



# the **BLACK** *bitch*

Linlithgow's news by Linlithgow's people

LINLITHGOW COMMUNITY MAGAZINE ISSUE 63 JANUARY 2019 £1.00



**FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS P16**



**NETBALL LEAGUE LEADERS P6**



**JOG SCOTLAND INITIATIVE P8**



**GROW YOURSELF HEALTHY P15**



**MATT MCGINN FUNDRAISER P17**

## PLUS

New Hopetoun Gardens, Burgh Beautiful, Folk Fae Lithgae, Town Centre BID, Police Scotland, Santa's Xmas Visit to LUCS, Growth for Greensteam, Book Review...

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# SANTA VISITS THE CANAL BASIN 2018

ON THE TWO WEEKENDS BEFORE CHRISTMAS SANTA MADE HIS ANNUAL VISITS TO THE CANAL BASIN AND HIS LOVELY DECORATED GROTTO. SINCE 1980 SANTA HAS BEEN CALLING AT THE BASIN EVERY YEAR TO SEE THE CHILDREN. USUALLY HE WILL ARRIVE ON HIS TRUSTY SHIP VICTORIA BUT ONE YEAR 1981 THE CANAL WAS FROZEN AND SANTA TRULY ARRIVED THAT YEAR BY SLEDGE PULLED ALONG THE FROZEN CANAL BY HIS TRUSTY LUCS REINDEERS.



On his visits over 4 days Santa saw over 300 children, the first Saturday was wet, but that did not deter 58 children visiting Santa. Everyday the basin was filled with lots of happy kids with smiling faces clutching their gifts from Santa.

With my friend I came along to see him with her 2 grandkids and you can see how they loved Santa Ronnie.

The Santa visits are £5 a child and they each receive a very good present and included a boat trip on which they are allowed to take their well-behaved Mums, Dads, Grandparents and other relatives. The Santa visits are LUCS's way of saying to the community thanks for your support throughout the year

To heat everyone up the tearoom was open to supply a warming glass of mulled wine (non-alcoholic!!!), mince pies, teas and coffees and some days live Christmas music.

Barbara Braithwaite MBE collared me and persuaded me to be Santa's Elf for the last Sunday and being me I dressed for the occasion. It was interesting talking to one of the mothers who had last been at the basin when she saw Santa 30 years before when she was 7 years old.

It is lovely to see so many happy sparkly smiling faces at the basin and makes the work the LUCS volunteers put in so worthwhile.

So thanks to everyone who made this such a success, you our visitors, our Santas, boat drivers and crew, the harbourmasters, the tearoom staff, Barbara and Martine for the lovely panels that decorated Santa's grotto, those who spent hours wrapping presents and everyone else who helped create this wonderland basin and also my fellow Elves.

**Santa looks forward to coming to the Basin this December.**

**Danny Callaghan**



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# WHAT'S ON - JAN/FEB/MAR

## Jan

**Thu 31** Linlithgow Keep Fit Club, 7:00pm - 9:00pm, Linlithgow Academy - Small gym\*

## Feb

**Tue 5** Linlithgow Civic Trust 2019 Lecture, 7:30pm - 9:30pm, Provost Lawrie Hall, Linlithgow Burgh Halls

**Wed 6** The life & experiences of a rugby referee with Colin Brett, 10:00am - 12:00pm, Colin will share some of his experiences as a rugby referee and about his role in the development of future referees. Linlithgow Rose Club

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

**Sat 9** Linlithgow Arts Guild, Adam Walker, Flute, 7:30pm - 9:40pm. Adam Walker was appointed principal flute of the London Symphony Orchestra in

2009, at the age of 21. His programme, with pianist James Baillieu, includes music by Reinecke, Widor, Schumann and Franck. Linlithgow Academy

**Wed 20** Supporting people with Cystic Fibrosis - Speaker Davis Badura. David Badura will explain how we can support people suffering from the condition. 10:00am - 12:00pm

## March

**Wed 6** Probus : Magic of the Mind - with Drew McAdam. Drew McAdam will demonstrate how our minds can be deceived by magic. 10:00am - 12:00pm, Linlithgow Rose Club

