Annett House team with their Rigg garden behind the museum. What a loss this rigg garden is to Linlithgow, it was such a history lesson for all as well as a wonderful place to visit and delight in. You don't need to actually be gardening to get pleasure from gardens. Just as walking around our beautiful burgh gives pleasure to so many people, looking at wonderful gardens can gladden the heart.



As winter approaches we need to get more of the garden heartwarming from inside our homes. At the Gardens we have created Hopetoun Hollows -our indoor miniature garden - to bring out the youthful excitement in all of us even though all the plants and snow are artificial. But we also have an indoor miniature garden up in the Bird House alongside the Fairy Garden display and we are demonstrating the delights of indoor Terrarium gardening as you enter our emporium. What can gardening do for you this festive season?

Dougal Philip and Lesley Watson,
New Hopetoun Gardens



so much more than just a garden centre

www.newhopetoungardens.co.uk

NEW HOPETOUN GARDENS

MERRY CHRISTMAS!
AND A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS FOR YOUR SUPPORT OVER THE YEAR FROM ALL OUR TEAM



LINLITHGOW ACADEMY HOCKEY CLUB
56 registered players.
Junior and Senior Teams.

LINLITHGOW ACADEMY HOCKEY CLUB

Linlithgow Academy Hockey Club are a group of young girls who enjoy playing hockey to get involved in sport and stay active. Playing hockey, especially for school girls, is a great social activity which provides relief from the stress of school and a place to meet new people and make new friends.

The Hockey club is run by a committee of parents who have to organize coaching, training, strips, first aid, travel to away games and everything else involved in running a sports team. All the girls are very appreciative of their support in keeping the club going.

Over the years, the club has grown and we now have 56 registered players.

We currently have many girls on the senior team, ranging from S4 to S6. We also have a junior team for girls in years S2 to S3 and our S1 team played their first game on Saturday 3rd November which caters to those who are younger and want to join in.

We train every week after school on a Monday and Tuesday, and play home and away games every Saturday.

Although we have a great team right now, the hockey club is always looking for new members!

All ages in Linlithgow Academy are able to join, and will be welcomed with open arms, regardless whether you've ever played the game before. The aim of the

club is to get more girls involved in sport and to help them improve their skills in stamina, speed and overall health. It's a fantastic way of getting exercise and is great fun as well.

We would like to give a big thank you to **Rotary Club** for sponsoring us at the end of last season to kit the whole team in new blue tops, and to the **Round Table** back in January 2017 for funding the goalie kit and equipment.

Next year, the senior team is delighted to be going on a trip to Holland where we will be taking part in a hockey tournament, and enjoying life abroad for three days. Aside from the matches we will be playing, we'll be attending different activities such as going to a waterpark and watching a live hockey match.

However, this trip requires lots of fundraising from the girls and from the parents to help make it happen. Throughout the year, all the girls on the Holland team took part in stepping up as senior members of the club.

>> We produced a promotional video for our sponsors, and helped to organise many of the events that took place.

>> We had a Race Night at the Linlithgow Rugby Club, where participants could sponsor wooden horses in the hopes that it would win.

>> Bingo at Linlithgow Rose Football Club was also a huge success with a magnificent turnout. There was food, Tombola, a Raffle,

along with a huge Bingo game with some terrific prizes.

We currently have a few sponsors for Holland too. This year's support for the Holland trip has come from Paul Rolfe Estate Agents, Thomas Veitch Solicitors and Alan Steel Asset Management. A huge thanks goes out to everyone who supported our Rose Club Bingo Night, our Race Night, as well as teachers at the school who supported the Car Wash and Hampton Hotel raffle.

We would also like to thank Casra Sports for designing our Holland Hockey Strip and Leask Photography for taking our pictures.

All of the support helps to give the club more prominence in the town and will overall help us to achieve the goal of getting to Holland.

Anyone who is keen to discuss a sponsorship for the Holland Trip or even the club is highly encouraged to get in touch via the Academy or our Facebook page.

As The Linlithgow Academy Hockey Club goes from strength to strength your support and help is greatly appreciated.

Daisy MacKie

(Vice Captain Linlithgow Academy Hockey club)

THE THIN BLUE LINE IN LINLITHGOW



Constables Neil Hunter and Andrew Murray are the two community officers based in Linlithgow Police station which is located in the newly refurbished Tam Dalyell House at Linlithgow Partnership Centre.

We are keen to get involved in local community issues and want to hear your views and opinions. We will be publishing an article in the magazine every edition covering ongoing community matters which we are keen to address within the ward. **There is also a public assistance desk which will be open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.**

LINLITHGOW COMMUNITY POLICE SURGERY

Once again the public will be invited to drop by, meet their local officers and chat through any concerns they have or highlight any areas they feel we should be giving further attention to. Or if you want to discuss something which may require more privacy, arrangements can be made to speak with you by appointment at a police station or at your home address. You can also email the Constables at:

LinlithgowCPT@Scotland.pnn.police.uk

For future Linlithgow Community Police Surgeries log on to [West Lothian Police Facebook page](#) or [Linlithgow Facebook Page](#) or [Neighbourhood Watch Scotland](#) for dates or check local press for details.

If we don't know then we can't fix it!

PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS NIGHT OUT

On a night out then have fun and enjoy yourself. However, people can sometimes end up acting out of character and may end up regretting it later.

What can I do to keep safe on a night out?

- > Plan your night out and how to get home.
- > Take your charged mobile phone.
- > Stay with friends/avoid leaving parties or nights out with strangers.
- > Be sensible about how much alcohol you drink/pace yourself - a drunk person is more vulnerable & an easier target for criminals.
- > Watch your drinks - don't give anyone the opportunity to alter them with other substances. If you leave a drink unattended then don't go back to it.
- > If very drunk or unwell after just a small amount then ask a trusted friend /member of the club/pub management for help.
- > Don't take drugs or New Psychoactive Substances (sometimes misleadingly called 'legal highs'). For information on Drugs, New Psychoactive Substance and Solvent misuse, see our Keep Safe from Substance Misuse advice.
- > Don't have sexual intercourse with anyone who is unable to give their consent

because they are too drunk or under the influence of drugs. In Scots Law this is rape.

> Look after bags and valuables. Attracting attention to a phone, especially when leaving a club under the influence of alcohol, makes you more vulnerable to criminals.

> Get more information by looking at our Keep your Valuables secure advice.

> Make sure you have enough money left at the end of the night to pay for your journey home.

> Stay alert at cash machines. Hide PIN, be aware of who's behind you and keep money out of view. Avoid using them if you've had too much to drink as you'll be more vulnerable to being the target of a robbery.

For more information about getting to or returning home from your night out safely, see our [Keep Safe on the Move](#) advice.

Ensure your Christmas is memorable.

CALLING ALL PARENTS

Over the past few weekends there have been complaints from residents in various areas of Linlithgow about large groups of youths congregating.

Unfortunately some of these groups have been involved in the consumption of alcohol, setting fires, shouting, swearing and littering the areas. The police and other partners are aware of these issues and will be conducting patrols in the areas.

This behaviour is having a negative impact on the local communities and there are also concerns regarding the personal safety of those involved in this conduct. The police would encourage parents in Linlithgow to have an open discussion with their children, as to where they are going and what they are doing when out with friends in the evenings and check the contents of their rucksacks.

Active parenting skills are required to challenge and check on their children's whereabouts and encourage young people to make good decisions, focusing on keeping young people and communities safe.

BOGUS CALLERS / WORKMEN IN LINLITHGOW AREA

We have been receiving calls regarding bogus callers and workmen. With the recent high winds and bad weather unfortunately it is expected that these persons will again return and attempt to take advantage of residents of Linlithgow and the surrounding area.

Please take the following precautions:-

- > Do not feel pressured to agree immediate work. Never listen to scare stories and beware of traders who suddenly appear after storms, floods or even snow and avoid claims that a low price is only available if you sign up right away.

> Do not agree to buy from the first person who calls. Ask yourself if you really want these goods or services.

> Do not pay cash up front. Never pay for work before it is completed and don't hand over large sums of money.

> Do shop around if you decide you need work done. Get a minimum of three quotes from reputable traders. Why not consider the council's Trusted Trader Scheme - which is administered by the Trading Standards Department and can provide details of reliable local traders to carry out work around your home or garden.

> Do report them. Don't ever feel embarrassed if you feel you have been the victim of doorstep crime. If you feel threatened, unsafe or suspicious of a caller then contact police immediately on 999.

> If you see something suspicious in your area or want more advice on doorstep crime than contact police on 101, taking note of descriptions of people and vehicles used where possible.

You can also contact police anonymously via Crimestoppers tel: 0800 555 111.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCOTLAND



Police Scotland is one of many partnership agencies who are working alongside Neighbourhood Watch Scotland in order to develop and promote the Alert system. This system allows users to receive alerts from Neighbourhood Watch and Police Scotland. Police Scotland can send an alert to all users who may be effected or who may have an interest in the crime.

Scheme is used to alert the public about:

- > Crime Trends – recent crimes that have occurred in their area, housebreakings etc.
- > Missing Persons – Details of High Risk missing persons can be broadcast to specific areas.

Members of the public can register online and the registration process is very simple. You can register as an individual or an association such as a residents association or community council/community group.

The key to the Neighbourhood Watch Alert system being a success is YOU, we require the public to register online; the more people who register the better. You can register at <https://www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk> And follow the link to JOIN

You can get more advice on a range of topics on the Police Scotland website.



Alternatively you can email LinlithgowCPT@Scotland.pnn.police.uk or pop into the station and ask to speak to our Community officers, PC's Murray and Hunter.

Regards,
Your Local Community Police – Linlithgow
Website: www.scotland.police.uk
Twitter: [@policescotland](https://twitter.com/policescotland)
Facebook: www.facebook.com/policescotland



FESTIVE SHOPPING

On Thursday 29th November, from 5pm until 8pm, Linlithgow's High Street will be open for business!

Twenty-two of our unique, independent retailers will be operating extended hours on the day to allow loyal customers to get some leisurely Christmas shopping done in a relaxed, friendly and festive atmosphere.

Whichever shops you visit, you'll be met with a mince pie or mulled wine, special deals only available on the night, and the chance to win your share of £200 in Loyalty

Lottery vouchers, which can be redeemed any time at participating outlets in the town centre.

Entertainment both in and outdoors promises to keep spirits bright throughout, so be sure to mark the date in your diary and we'll see you on the night!

Please see the "News" section of the Linlithgow.com website for full details of participating businesses, who are participating in the "late-opening lottery" and where to get some sweet treats and deals!



INTERACTIVE LINLITHGOW VISITOR GUIDE

The perennially popular Linlithgow Visitor Guide has been brought up to date and online! You can find it by visiting the home page of the "Linlithgow.com" website.

Featuring an exhaustive list of Linlithgow's fantastic town centre businesses, as well as maps, accommodation and attractions across a wider area, the Linlithgow Visitor Guide has all the information you could need as a resident or visitor to the town.

The digital version adds links to further details about each entry, so if you're using a computer or mobile device to explore Linlithgow, you need look no further. Even the shiny, brand-new businesses announced in this issue are included, so you can be confident it's bang up to date – please share it freely! Hard copies of the original 2018-19 guide are still available, so please get in touch with us if you'd like some (info@linlithgow.info).



NEW BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: DU VIN BOUCHERS



The old Scots expression "grab a pew" has now taken on a whole new meaning on Linlithgow High Street thanks to the recently opened wine bar at 62 High Street! The intimate Du Vin Bouchers lives up to its aim of being quirky and different by installing three repurposed church pews and crafting the bar from other church fittings.

Owner Catherine Lawrie, a talented stained-glass artist, has further stamped her individuality on the cosy wine bar by making two stained glass panels for it: "I'm a great admirer of Charles

Rennie Mackintosh and I felt inspired to make the panel in his 'Glasgow Rose' style immediately after the devastating fire that destroyed Glasgow School of Art."

Incredibly, six butcher's hooks were uncovered after two false ceilings were removed in the centuries-old building: "I asked the local historian Bruce Jamieson if he could do some research, and he found that the place had been a butcher's shop in 1880. He also came up with lots of other interesting facts about the building and I'm very grateful to him."



Catherine added that her wines both by the glass and bottle were reasonably priced, and there was a limited range of spirits and craft beers. She also planned to offer cheese platters in the not-too-distant future.

No wine-snobbery at Du Vin Bouchers: relaxation and enjoyment are key!

NEW BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: MASON BELLES KITCHEN



The multi-award-winning chef patron of Mason Belles Kitchen in the former Livingston's Restaurant on Linlithgow High Street has a problem - and she couldn't be happier: "people do understand that we're fully booked! They tell us how pleased they are it's going so well. I've been completely booked for several Saturdays, but people are saying they will try another time."

When she heard that Livingston's was up for sale, Linsey instinctively felt it

was the right place for the restaurant she'd long dreamed of opening:

"I worked here for a year as second chef in 2004, but it didn't have the extension then. It could not have been better for what I want to do, and Linlithgow is a great location. In over 20 years in the business, I've gained a reputation as an innovative and creative chef, bringing classics to the table, with a contemporary twist at affordable prices. This is exactly what I want to achieve at Mason Belles and there has been some wonderfully encouraging feedback!"

Mason Belles Kitchen offers brunch/lunch 11am - 4pm with a number of unusual brunch and small plates.

Prices range from around £5 to £7. The main menu is served from 5pm-9pm Wednesday to Saturday, using locally-sourced produce, including



game and a vegan menu, which is proving increasingly popular.

Linsey concluded by telling us that the aim of Mason Belles Kitchen, apart of course from providing quality food, is to have a place that is relaxed, cosy, and family-friendly. And the name?

"My husband Stuart and I loved Mason as a name, and our wee boy is now two-and-a-half. Belle is named after my gran."

AWARD WINNERS

Step up to the catwalk, Linlithgow, you are as beautiful as they come! Prestigious awards have been raining down on our town centre and its inspirational businesses and community groups with such ferocity that the bombardment of praise can no longer be humbly dismissed.

Hot on the heels of Burgh Beautiful's spectacular victory (Gold: Best Town) at the UK-wide Britain In Bloom awards earlier this month, the popular Platform 3 pub on Linlithgow High Street has scooped two top awards in the prestigious Scottish Licensed Trade News annual competition for the second time in five years.

The pub, renowned for its charity fundraising efforts, has been named Independent Pub of the Year and manager Becky Smith has received the

coveted Bartender of the Year accolade.

Anne Gibson, who owns the pub along with husband Ian, said they were both "still reeling" from their success at the glittering awards ceremony in Glasgow: "it's such a great achievement to win two of these prestigious awards. This is due to Becky, our fabulous manager, and the team, and to our amazing customers. Without them there would be nothing to celebrate."

Ian Gibson said Platform 3 raised over £10,000 in a variety of ways, including the annual duck race, quizzes, tastings and sponsorship: "We have supported local charities like Linlithgow Reed Band, the Children's Gala Day Committee, and the Deacons Court, as well as various national charities."

Looking further back than just the last few weeks, we add Far From The Madding Crowd as "Independent Bookshop of the



Year" (British Book Awards, 2017) and Sebastian Kobelt received his just desserts as "Chocolatier of the Year" (Scottish Food Awards, 2018).

Linlithgow is also currently in the running for "Scotland's Most Beautiful High Street" in 2018 (Scotland's Towns Partnership). By the time you read this, you'll be able to check the results online. Whatever the future (at time of writing) holds, we know Linlithgow deserves it!

LINLITHGOW LADIES CHOIR AT THE ALBERT HALL



“Definitely one of the highlights in the choir’s history and it’s been a truly unforgettable experience.”