**Sat 9** Linlithgow Arts Guild, Red Priest, 7:30pm - 9:45pm, Linlithgow Academy

**Sat 20** Probus AGM, 10:00am - 12:00pm, Linlithgow Rose Club

## LINLITHGOW RAMBLERS WALKING CALENDAR



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

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



**'Thresholds' - Photography Book Competition Winners... Margaret Johnstone & Chris Matheson Dear**  
with Pat Swan of the BB Magazine

For more details and more events visit the **what's on** page at [www.linlithgow.info](http://www.linlithgow.info)

## 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.** If you are interested make sure to get in touch with me via social media, tel or email

**Alice Ferguson** MSYP

Twitter - @aliceMSYP

Instagram - @alicemsysp

Facebook - @aliceSYP



## Contact the Black Bitch

For editorial and to advertise:

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Copy deadline for next issue is 27 February 2019.

## Linlithgow Film Society

CINEMA IN THE COMMUNITY

LINLITHGOW ACADEMY THEATRE: 7.30pm

\*\*\*\* New Members Welcome \*\*\*\*

Guest Tickets / Concessions

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

T. McKerron: 01506 844425 Or come on the Night!  
[www.linlithgowfilmsociety.org.uk](http://www.linlithgowfilmsociety.org.uk)

4 FEB The Midwife

18 FEB Murder on the Orient Express

4 MAR Breathe

18 MAR Death of Stalin

The Linlithgow Community Magazine (aka The Black Bitch) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO): SCO42542  
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The paper we are using is FSC approved.  
Images: A big thank you to all our photographers who support the magazine throughout the year.



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# Folk Fae Lithgae

MARION FLEMING



**M**arion Fleming is the new chair of the Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Children's Gala Day committee and she is looking forward to the big event on Saturday June 22nd.

Born in Hamilton Avenue, the youngest of six children, Marion grew up with the Gala Day traditions and recalls her Granny being a member of the committee. She has fond memories of Granny walking beside the float Marion was on when she was a fairy.

.....

Through her job in the local Tesco supermarket, Marion was once invited along to the Gala Day as a guest. She told me:

*"Tesco always donates Smarties and the kids save up their 20p pieces in the tubes as a fundraiser. The company helps in other ways too and representatives are invited every year as a thank you. I went along one year and that's when I realised just how much work goes on. They were struggling for committee members, so I decided to join about nine years ago. I was just an ordinary member and then I took on other roles, such as public relations, transport co-ordinator and seamstress."*

Following a very successful fundraising Ladies' Night in the Rose Club a few weeks ago, the committee members are now gearing up for the Gala Day draw

on Thursday February 7th at 6.30pm at the Academy.

The name of this year's Queen and retinue, plus all the other participants, will be drawn out of a hat. Nowadays children must opt in to be one of the main characters, but their names are also entered into the draw for other roles. Marion explained:

*"A lot of children maybe haven't got the confidence to be one of the main characters and make a speech, so we give them the choice and then they can be put back into the hat to be bower girls, or whatever."*

In recent years, Marion has been one of two people who visit the Queen-elect's house to tell them that their name has been picked, a task she describes as "the most exciting job ever."

*"I just love seeing the girl's wee face and they are always so excited when you tell them."*

After the draw, consent letters are sent out and the next event will be the Parents' Night on Tuesday March 13th, where the fairies, flower girls and junior guards are paired up. Weekly rehearsals get underway at the beginning of May.

The Gala Day has evolved into a wonderful spectacle in the last two decades and the hard-working

committee members are constantly striving to improve things. Marion was delighted to announce that, this year, they are going back to the future with the revival of the sports events, which were once such a huge part of the Gala Day. She told me:

*"Linlithgow Athletics Club are going to help us. We are trying to keep people in the Peel for as long as possible, as used to happen in the past, and we hope that families will come along and join in the sports. We are also re-introducing the goodie bags, which all the children so much looked forward to receiving."*

The committee are about to launch a major fundraising drive for a new stage and further details will be announced shortly. Marion would also like to hear from anyone who could spare some time to help the Gala Day, even if only for a few hours on the day itself. In the words of her employer's slogan, she says:

*"Every little helps."*

**Murdoch Kennedy**



# BEAUTIFUL EFFORT FOR PRIMARY ENTERPRISE

Averil Stewart



## Planting fruit trees at Learmonth Gardens with Linlithgow Primary School P5 pupils

*In 2017, Primary 4 children of Linlithgow Primary undertook an enterprise which involved working closely with Burgh Beautiful. The idea came about after studying our Local High Street, looking at all the lovely displays and how they are maintained. The children were very keen to form a community link and so help keep our town tidy. How could they raise funds for Burgh Beautiful?*

The children chose to make fridge magnets, which they would sell to their families. As part of this enterprise project, they had to come up with different designs for magnets, what materials would be needed and work out how they could market them. They produced a brochure, where families could see the variety of magnets on offer, and then place an order. This also meant that there would be no waste.



*Hannah, Connor, Faith, Rachel and Isla called themselves Burgh Beautiful Juniors!*

Over £300 was raised and the decision made to create a legacy by investing in fruit trees. West Lothian Council and neighbours at Learmonth Gardens were happy that these should be planted along the west facing wall opposite the Canal Basin.

As part of National Tree Planting Week in November, a group of children, now in Primary 5, went along to the 'Dooocot' in Learmonth Gardens to work alongside Burgh Beautiful. This involved the children planting

their trees, making support frames and a lot of teamwork. A plaque was put up to mark the children's fundraising efforts.



The children's letters and drawings show just how much was learnt: Logan wrote that he learnt *".. in pots the roots go round."* This meant the children had to tease them out.

All expressed enjoyment of the planting session. Ryan gave 5 stars writing that *"It was fun to mix the bone-meal and dig the soil into the hole where the tree sapling was!"* While petite Kai *"...liked hiding in the big hole"* and another *"...enjoyed tying the canes together."*



*This was all done under the expert guidance of Jon Brown with BBL volunteers and teacher Tracey Graham and Mrs McPhillips from LPS also helping. All agreed it was a most productive afternoon.*

*Now we look forward to the trees growing healthily and in time the various apples and plums being eaten. Do check out these beautiful and interesting gardens for yourself.*

# NETBALL BOUNCES BACK!



DO YOU REMEMBER A TIME WHEN BIBS WEREN'T JUST FOR BABIES? WHEN A WING ATTACK WASN'T THE PRESERVE OF THE SWANS ON THE LOCH? WHEN WEARING A SMALL LYCRA SKIRT WASN'T FOR HITTING THE TOWN AS A TEENAGER? CHANCES ARE, THEN, THAT YOU HAVE SOME HAZY MEMORIES OF PLAYING NETBALL AT SCHOOL. BUT DID YOU KNOW THAT THE GAME, ONCE ASSOCIATED WITH PRIMARY SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN, IS NOW ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING RECREATIONAL SPORTS IN SCOTLAND FOR ADULTS?

Inspired by the sport's showing at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Netball Scotland set up its **Bounce Back to Netball (BBN)** programme, specifically for over-18s wanting to play for fun – and in less than four years there are more than 1000 members in 50 BBN groups across Scotland, including in Linlithgow.

The town's netball club, the **Linlithgow Flyers**, has also enjoyed success over the last few years. Due to the huge demand from its players, the club now has two recreational netball sessions a week. These sessions are just for fun, and take place on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings at **Xcite Leisure Centre**. You just turn up and pay to play: it's fun, it's friendly and you get fitter without even realising it. All levels are welcomed including complete beginners as friendly volunteer coaches show

you the ropes and keep you right.

*"We have women from all different levels of netball and we can tailor our sessions depending on who turns up. It's a sport you can get playing quickly and we teach you what you need to know. Our oldest player is 56 and our youngest is 23. We're very supportive of each other and you'll be guaranteed to have lots of laughs and a great time,"* says Flyers chair **Rachel Johnston**.