On a cold Friday morning at the start of November, fifty-four members of Linlithgow Ladies Choir and twenty-nine supporters set off for London. Along with the Rugby Club Male Voice Choir, we were going to take part in the Festival of Brass and Voices Gala Concert in aid of Cancer Research held in the Royal Albert Hall on 3 November. The first Gala Concert was a local affair in Yorkshire. However, there was so much interest that it transferred to the Royal Albert Hall thirty years ago. Since then, concerts have been held every three years and now attract male and female choirs from all over the UK and Europe. To date, they have raised over £500,000 for Cancer Research which will be supplemented by this year’s total.

The choir and supporters travelled variously by train, plane and coach. The coach travellers braved a very early start as they joined members of the men’s choir at 5.30am to start their 10 hour journey. Others had opted for a more leisurely start to the day. One notable group had swooped on an early booking First Class deal on the train. After a slight panic due to a signal failure at

Haymarket it was a special treat to enjoy the comfort, food and drink supplied by LNER and the ladies, by their own account, made the most of it. Whatever the method of travel, both Linlithgow choirs had arrived at the Dorsett Hotel in Shepherd’s Bush by Friday evening and, after dining in local restaurants, retired for a good night’s sleep to prepare for the long day ahead.

Alarm clocks were set early so that we could have breakfast before getting on a coach at 8.15am to take us to the Albert Hall. The first part of the morning was a major exercise to get nearly 1500 singers into their seats. By 10.00am, the rehearsal was underway under the baton of William Relton, the Musical Director and Conductor, now in his late eighties. After weeks of practice, under the inspiring and meticulous direction of **Kirsty Ball**, our Musical Director, we felt well prepared but it was a real thrill to hear the massed choir coming together to sing for the first time in such magnificent surroundings. When the brass bands, the world-famous Cory and Grimethorpe Colliery Bands, joined us for the Hallelujah Chorus, it was a special moment.

After a break in the afternoon to grab some food and get changed for the evening, we returned to the Albert Hall at 6.00pm so that we could be seated

well before the audience. While the rehearsal had been a great experience, it was even more exciting to sing for thousands of people who responded with enthusiastic applause to the choirs and the bands. The programme ranged from the ladies choir’s affecting Another Day through the male choir’s spiritual A-men to the joint choir’s Gloria by Mozart. The bands’ programme was equally varied as they moved seamlessly from Lohengrin to Bohemian Rhapsody. The Scottish contribution was enhanced by the Fochaber Fiddlers who got everyone’s feet tapping, especially when they finished with a rousing ‘500 Miles’. The concert ended in the Royal Albert Hall’s traditional manner with Land of Hope and Glory sung with enthusiasm by choirs and audience.

On Sunday, tired but happy, the Linlithgow choirs and supporters made their way back home with lots of good memories of a wonderful event.

For the Ladies Choir, the concert was a great start to their 15th Anniversary year. Sam Moore, the Choir Chair said,

“Some of us attended this event in 2012, but since then our choir has grown in numbers, ability and confidence. We have a great team of volunteers who make events like this possible, but every member of the choir should be proud of what we’ve achieved. Even those who weren’t able to join us on the trip supported us in our preparations, including an open rehearsal where we raised over £350 to add to the donations for Cancer Research. It’s definitely one of the highlights in the choir’s history and it’s been a truly unforgettable experience.”

Patricia Russell

THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL

A FANTASTIC EXPERIENCE

“Memorable, fun and at times moving - especially when the lights were dimmed and we sang the hymn Calm is the Sea.”

On Saturday 3 November members and supporters of Linlithgow Rugby Club Male Voice and Linlithgow Ladies Choirs joined forces to support a “Gala Festival of Brass & Voices” at London’s Royal Albert Hall. They combined with choirs from the UK and Europe to form a “Festival Choir” over 1,000 voices strong. The addition of two of the world’s leading Brass Bands provided an impressive assembly of artists dedicated to providing an evening of glorious music in a fundraising Concert for Cancer Research UK.

Deputy Chairman **Harry Lynch** was the “CEO” of the Rugby Club Choir’s logistics planning - ably supported by Tony Drennan. In terms of the organisation, Harry commented

“The challenge was blending the arrangements specific to our Choir with the overall Master Plan of the Festival organisers. There were many moving parts to co-ordinate, but I’m pleased to say that everything went smoothly, we had a brilliant time - and arrived home without losing anyone!”

The task of preparing the Rugby Club Choir to be “Concert ready” was shared by accompanist **Pam Amattler** and Musical Director **Jim McGuigan**. Managing this preparation in parallel with the Choir’s other engagements was a real challenge as Jim explained. “The Programme contained some songs that were in our repertoire, but quite a few that were not. The guys put in a tremendous amount of work and from comments passed between the Choirs we knew that on the night we were really well prepared and gave of our very best”. Choir Chairman **Chris Thomas** added

“The combined Male Choirs singing Wagner’s Pilgrim’s Chorus and the full Festival Choir singing Handel’s Hallelujah Chorus with the Brass Band accompaniment are moments we will all remember -and are probably pieces that are at their most magnificent when performed with such a large number of singers.”

For newer members, this was their first visit to the venue. Rod Aird commented

“Nothing quite prepared me for the experience of singing in the Royal Albert Hall with over 1,000 other voices. The sound was stunning. I felt proud to be part of the Male Voice Choir, to sing with a great baritone section and to be able to play a small part in the Concert. It was memorable, fun and at times moving - especially when the lights were dimmed and we sang the hymn Calm is the Sea. Was it worth spending over a year preparing for it - absolutely!”

The Festival also enabled family and friends to get together - as Janie McGill (husband Colin sings with the Tenors) explained “This was my second trip to hear the choir in such an amazing venue and it also gave us a chance to meet up with our daughters, sons-in-law and grandchildren. What we really enjoyed was going to the Concert as a family and we all loved the experience! The whole evening was just such an amazing musical treat of the highest standard.”

the 1000+ strong choir. They did us proud. A big thank you to all involved. A memory for life.”

It’s hard to distil the impact of such an experience into a few words, but Harry Lynch is better at this than most. “People are motivated by many different things. The Rugby Club Choir has always been about fundraising for good causes, being the best that we can be, singing with passion and developing friendships. This Festival was a success by all of these measures and it was fantastic that Linlithgow was able to provide two top class Choirs for such a prestigious event. If this Festival raises over £100,000 to help defeat cancer - as some previous ones have done - it will be the perfect ending to a brilliant event”.

Back home, the Choir now moves on to a full Christmas programme. Highlights for next year include a visit to France and hosting an Italian Choir. Plans for 2020 include a first tour to Italy, when they will sing in Florence. New members are very welcome.



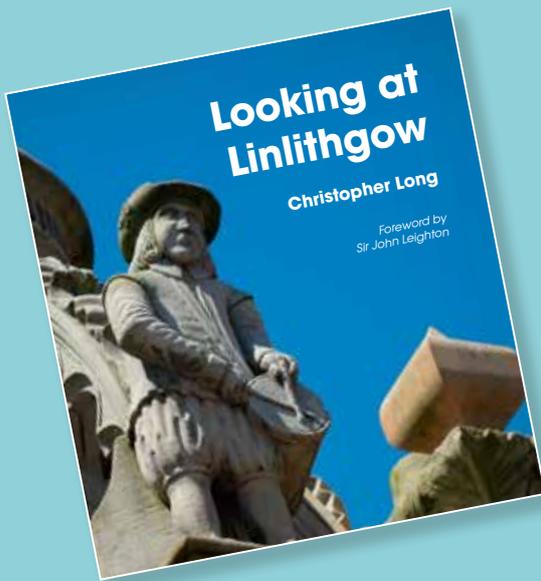
Hector Woodhouse, a supporter who travelled from Linlithgow gave this assessment:

“What an amazing concert in a magnificent venue! The sound of the massed choirs and the brass bands was marvellous. Our lads in white shirts and kilts, and our lassies with their pink scarves were easy to pick out in

If you are interested in joining the Choir or would like any further information, please contact Harry Lynch on 07540 634550.

Chris Thomas

LOOKING AT LINLITHGOW



I mentioned the upcoming publication of this book in my Arts page last time, and felt I wanted to know more, so I arranged to meet local author Chris Long, to discuss the content in more detail, and was lucky to see the proof copy of the book last month. It's on my Christmas wish list.