And the players agree. **Denise Schofield**, a former people manager with a financial institution, had played at school over 30 years ago but had been put off continuing as an adult. *"I went to uni at Stirling and joined the netball club there but the first time I turned up they were all very experienced, very competitive, and I was just like: 'Hmm, I don't think this is for me'."*

But after having two children, now aged six and four, and taking redundancy from work, leaving her a full-time mum, she spotted an advert for the **Linlithgow Bounce Back to Netball**.

*"I love being a mum but I wanted something for me. It wasn't long after I'd had Ben, I wanted to lose the baby weight - I had two stone to lose - I wanted to get fit, and I wanted adult company that didn't entail my family - being a mum staying at home there is a sense of isolation. I felt I had been rubbed out and needed to be redrawn."*

The 44-year-old admits she was nervous going along to her first session. *"But it was a case of nothing ventured, nothing gained and you didn't have to have previous experience. There was a range of women, all ages, from young to in their late 50s, and a range of sizes, fitness levels and*

Denise Schofield (left), and Julie Walton



experience so that was quite comforting and I think for me that made it a safe environment.

Immediately I knew I'd found the right place to play netball. It fits in with my family – I play in the evenings when the children are in bed and my husband is home from work. I've learned a lot and I'm still learning. When the whistle blows you are just in that moment, you forget about the family and what you have to do in the morning.

And afterwards I feel I'm ready to go back to being a mum. I didn't ever expect to enjoy it as much as I have."

One of her highlights has been playing a team from Stirling University. "We beat them and they made me their player of the match, 20+ years down the line from when I was too daunted to join them," she laughs.

For Julie Walton, an office manager and mother of three, the attraction was meeting new people after moving back to her native Scotland after spending nearly a decade in New Zealand. "I had never played netball in my life. I was very nervous, I didn't know what the lines meant or what the rules were but you buddy up with someone and they keep you right.

*I ended up totally addicted, I do it three times a week, it's fun, you run around, get sweaty and before you know it, you've done two hours of exercise.*

*For me, it was a way to meet people and become part of the community. There is definitely a network; my daughter now babysits for someone I met at netball. And it's affordable for me with a family of three children, it's more affordable than the gym, it's £4 a session and you pay week by week so there's no commitment. It's really flexible."*



**AFTER NEARLY TWO YEARS OF PLAYING JUST FOR FUN, A CORE GROUP OF LADIES WANTED TO TAKE THEIR NETBALL TO THE NEXT LEVEL AND TO PLAY MORE COMPETITIVELY. AS A RESULT, THE CLUB NOW ALSO HAS TWO TEAMS THAT PLAY IN THE CENTRAL NETBALL ASSOCIATION – A BRAND NEW LEAGUE THAT STARTED IN OCTOBER 2018. THE TWO LINLITHGOW TEAMS ARE CALLED THUNDER AND LIGHTNING. COMING UP AGAINST CLUBS FROM STIRLING AND GLENROTHES, BOTH LINLITHGOW TEAMS HAVE WON ALL THEIR GAMES SO FAR WITH THUNDER AND LIGHTNING SITTING FIRST AND THIRD IN THE LEAGUE. THE SECOND HALF OF THE SEASON STARTS BACK ON FEBRUARY 10. WATCH THIS SPACE!**

This year Netball Scotland expects to increase its BBN membership by a third, as well as doubling the numbers coming to one of its other initiatives – Walking Netball, launched in 2017 in partnership with Age Scotland, for those who want to

enjoy the sport at a slightly slower speed, and which also has sessions in Linlithgow.

With Tracey Neville – sister of former footballers Gary and Phil Neville – hitting the headlines in the UK after leading the English netball team to gold in the 2018 Commonwealth Games and the Netball World Cup coming to Liverpool in July where the Scottish team will compete, the profile of the sport has never been higher.