I knew a little of how artists over the centuries had been inspired by the history and appearance of Linlithgow, but I was amazed at the amount of related art that exists, and indeed how much can be seen locally. Chris has done an outstanding job of pulling it all together in this publication.

The book is divided into five parts: art related to Linlithgow's history; art of the 19th century; art to show the work and play of the community and its individuals; art showing how Linlithgow, its history and its icons have been used by businesses and organisations to promote what they manufacture or do; and art of the contemporary era.

This is the first time a book has been written that looks at the portrayal in art of the town as it has evolved from a royal residence, to being a centre of trade and industry to the important tourist and residential town that we now know.

Chris has spent several years researching all the artworks, organising copyright consent and writing a unique book that uses artwork to illustrate all aspects of Linlithgow now and in the past. Linlithgow has history aplenty and here you will see it through the eyes of artists over the centuries.

Many gifted artists and photographers have captured the beautiful Royal Burgh of Linlithgow. Their paintings, sketches and photographs are held in many UK and international museums, libraries and galleries. Chris has located pictures in the House of Lords by Mary Louise Coulouris, the original picture by reconstruction artist, Ivan Lapper, in the Council's Livingston archives, the delicate 1914 watercolour of the drummer at the Marches by Sybil Henderson, as well as locating the enigmatic picture, allegedly by David Allan which hangs at the National Trust for Scotland property, Alloa Tower.

Well-known artists such as J.M.W. Turner, John Abraham Slezar and many Victorian artists have drawn here. Hill and Adamson, the 19th century photographers, took some of the first photographs of the town. All of these are represented in the book, but I was also very pleased to see that the work of current artists are included, such as Douglas Cook whose work I love, and which has been exhibited recently in The Line Gallery.

The book also covers images of the town and its people in textiles, mosaics, sculptures and more quirky illustrations such as that of Linlithgow Palace on the lid of a pot of jam! I hope that residents, as well as visitors, will take an interest in the art located around town, and make an effort to take some time to take in the many accessible examples. The tour would include Tam Dalyell House, the Burgh Halls, Linlithgow primary school, street and road signs, Anderson the butcher, the station and the Low Port Centre amongst others. Sadly the banner which was in the station (above right) was recently stolen.

Here's hoping it is back in place by the time you read this.

*The book has been published by Linlithgow Civic Trust, one part of Linlithgow Burgh Trust (www.lbt.scot). The other part, Burgh Beautiful, is the dynamic, award-winning group that is well-known in the town. Although it does not have the same profile, Linlithgow Civic Trust also fulfils an active role in the town. Its purposes are to stimulate public interest in, and care for, the beauty, history and character of Linlithgow and its surroundings and to encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in Linlithgow. The Trust has previously published a number of quality publications, including *Linlithgow Old and New*, *Linlithgow - Architecture and History of a Scottish Royal Burgh*, *Street Names of Linlithgow*, as well as *Walks around Linlithgow*. Most of these are for sale in local retail outlets.*

"Looking at Linlithgow" is available to buy, priced at £20, from Far From the Madding Crowd, The Post Office and other local retail outlets, or direct from Linlithgow Burgh Trust at www.lbt.scot.



On Saturday 1st December there will be a book signing in Far From the Madding Crowd.

Read about the latest Art inspired by Mary Queen of Scots and her link with Linlithgow in my article on page 25 of the magazine.

Pat Swan



MARRIED COUPLES ALLOWANCE AND PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS IN UNISON



Created by Ian Morrison
References from www.Gov.uk

www.morrisonpwm.com
T. 01506 200 580
Enquiries@morrisonpwm.com



A new client to Morrison PWM held discussions with their accountant and with the updated income figures a very specific set of circumstances arose which create a good opportunity.

Others may also be in a similar position so well worth considering the following.

Marriage Allowances allows spouses/civil partners to transfer £1,190 of any unused Personal Allowance to each other provided the partner is not paying higher rate tax.

Case Study/Example:

Income of £44,500 in 18/19.

This as it stands means the client will not be eligible for the Marriage Allowance as the income is above the £43,430 threshold (Scotland).

However, if a **net pension contribution is made of £2,880**, this in effect expands the Basic Rate Band by the gross figure of £3,600. This means the £43,430 threshold figure is in fact “expanded”. This would allow the client to benefit from Marriage Allowance and could transfer the £1,190 unused PA. I have used the figure of £3,600 gross as this is the well-known maximum contribution which will receive tax relief for non-earners or those with non-pensionable

earnings. In this example the amount required would be the difference between the income and the threshold in this example = £1,070 gross or £856 net would be enough to cover the higher rate income.

When working through the long term impact this is particularly effective if the funds remain in the pension wrapper for many years and are not withdrawn.

How might this affect you?

The **critical factor** in all of this is what the purpose of the money is and when it may in fact be used. If you are not likely to draw on the funds then the upfront tax saving is significant and beneficial. On the other hand if you are likely to draw the funds and live off the money within a relatively short period (say 5 years or so) then the impact of the upfront tax relief is heavily offset by the tax on the way out. None-the-less there is the potential for some uplift.

I think this case study also serves as a good reminder that non-earners and low income individuals can still benefit from the de minimus pension contribution of £2,880, which is grossed up by basic rate tax relief to £3,600 (£720 from the taxman can't be too bad). And there is scope for higher rate relief too if you find yourself in that position.

Past performance is not a reliable guide to the future. The value of investments and the income from them can go down as well as up. The value of tax reliefs depend upon individual circumstances and tax rules may change. The FCA does not regulate tax advice. This newsletter is provided strictly for general consideration only and is based on our understanding of law and HM Revenue & Customs practice as at June 2018. No action must be taken or refrained from based on its contents alone. Accordingly, no responsibility can be assumed for any loss occasioned in connection with the content hereof and any such action or inaction. Professional advice is necessary for every case.

THE ARTS

“THE V&A ON THE TAY”

V&A Museum, Dundee



I've been given a special dispensation this time to mention Art outwith Linlithgow! The new V&A in Dundee is the first ever dedicated design museum in Scotland and the only other V&A museum anywhere in the world outside London. It's the biggest Art event to happen in Scotland for years! I was very lucky to be one of the first through the doors on opening day in September and spent over five hours there savouring the atmosphere and enjoying seeing the positive reactions of visitors as they wandered through what is a remarkable piece of architecture. I don't have room to write more but you absolutely must take time to go and visit. It's free unless you want to see the touring exhibition, and it's worth it just to see the spectacular building inside and out.

Burgh Halls

Another must do is Helen Flockhart's exhibition, "Linger Awhile" which continues in the Burgh Halls until January. Read more about it in my article on page 25 and try to go to the opening event on 22 November at 6.30pm.

Linlithgow Pottery

The Creative Workshop which used to be in the Vennel, has reopened and rebranded. The new studio is at 226a High Street and is now called Linlithgow Pottery. Concentrating on pottery and printmaking, Hepzibah is running some special Christmas classes

LINLITHGOW POTTERY
November Classes & Workshops
SATURDAY POTTERY CLASSES
17 November - 15 December 11-1:30 & 2-4:30
£200. Includes all materials and firings/pre book
Christmas card workshops
17 & 24 From 12-2 & 3-5 /pre book
£40. Includes all materials to make ten cards
(more available at an additional cost/kit sets available for purchase)
Paint your own baubles & yarn bowls!
29 November 3-8 / Drop in
Priced by piece
All work will be out of the kiln in time for Christmas!
GIFT VOUCHERS
NOW AVAILABLE!
07957 784 020
226 High Street, Linlithgow G24 7TS
LinlithgowPottery@gmail.com

if you fancy a Christmas get together with friends, or just some me time yourself. Making your own Christmas cards by cutting your own lino print is so satisfying and anyone can do this as you don't really even need to be able to draw. Gift vouchers are also available and would make excellent Christmas presents. See the details above.