*"It is a great time to be part of the netball movement. The profile of the sport is just getting bigger and bigger,"* says Lee Wilson, a regional development manager with Netball Scotland.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON LINLITHGOW FLYERS NETBALL CLUB, LOOK US UP ON FACEBOOK OR EMAIL [LINLITHGOWBBN@GMAIL.COM](mailto:LINLITHGOWBBN@GMAIL.COM)**



Images: jaxmackenziephotography.smugmug.com

# JOGSCOTLAND GROUP LET'S GO LINLITHGOW

*Jogscotland group, Let's Go Linlithgow is Linlithgow's newest keep-fit initiative. Jogscotland groups are fun, friendly jogging groups. They are perfect for people who want to get active for the first time, and to exercise in a sociable, supportive environment. They are also great for more experienced runners who want to join a local group. Nobody is "too slow" to join Jogscotland, and nobody gets left behind.*

As part of its local community commitment, Linlithgow Athletic Club has supported recent Jogscotland groups in Linlithgow. The Club has sponsored several of its runners to complete the Scottish Athletics Jogleader course. **Lorna Simpson**, supported by **Alex Wood** and **Roddy Simpson**, ran the first **Let's Go Linlithgow** group in the Spring. The group's purpose was

summed up by its 'couch to 5k' strapline, taking non-runners through a gradual build-up towards running a 5k. It worked! Not only did group members run a parkrun 5k but they are still running and took part in the Kelpies 5k in November. One former member has gone even further and completed a half-marathon.

The second group, led by **Roddy Simpson** and **Alex Wood** and supported by **Angus Gallie** and **Neil Anderson**, is now meeting every Friday morning at the Cross and jogging at the Peel. It has seventeen active members, with at least thirteen taking part each week. New jogger, Zoe Hamilton, told us, *"This starter group gave me the confidence to try running for the first time in my life in a relaxed group with people like myself"*. Progress has been huge and the participants are working towards 'graduation' on Saturday 8 December when most of them hope to run Falkirk parkrun at Callendar Park.

The group's progress and activities can be followed on its facebook site, <https://www.facebook.com/lglinlithgow/>.



*New jogscotland courses are planned for the Spring and these will be announced on the facebook site.*

**Alex Wood**



*For people who want to get active for the first time, and to exercise in a sociable, supportive environment.*



# NEIL GORDON - EXTREME CLEAN



The day that Neil Gordon, of new cleaning company "Extreme Clean" was coming round to chat, I found a sudden urge to clean my kitchen. Nothing focuses the mind more than a professional coming round! As we chatted over his new venture, I realised that Neil has absolutely got what it takes to run a successful cleaning company; he loves cleaning and he has great energy, drive and vision for his business. "I've always loved cleaning" he tells me. "Ever since I was a kid, I was never in trouble from my parents for having a messy room."

It was time for Neil to make a change in his working life and he was keen to work for himself. The idea of a deep cleaning company kept coming back to him: "I went to the Linlithgow Business Gateway to run the idea through with them and they kept saying it's a feasible idea." Neil had intended to start his business in January, but after mentioning his ideas to a few people, he immediately had interest: "I started to get a couple of calls. And then I started getting more calls. And it just took off from there." On the 20th November he was up and running and hasn't looked back since.

Neil's signature service is the deep clean: "When people come home from work, the last thing they want to do is go around cleaning the skirting boards or the fronts of cupboards, door handles etc. Also people

forget about things like the insides of the lamps; if you look at your lamp shades, you've got all the dust building up inside. Also the oven!" Neil will bring all his own products to your property, including Hoover and carpet cleaner, and maintains that two deep cleans from him each year will be enough to keep on top of those jobs that we all like to forget. A deep clean costs from £165 for a three bedroom property. He will also take on fortnightly house cleans and his hourly rate is £16, which is negotiable depending on the size of property.



There are also start or end of tenancy cleans, starting at £80: "Its peace of mind for people who are moving into property. It might be left in a clean state but I can go in and give it a deep clean and make sure all the toilets, sinks, the inside of the washing

machines are all ready to go." Neil is also already working with some builders: "Once somebody does a renovation, a conservatory, extension or a bathroom, they can contact me and I go in and do the final touches."

Extreme Clean are also keen to work with commercial clients, and are already working with some restaurants in the area. He can also clean cars, although is not a valeting service: "A car would be between £30 and £40 and I will come to people's homes or place of work. It's all done by hand."

Basically if you have something that needs cleaned, Extreme Clean will clean it; "If you want me to come and clean your garage, I'll clean your garage out. If it involves me hiring a skip, I'll hire a skip. If you want me to clean your car then I'll clean your car. If it's an attic, anything. I'm in the business to make people's homes more organised, decluttered and I will purge someone's house, if they give me the permission! I am ruthless! In a kind way."

So if you, like me, are now looking at the insides of your lampshades, it might be time to give Neil a call on 07891460787. Anyone calling Neil and quoting "Black Bitch" will receive £10 off of the cost of a deep clean. If you follow Extreme Clean on Facebook you can see the full range of services, costs and also offers running throughout the year.

**Alison Train**



## WHAT'S ON AT THE ROSE...

OPEN 7 DAYS

>> Ultimate Legends plus Lauren Kyle Friday 15 March 7.30-12.30 3 Course Dinner £25pp Bookings now being taken	>> Annual Sportsmans Dinner Saturday 23 February, 3 Course Dinner £35pp Tables of 10 available.
--	--

Full Session Bingo at 8pm on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday evenings. Live entertainment every Saturday and Sunday evening.

Domino competitions on Wed afternoons and Friday evenings.

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## THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS...

...a Hollywood blockbuster, no less! Released in theatres and on Netflix on Friday 18th January, Saoirse Ronan, Margot Robbie lead an all-star cast in a gripping, faithful retelling of one of Scotland's most fabled histories.



Following the enormous influx of "Outlander" tourists from all over the world (the United States in particular), Linlithgow businesses are this time quicker off the mark to capitalise on the release of "Mary, Queen of Scots".

As a true Scot will know, Mary Stuart's links with Linlithgow are far from tenuous. She was born on 7th December 1542 in Linlithgow Palace, returning throughout her chaotic reign until her 'spoiler alert' execution in 1587.

But what does this mean for Linlithgow in 2019? Well, as a result of the town's status as a central feature of such major productions, Linlithgow Palace enjoyed a not-insignificant 17% increase in visitor numbers in 2017/18. 'Film tourism' is a growing market in West Lothian and Scotland at large, thanks in no small part to 'Outlander', 'Outlaw King' and now, 'Mary, Queen of Scots'. Figures identified by Visit Scotland reveal that 14% of visitors to Scotland were influenced

by film and television productions when deciding to visit.

Businesses are getting behind the "Month of Mary" promotional drive, spearheaded by Visit West Lothian. **Yvonne Sherratt**, owner of **A Wee Mindin** on the High Street, said the film should result in a significant increase in visitors to the Royal Burgh: *"It can only be good for businesses the length of the High Street, including gift shops like my own."*

Yvonne stocks a wide variety of 'Luckenbooth' jewellery, originating from gifts given to Mary as an engagement present by the Dauphin of France.

**Jim Brown**, owner of the mid-C-mod antique shop on the High Street, also predicted that the film would provide a welcome boost for local businesses of all kinds: *"I'm sure the chance to visit the Palace where the Queen was born will draw a lot more visitors, and they'll find out just how much our beautiful town has to offer."*



Mid-C-Mod



Lilypond Mary

## HERITAGE ART PROJECTS IN LINLITHGOW

The prolific and perennially successful Burgh Beautiful has developed plans, supported by the Linlithgow Town Management Group and Linlithgow Town Centre BID, to further promote the town's rich heritage and mythology.

Proposals for 2 sculptures depicting Linlithgow's famous Black Bitch and Linlithgow's patron saint, St. Michael,

can be viewed in the window of the BID office at 28 The Vennel and public consultation events are planned for March and May 2019. Further funding will be sought from sources such as Creative Scotland, the Heritage Lottery Fund, and crowdfunding campaigns, to maximise the hugely positive impact that the sculptures will have on our town.