Red Door

The final Red Door event of the year takes place on Wednesday 28 November in St Peter's Church at 8pm. Jyotsna Srikanth, a superb violinist from Bangalore, plays in the (Indian) Carnatic tradition, with percussion accompaniment (see flyer above). I suspect this is a first for the town!

Unfortunately I've missed the events to date, but I'm hoping the new year will bring more prestigious artists to the Red Door venue.

Jyotsna Srikanth
Bangalore violin virtuoso plays music to touch the soul with masterly percussion accompaniment.

Linlithgow String Orchestra

The Advent concert by Linlithgow String Orchestra at St Michael's Parish Church is sure to make you feel Christmassy – it will include the score to Raymond Briggs' The Snowman, which is arguably the most cherished soundtrack to the Christmas season. It's on 24th November at 7.30pm, entry by donation. You'll probably have a laugh too as Bruce Jamieson is the compere.

Linlithgow Burgh Trust

On Tuesday 22 January 2019, at 7.30pm there will be a free talk in Cross house, open to all, and no need to book. This will feature an illustrated joint talk by Chris Long, and LBT member and local historian/author Laurie Alexander. Chris will be speaking about "Looking at Linlithgow", the LCT book published on 17 November which Chris authored (see more about this in my article on page 20). Laurie will talk about his forthcoming publication examining how the High Street has evolved over the centuries.

Looking at Linlithgow
Christopher Long
Foreword by Sir John Leighton



The Line Gallery

The Gallery invites you to go along and help them bring in the season of good will and peace to all, on Saturday November 24th from 2pm to 4pm - there will be mulled wine and mince pies for the opening of the exhibition, their contribution to the splendid Advent Fair in Linlithgow. "A Time for Angels" will continue until Monday December 24th, and The Line will be open on Mondays from November 26th.

To help on the way to domestic quiet and calm, they are delighted to bring together a mixed exhibition with pieces from artists in many media with whom they have worked throughout the last year. There are names you will recognise and others which will perhaps be less familiar, but what there will be in common are good cheer, skilled work and lively imagination. Their words, not mine, and it sounds like you should make an effort to visit this lovely local gallery.

Please do keep in touch so that I know what's going on - patswan@virginmedia.com. I hope you have time to experience some ART this month.



Pat Swan

patswan@virginmedia.com.



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"architecture is just art we live in"

BOOK REVIEW A CHRISTMAS CAROL BY CHARLES DICKENS

There are many versions of A Christmas Carol available for reading, listening to and viewing over the festive period. It is a tale that many of us are familiar with and associate strongly with the advent of Christmas. However it may come as a surprise that prior to the publication of Dickens' timeless masterpiece in 1843 there was a marked decline in feelings of celebration and joyful spirit. Dickens is widely credited, through the popularity of this novel and several other writings, for a revival in the nation's consciousness of Christmas while also encouraging people to think outwardly and charitably of others, especially at this time of year.

A Christmas Carol tells the tale of the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge, long isolated from family and friends, who is visited in one night by a series of ghostly visitors who aim to teach him the true meaning of Christmas. For any of us who have ever been awake in the dead of night, listening to

obscure noises and creaks that have the power to transform ghoulishly within one's fertile imagination, we can imagine all too well the terror that must have gripped Scrooge's heart when he heard the clanking and rattling of chains that heralded the arrival of the spectre of his former business partner, Jacob Marley.

"The bells ceased as they had begun, together. They were succeeded by a clanking noise, deep down below, as if some person were dragging a heavy chain over the casks in the wine-merchant's cellar".

Next we meet the Ghost of Christmas Past who transports Ebenezer back to his younger days and shows the reader that this penny-pinching mercenary was once a carefree, giddy young man surrounded by happiness and love. We visit an episode from Scrooge's life where we see the stark contrast between Scrooge's tight-fisted treatment of his own clerk - who is only permitted a very tiny fire with rationed coals - with the way that

the Scrooge of yesteryear was treated by his first benefactor, the beloved Fezziwig. Scrooge is enlivened and invigorated by the experience of revisiting this joyful period of his life:

"He had acted like a man out of his wits. His heart and soul were in the scene, and with his former self. He corroborated everything, remembered everything, enjoyed everything, and underwent the strangest agitation".

The Ghosts of Christmas Present and Christmas Future take the novel into increasingly uncomfortable territory for Scrooge, who is forced to face some interesting truths about his life and how others view him. They also show him how Christmas is celebrated by others across the country and from all walks of life. They show him how people think fondly and tenderly of those nearest and dearest to them and how their lives are richer, not in wealth or status, but in happiness. Dickens' message is strong: when the day of reckoning comes, human kindness is what matters most of all.

Although A Christmas Carol was first published over 150 years ago, the language used by Dickens is very readable - it does not feel archaic. Instead, it is accessibly nostalgic, harking back to a more

formal era. Dickens excels in rich and vibrant descriptions of characters, places and feelings. The novel itself is surprisingly short in length considering what an impact it has made on the festive season throughout the generations. It is dark and macabre in places yet Dickens balances these passages with wry wit and juxtaposing light-hearted humour, none more well-placed than Scrooge's infamous outbursts of "bah humbug!" A Christmas Carol is a cosy armchair read, perfect for the season: a timeless classic well worth revisiting in its original form.

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





NAMIBIA. HERE WE COME!

THE BUILD NAMIBIA 2019 EXPEDITION 30 SCOUTS AND LEADERS FROM THE FORTH REGION JULY 2019

We are a group of four Linlithgow scouts – Alison, David, Emily and Vicki – who have been involved in the World Scout Organisation for years and are now widening our horizons by taking part in a scouting trip to Namibia in July 2019 for 3 weeks. This is a great opportunity for us because it will change our outlook on life, build new friendships and enable us to do something that most people don't get to. We are greatly looking forward to our adventure, learning about other cultures and helping the local scouts and school children.

In 2017 the Forth Region Scouts (incorporating Scouts from West Lothian, Falkirk, Clackmannanshire, and Stirling & Trossachs districts) teamed up with Scouts of Namibia to build a kindergarten, install a borehole and create a market garden for the small village of Omakange. The kindergarten has made a huge difference to the younger children (who were previously children taught under a tree by a local volunteer teacher!), providing a safe place for lessons, providing basic facilities and creating space for play. The community garden is developing well.

The 2017 team also created temporary facilities for a Scout camp site and provided 40 second-hand bicycles for the young people of the community. Scouts of Namibia have in recent years started a programme to get scout groups started in schools all over the country and this is proving to be a great success. The scout

camp site set up by the 2017 team in Omakange has since been used for national and local scouting events.

Omakange is a small dispersed village (population approximately 700) located 800km North of the Namibian capital Windhoek, and 100km South of the border with Angola. The village is in an arid area, north-west of the Etosha National Park. It is inhabited by people from five local tribes and is extremely poor in terms of both finance and resources.

The Build Namibia 2019 expedition is taking another group of 30 scouts and leaders from the Forth Region, back to Omakange in July 2019. We will be making the facilities at the Scout campsite permanent, to enable the Scouts of Namibia to continue to use the campsite for many years into the future. We will also be expanding the water supply for the garden and kindergarten, and helping with the building of a small house for the caretaker.

Beside the construction project we will also be working again with the local school, which is about 7km outside the village. In 2017 the team visited the school on a daily basis, to share their experience of education, encourage the learners at the school to go on to higher education, and to deliver lessons in health and hygiene. We are planning to provide similar input to the school in 2019. We will also be working with the Scouts of Namibia to develop gardening training which will be offered to the local population via evening classes, in order that they get the most out of the community garden. We also plan to deliver further training e.g. tuition in bicycle

maintenance so the bikes donated can be looked after in the long term, and first aid to the local scouts.

We are currently finalising details, planning the construction work and developing the skills of our team. After two training camps where we have been taught how to cope with the climate (which is very unlike the Scottish climate!), first aid and basic construction techniques. All 30 of us have really bonded with each other since we first all met and we all feel really excited to be going on this trip.

The four of us attend Linlithgow Academy and fundraising at school has been helpful. However between us we need to raise £9,600 for our share of the building supplies, travel costs and equipment, so we have lots of fundraising activities planned in Linlithgow.

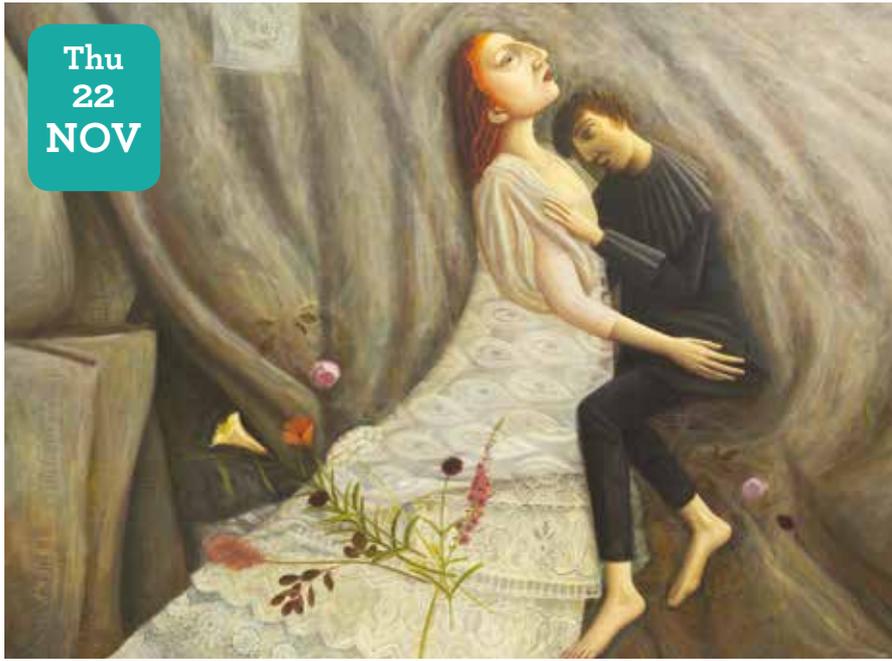
**Fri
7
DEC**

For example we are hosting a variety concert on Friday 7th December at 7.00pm at the Academy, which includes the Home Grown choir, the Octoberists band (comprising 3 Linlithgow Academy pupils), Magic Matt (ex-Linlithgow Academy pupil) and The Undecided band (who are writing a song specially for the concert). So please make sure to come along and support our trip, and look out for our other fundraising activities!

The Linlithgow team

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS RETURNS TO LINLITHGOW

Thu
22
NOV



The eye-catching cover on the last issue of *The Black Bitch* showed an image from the current exhibition, “Linger Awhile”, at the Burgh Halls. I arranged to meet with the Artist, Helen Flockhart, to chat about her inspiration for this body of work, after attending the opening night and discovering its relevance to Linlithgow. Her work also fascinated me in terms of the depth of colour, the layers and the intricate detail in every piece. It's one of my favourite exhibitions to date in the gallery.

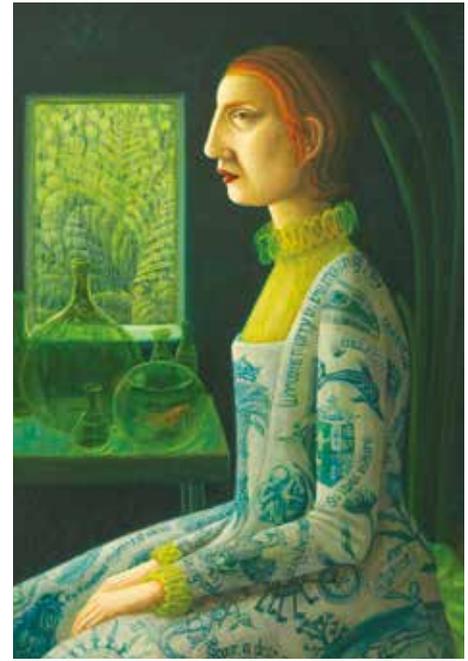
It is also believed to be the first major exhibition of new artworks dedicated to Mary Queen of Scots for decades, so it is perfect that it should be displayed in the town of her birth, and is timely given the release of the film of that title in January next year (a complete coincidence). Seems a good time to remind yourself of the Mary Queen of Scots story, and go to see Helen's interpretation of some of the major events and personal tragedies in her short life.

Helen had been approached by the Gallery with thoughts for a retrospective exhibition, and when visiting to discuss the proposal, decided to head up the hill to the Palace, which she'd never visited before, despite living in Glasgow. Becoming somewhat obsessed with Mary's interesting and turbulent life she decided it would be good to do a painting for her forthcoming

exhibition, given the Linlithgow connection. This led to another and then another and she ended up producing 17 pieces on the theme, after working on it tirelessly for just over a year. Helen has rarely worked at this pace before and combined with the immense amount of research she obviously did about that period in history, she described that year as an intense and enriching one. She spoke to me in great depth about Mary's life, and I recommend you attend the Gallery Tour on 22nd November at 6.30pm in the gallery, which will hopefully bring the exhibition to life. Booking is required on 01506 340700 (£5 incl refreshments).

I've included two of my favourite pieces here. The painting “Linger Awhile”, which was one of the first to be completed, portrays Mary's first wedding to Francis. Bright tumbled wildflowers recall the abandonment and carelessness of youth. They were only 15 and 14 at the time and are shown curled up in an affectionate embrace, almost engulfed in crumpled bedding and lace from her petticoat. Intricate patterns of the Scottish thistle, French fleur de lys and Tudor rose form the lace of her dress, as if the symbolism of history was an integral part of her outfit - the detail is breathtaking.

In “Lachrymose Window”, Mary sits patiently by a window covered in thick fern and ivy, a nod to the 19 years she spent incarcerated by Queen Elizabeth.



Again her dress has detailed embroidery featuring references to people and events in her life such as Queen Elizabeth, a banner from the Scottish battle of Carberry Hill, the Scottish minister John Knox as a crow, an inflammatory poster used after her marriage to Bothwell, and a dolphin for Mary's first husband Francis.

The other fascinating feature of all these paintings is the feeling that Helen is bringing in an element of self-portraiture, with her auburn hair seemingly reflected in how Mary looks. Please take your reading glasses when you visit this exhibition and get up close to see the detail.

The same work has previously been exhibited at the Arusha Gallery in Edinburgh, and every painting was sold during that show, a great situation for an artist to be in when hanging an exhibition in a new gallery, and a reason why this is a must see. However if you love her work there is a beautifully presented catalogue available to purchase.

Here's hoping this exhibition and the upcoming film give our tourist trade a boost.

Pat Swan



WILL MY KIDS EVER BE ABLE TO MOVE OUT!

Susan Ralston, Virtue Money



Virtue Money

According to recent research from the BBC, people in their 20's who are looking to rent are having to fork out a large percentage of their monthly wage – from 30% to 60% depending on where they'd like to live.

Using the “locator map” on the BBC website it is estimated that rental for a one-bedroom apartment in the Linlithgow area will be in the region of £556 per month. That means that if you earn £20,000 then your rent payment is 33% of your monthly wage.

The August 2018 “Living Home Standards Report” based on from Shelter Scotland tells us that:

- > 1 in 5 renters can't meet rent without regularly missing out on social activities
- > 1 in 4 renters struggle to meet their payments and save
- > 1 in 4 renters worry about rising housing payments

What can we do as parents to help our child fly the nest and start the next chapter of their lives?

If your child is under 18 then you can open a Junior Investment Savings Account (ISA) for them. You can put £4,260 (Allowance for 2018/19) into it for them and can choose from either a Cash ISA or a Stocks & Shares ISA.

The money belongs to your child and although they can take control of the account from age 16 they cannot access the money until they are 18.



It would be a good way to give them a helping hand and when they turn 18 and it becomes a normal ISA they can continue saving.

Alternatively, if your child is older and earning a wage they can start either a Help to Buy ISA or a Lifetime ISA.