Watch this space for updates and, if you'd like to comment or make a suggestion, contact [bbl.public.art@lbt.scot](mailto:bbl.public.art@lbt.scot)

## BUSINESS NEWS: EEK! ESCAPE ROOMS:



Did Mary Queen of Scots really die following three blows from a blunt axe? A completely new experience in Linlithgow offers you the chance to alter the course of history and work out a happy ending for the ill-fated monarch... but it won't be easy! Enter the fascinating Eek! Escape Rooms on the High Street and prepare to be baffled by challenging clues. As you and up to five companions try to solve the puzzles, you will have a history lesson that's totally different, and a lot of fun.

Ellie Hair, who owns and designed the Escape Rooms, said she wanted to provide a totally immersive experience: *"It's all about making the subtle connection between clues. If you work together in the 60 minutes you can save Mary from the blunt axe - perhaps by preventing Darnley's murder."*

Ellie said that she gave teams of between two and six a briefing first, but then she was behind a high wall. Participants could shout out for help, and a series of prompt cards was also available: *"It's like a live board game. You have to crack ciphers, and find keys inside boxes. The aim is to escape within 60 minutes. By and large we're in the entertainment business, but I take great satisfaction in seeing people complete the course. And I can assure everyone they are not locked in - they can leave at any time!"*



Ellie said that no other Escape Rooms in Scotland offered an historical experience like hers, but it seemed the perfect fit given the Royal Burgh's rich history.

## BLINK BAR:

An art form that has been popular in Asia for countless years has arrived in Linlithgow - and it's gaining more and more devotees among Scots ladies.

In her first business venture with the **Blink Bar on Linlithgow High Street**, Saima Anwar offers more conventional beauty treatments, such as waxing, eyebrow and lash tinting, as well as a range of specialist threading, but she is also a trained henna artist, and uses the natural plant extract to paint beautiful patterns, usually on the backs of hands, but also on faces or legs.

*"I can do any design a customer wants, or one of my own. It's a lovely brown colour and will remain for several weeks."*

Saima said she had given demonstrations to teenagers at local high schools, and many had been taken by the art: *"Women are wanting henna work for weddings, to be that bit different, or for other special occasions. It's good for me too - I just love using henna and seeing the happy faces when it's finished. I'm also doing henna brows in seven different colours. It lasts for up to seven weeks, and more and more ladies are having it done."*

Saima, a mother of four girls - who had come up with name Blink Bar - also paid tribute to her husband **Nadim**, owner of the Sanam Restaurant in Falkirk, for all the help he had given in preparing her beauty shop.



## SO STRAWBERRY CAFFÉ CHRISTMAS LUNCH:

The award-winning and ever-popular So Strawberry Caffé at Linlithgow Cross embraced the true spirit of Christmas by ensuring that regular customers really did have a merry time on the 25th.

Suzanne, daughter of owner Pamela, said they had decided to open on a "not-for-profit" basis for customers who didn't have any, or little family, to celebrate with: *"We also invited along a few other regular faces to join in for the lunch because we had the space and, well, the more the merrier!"*

Suzanne said that a group of local musicians - also regulars - had given up their time to entertain the lunch party.



She added: *"Customers also gave £80 in 'tips'. Being the season of goodwill, we split this between two charities - SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, and Scottish Women's Aid."*



# GREENSTEAM HEADS TO NEW LOCATION & SERVICES AT MILL ROAD.

“Greensteam are investing substantially to provide the car owners in Linlithgow and the surrounding areas a car valeting centre that can cater for all their needs. The new drive through jet wash will give customers a state of the art washing facility with smart wash technology.” Tim Nicoll

Greensteam is the Linlithgow based car steam cleaning business that cleans car interiors and exteriors using new steam technology. Our steam cleaning process uses low pressure steam vapor with fantastic results both inside and on the outside of your car. It's gentle on your car paintwork and tough on the bacteria in your car interior. Steam can remove allergens, deodorize and it dries very quickly. This system dramatically reduces water consumption and chemical use – making it environmentally friendly.