If they are 16 or older, they can open a Help to Buy Cash ISA. They save monthly, the 1st month's payment can be a maximum of £1,200 and future monthly payments a maximum of £200. The government will give them a bonus of 25% of the amount of deposits they have made (up to a max of £3,000) when they purchase their first home.

If they save at the max rate for 4 years 7 months they will have saved £12,000 and be eligible for a maximum bonus of £3,000 when they purchase their first home.

If they are 18 or over, they can open either a cash or Stocks & Shares Lifetime ISA. They don't have to make monthly contributions to this

and can make lump sum payments up to a maximum yearly contribution of £4,000.00. The 25% bonus is paid monthly based on the level of payments made.

They can save from 18 to 49 and the monies can either be used to purchase their first home or alternatively if they leave the money invested until age 60 they can withdraw it and not pay a penalty.

It should be noted for both the Help to Buy and the Lifetime ISAs that if the monies are withdrawn (before 60 for Lifetime ISA) and are not used to buy their first home they will not be eligible to receive the 25% bonus from the government.

More details of both types of ISA can be found on the Money Advice Service website.

FREE CONSULTATION

If you would like to make an appointment to speak with one of our advisers regarding life assurance, retirement, critical illness, income protection or any other aspect of your finances then please give me a call on 0345 034 3424 or drop me an email at susan@virtuemoney.com and I will be happy to arrange this.

The first consultation is completely free of charge and no obligation.



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This article is intended to provide a general review and opinion of certain topics and its purpose is to inform but not to recommend or support any specific investment or course of action.

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REED BAND CHIEF CELEBRATES MILESTONE YEAR

Sun
16
DEC

2018 has been another very successful year for the Royal Burgh of Linlithgow Reed Band, with record attendances at rehearsals and engagements.

The band will bring down the curtain on what has been a momentous twelve months with the annual Christmas Concert in St Michael's Parish Church on Sunday December 16th at 7pm.

An exciting programme, with everything from traditional carols and seasonal music to Ed Sheeran numbers, has been put together by the bandmaster, Lex McDowell, who recently celebrated ten years at the helm of Linlithgow's much-loved Burgh Band.

Lex is a graduate of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (RSAMD), now known as the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and has been a music teacher at Linlithgow Academy for a number of years. Under Lex's leadership, the Reed Band has made tremendous progress and can now boast an active membership of 130 across its three sections – the main band, the LRB Training Band, which Lex also conducts, and the beginners' band, which has recently been taken over by Sarah Storrar. This is the largest playing strength in the band's 52 year history.

Lex can be found every Tuesday at the main band rehearsal in the Academy and on Sunday at the various beginners and training groups that meet in the Longcroft Hall. He is particularly proud of the number of adult 're-starters', who have been persuaded to come back to playing again. Many of these have made rapid progress through the ranks and are now involved in the main band.

Lex's milestone tenth anniversary was

marked at the recent annual general meeting with the presentation of a commemorative quaich by band President, Jonathan Molloy, who told the meeting:

"I would like to thank Lex, for continuing to find interesting, new pieces for both the main band and the Training Band

'Swinging Safari' and 'Born Free'. Now we have a membership of 130 of all ages and only the Academy hall is big enough to accommodate our weekly rehearsals. All I can say is that the last ten years have been for us a lot of hard work, a lot of great performances –



to play and for leading both ensembles so assuredly. My own view is that Lex's conducting, particularly in our concerts, just gets better and better. Having such a reliable and capable conductor really helps to give us all confidence for our concert performances."

Reflecting on his decade of leading the Reed Band, Lex gave an insight into what he felt back in 2008:

"I don't know what I thought during that first period. Could I even see ten years into the band's future? Would I leave?

Would the band be for me? We had 18 players in the ATC hall in Barkhill Road, playing

The Christmas concert will be compered by the irrepressible Bruce Jamieson. Tickets cost £6 (Primary aged children and younger free) and are available from The Thread Counter (formerly Norman Cummings), Far From the Madding Crowd or on the band website www.linlithgowreedband.org.uk

Murdoch Kennedy



TEAM ACCELERACE- F1 SINGAPORE 'REPORT' CARD



We wanted to achieve personal development for each of our team members, provide a STEM legacy at our school and promote girls in STEM.

Formula One in Schools is a global STEM competition open to 9-19 year olds around the globe. It is a project promoting teamwork, engineering and marketing skills in schools around the world. The competition requires teams to design, test and make a model F1 car along with creating portfolios on engineering and enterprise.

We are **Team AcceleRace**, a team of S4 pupils from Linlithgow Academy who have just been competing at the F1 in Schools World Finals in Singapore. The team consists of **Molly Ganner** - Manufacturing Engineer, **Louise Murray** - Graphic Designer, **Louise Paterson** - Team Manager, **Isla Petrie** - Design Engineer and **Aoife Sutton** - Resources and Media Manager.

Earlier this year we wrote in The Black Bitch Magazine about our experiences competing in the regional and national stages of the competition. After being successful at the UK national finals we won our place at the World Finals this year in Singapore. We were so surprised that we managed to get this far in the competition but we have found it has been such a great experience.

Getting to Singapore we had so much amazing support from our community, school and sponsors. To get to Singapore we had to fundraise and gain sponsorship. This was a completely new experience for us all but it was necessary for us to get there. We have had absolutely incredible help and support from our many sponsors including Inoapps, Virtue Money and SkyScanner who have all supported us in many ways. Over the past six months we held many fundraising events and

we are so grateful for the support of the community at these events and also on our social media and all of the help we have received from the community. The local business community have been very supportive; we have had a massive amount of help from JMK Printing, Casra Sports, McNicoll Vehicle Hire, EMS, Barclay Associates, The Rotary Club and Linlithgow Round Table to name a few. So, we would love to thank our sponsors, school and community for making our journey possible.

After the national finals, we set ourselves three main objectives for our journey to Singapore. We wanted to achieve personal development for each of our team members, provide a STEM legacy at our school and promote girls in STEM. These objectives helped us focus on our goals over the past six months. We felt it was important for us to have a focus that was wider than just the competition itself and that was important to us as a team.

To compete at the World Finals, we needed to move up to the higher division of the competition, professional class. This meant that our design engineer, Isla Petrie, had a whole new car to design to different rules and specifications. Our manufacturing engineer, Molly Ganner, also needed to improve her manufacturing skills and processes to make the new car. As a team, we also had two portfolios to write along with a marketing plan and a presentation. We found doing all of this has helped us in so many ways and we definitely enjoyed it even though it was a lot of work.

On the 6th of September, we set off for

Singapore, traveling for almost a whole day. When we arrived we quickly noticed the tropical weather which is definitely very different from home.

There were 50 teams from across the globe competing and we loved getting to meet people from so many different places. The competition itself was very busy with pit display build, car racing and repairs, presentations, design judging and enterprise judging. We all especially enjoyed doing our presentation where we could tell the judges all about our journey from the regional finals to Singapore. We were surprised but very pleased when we achieved the 8th fastest car time of 1.044 seconds. We came 40th place overall which we are really happy with especially with this being our first time competing at such a high level.

We also loved exploring Singapore which we found really hot but so amazing. We also went to the Grand Prix which was a very new and exciting experience for us all.

We have had so much fun competing in F1 in Schools, have learned so much and have had so many new experiences. Representing our school and the UK on an international level has been so incredible. We have grown so much as individuals and as a team and have had an unforgettable experience. Thank you to everyone who followed and supported our journey- we have loved every minute of it.

We are really excited for the future of F1 in Schools in Linlithgow Academy and wish the best to next season's team.

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THE KIRKGATE

Bruce Jamieson

My favourite street in Linlithgow is the Kirkgate - even the name is redolent with history - coming from two Norse words meaning the roadway to a church.

As I climb up its steep incline, past the plaques marking the line of succession from Mary Stewart to our present monarch, I often think of those other feet which once ascended the brae: King James V and his retinue making their way to the palace; Protestant insurgents intent on demolishing all signs of 'Popery' from off the walls of St Michael's; poverty-stricken individuals on their way to the Kirkgate Alms-house; Cromwellian troops intent on stabling their horses in the church; Bonnie Prince Charlie and his Jacobite followers off to a reception in the Palace; Robert Burns on his way to visit what he called "a poor, pimping place of Presbyterian worship"; King George V on his visit in 1914; Queen Elizabeth, on two occasions, in 1955 and 1989.

No earlier footsteps echoed up the route, of course, as the lane up to the royal residence was not opened until 1535 when King James ordered a new approach to his dwelling to replace the old circuitous track which took him from the Cross round to the Peel and then over a drawbridge. In the process of constructing the roadway, up to the monarch's triumphal arch bearing his orders of chivalry, it would seem as if an area of the church burial ground had to be cleared. In the course of laying cobbles up the Kirkgate the remains of several bodies were uncovered. On one occasion I was asked to assist an archaeologist who had uncovered a bone up near the gatehouse.



An archaeologist uncovers bones in the Kirkgate.

I duly arrived and inspected the pieces of skeleton, which had been uncovered and declared them to be from a human femur and, given the history of the site, dating to the early 16th century. Later, I was told that laboratory analysis had proved me partly correct - they were around 500 years old - and came from a horse!



The blocked up entrance to the Debtors' Prison.

I'm also fascinated by the buildings that line the cobbled roadway. Ascending, on the right is the side of the Burgh Halls, which date back to 1670. The west elevation carries interesting clues as to some of the former uses of the building. A blocked up doorway and the carved wording "Debtors Prison" bear testimony to the grim cells that once housed local insolvents.

The faded wording "Fire Engine Station" which until the 2011 restoration could be seen at the corner, has now gone - and all testimony to the 19th century firemen who used the room behind to house their simple, horse-drawn pump has disappeared.



The old entrance to the Fire Station.

On the other side of the road is the east corner of Cross House built around 1700 by Andrew Crawford of Lochcote and lived in by James Glen, one time Provost of Linlithgow and then Governor of South Carolina.

Next to that prestigious edifice is a row of 17th century cottages whose walls bear the fascinating marks of previous existence: blocked doorways, shifted windows, evidence of grain storage hatches and the unmistakable signs on the rooftops that the buildings were once thatched.

A mid twentieth century photograph of the Kirkgate Cottages showing the existence of a shop.



Documentary evidence exists that shows that in the early 17th century the thatch on the Kirkgate properties was in a disgraceful state and infested with rats. The imminent visit of King Charles I prompted the Town Council to take action. Linlithgow did possess an official rat-catcher, Ratter John, but he was not employed in this case. Instead, he perhaps had to earn a crust by visiting a local hostelry and performing his "party-piece". His 'trick' (in exchange for the price of a pint of ale) consisted of putting his head into a sack containing a live rat and trying to kill it with his bare teeth! (No RSPCA in those days)

Instead of employing the Burgh Rat Catcher, the thatch was totally removed from the cottages and replaced with slates - and slates there still are today.

On the east side, is the entrance to the Old Fleshmarket, now the area behind the Burgh Halls, where, in 1679, some 1200 Covenanters were incarcerated before being taken to Edinburgh for trial and transportation. At a later date, the town's Grammar School was built here - until a fire devastated the building in 1902.



The gutted shell of Linlithgow Grammar School.

Standing forlornly on the site of the vanished educational establishment is the 1911 statue of John Hope, Marquis of Linlithgow and early 20th century Governor-General of Australia.

The 'Green Man' statue of John Hope - its hue caused by a natural chemical reaction - as seen in the Statue of Liberty.



Access to him is through an archway graced by a recently created, elaborate, wrought iron gateway - the work of artist blacksmiths from Ratho Byres Forge - its curve and texture reflecting the tunnel effect of the pend.



The gateway commissioned by West Lothian Community Arts.

Opposite is the entrance to another recent addition to the Kirkgate townscape - St Michael's Manse, designed by architect William Caddell in 1974 and extended in 2004 by the Pollock Hammond Partnership.

All in all, it's an enthralling area, steeped in history. Well worth a walk.



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Thanks to everyone who attended the event
and helped raise £180 to The Linlithgow Link.



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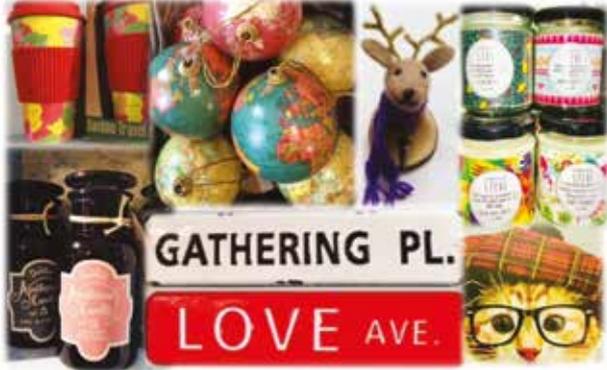
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Stuart from the Westport Veterinary Clinic tells us about some of his regular customers. This month it is Evie the 2 year old Labrador cross

Hello
I'm Evie

Evie loves Beecraigs and any beach walk, especially when she can get really wet. Her favourite toy is a koala bear and she loves her snuffle mat, very useful for all the crate rest she has had.

She delights in shredding any paper ready for recycling and when her family dig the garden she is right there digging a bigger hole and making an even bigger mess!
Evie's family describe her as boisterous, cuddly and very cheeky where food is concerned!
Evie recently had orthopaedic surgery on her cruciate at Westport. She has been doing great - her family have been very dedicated in supporting her through the recovery process.
Cruciate repair surgery over the past few years has become a common in dogs.

The cranial cruciate ligament in dogs is the same as the anterior cruciate ligament in humans. It is a tough band of tissue that attaches the femur (thigh bone) to the tibia (shin bone). It prevents the tibia from shifting forward relative to the femur.

When humans damage theirs, it is usually caused by excessive trauma. In dogs however it usually degenerates slowly over time, much like a fraying rope. For this reason, the treatment options for dogs vary differently from the treatment for humans!

In dogs, symptoms may appear suddenly, such as limping and can even occur in both legs at once. As the ligament frays it causes pain and lameness, often linking with osteoarthritis in the joint. Dogs often find it difficult to rise from certain positions and their movement changes can be visible to owners.



Boisterous,
cuddly
and so very cheeky.



If you notice any changes in your pet, it is important to get them checked out.
If you worried about your pet, or would like to arrange a check-up please contact Westport Veterinary Clinic: Tel 01506 844165.

WANT TO WRITE / BLOG FOR THE BLACK BITCH MAGAZINE?

The magazine is **looking for young people to help establish a regular presence on its website, Facebook and Twitter accounts to keep the magazine in readers' minds between issues by promoting articles online and expanding the magazine's network as well as offering some writing/journalism opportunities.** So, if you are interested make sure to get in touch with me via social media, email or face to face in order to get involved!

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CARA'S 'CRITICAL CHARITY MISSION' TO NEPAL



In October 2019, I will be taking part in a two-week long school expedition to Nepal. Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world and we will be working in an isolated and vulnerable mountain community to help install safe drinking water systems, help build a critically needed classroom or public health clinic.

The work will be done in conjunction with charities such as the **International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development** and the **Gurkha Welfare Scheme**. The latter charity enables Gurkha veterans, their families and their wider communities to live their lives with dignity in Nepal.

CARA'S FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES...

To enable me to go to Nepal I have to cover my own costs. So far I have raised £500 through various jobs such as car washing, window cleaning, fence painting, babysitting and gardening and I am looking to continue these activities.

I am keen to raise further funds through helping out any households or businesses around Linlithgow with those small jobs that you need help with or simply never get round to doing.

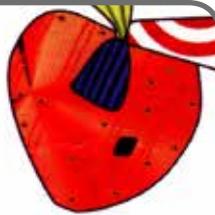
"I'm ready to help" so please email me at: farki5@hotmail.com.

Any contributions to my trip would also be very welcome and can be done via my just giving page:
<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/cara-farquharson>.

Cara Farquharson, Linlithgow



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