As we continue to grow and to cater for all customers we are building a new valeting centre at the entrance to Mill Road industrial estate and installing a 2 bay German made EHRLE drive through smartwash which can be self service also. In addition there will be a two bay turbo Hoover unit for customers who like to Hoover their own car.

Tim Nicoll (right) & Kyle Nicoll



UNIT 1 THE GATEWAY, MILL ROAD IND ESTATE, LINLITHGOW BRIDGE EH49 7TP

www.greensteamscotland.com info@greensteamscotland.com

# THE THIN BLUE LINE IN LINLITHGOW



NO  
THANKS

Constable Neil Hunter and Constable Andrew Murray are the two community officers based in Linlithgow Police station, which is now located within the newly refurbished Tam Dalyell House at Linlithgow Partnership Centre, High Street, Linlithgow.

We are keen to get involved in local community issues and want to hear your views and opinions on these issues. We will be publishing an article in the magazine every edition, covering ongoing community issues which we are keen to address within the ward.

There is also a public assistance desk at the station, which is 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](mailto:LinlithgowCPT@Scotland.pnn.police.uk)

To find out details of future Linlithgow Community Police Surgeries, please log onto [West Lothian Police Facebook page](#) or [Linlithgow Facebook Page](#) or [Neighbourhood Watch Scotland for future dates](#) or alternatively check local press for details.

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

## PARK AND STRIDE

Excellent news, schools are back and pupils will be delighted to put on their new clothes and shiny shoes and head off for another term of fun filled education.

**Question – what is the safest way for the kids to get to school is it**

- a) school bus
- b) walk (like everyone else had to do when we were younger)
- c) get dropped off by car as close possible to the school gates along with dozens of others, on roads which cannot possibly cope with the volume of cars resulting in 3 point turns, children crossing between vehicles and irate frustrated drivers in a hurry to get somewhere...

Road safety is the responsibility of everyone, so if your children are heading off to school have a think about how they are going to get there, unless there are mobility issues the majority of children are capable of walking or if you have to drive consider where they can safely be dropped off.

Alternatively you could park legally nearby and walk (Park and Stride) this would be good for both the environment and the waistline!!! Especially after the festive period!!! You would be surprised that your younger children may be all for this!!!

Studies have shown that children who walk to and from school arrive more alert and ready to start the day.

Please share this with anyone with school children and help keep them safe.

## CALLING ALL PARENTS

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

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

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

Over the past couple of months 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.

**When in doubt, keep them out!**

## 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. You can register at <https://www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk>

**101** 101 is the new number to contact the police when it's less urgent than 999. It's quicker to contact the police when you don't need an emergency response, For example to:

- > speak to your local police officer
- > report a crime that's already happened
- > get crime prevention advice
- > make us aware of any policing issues in your area.



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

Alternatively you can email [LinlithgowCPT@Scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto: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](http://www.scotland.police.uk)  
Twitter: [@policescotland](https://twitter.com/policescotland)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/policescotland](http://www.facebook.com/policescotland)

# FORGOTTEN PHOTOGRAPHER

## BY RODDY SIMPSON

*Two Unknown Children,*  
by *Mary L Porteous, c1900.*

A chance purchase of an old photograph on 'a well-known online auction site' turned out to be much more surprising than expected. It was the name that first caught my attention because it was 'M L Porteous' and I had never come across that name before as an early commercial photographer with a Linlithgow address.

There were several well-known Linlithgow commercial photographers, especially James Paton, who has already been mentioned in *The Black Bitch* (Issue 51, July 2017), but also Andrew Clark and Norman Mackenzie and there are numerous examples of their photographs.

When I began to find out more about 'M L Porteous' the first revelation was that the full name was **Mary Laidlaw Porteous**. Women commercial photographers were uncommon, but it was even rarer for them to be running their own business. Mary was also a young woman and 23 at the 1901 census when she was described as a 'Photographer'. She was living with her parents at the family home, 'Annan Lea, Bo'ness Road'. The family originally came from the parish of Wamphray in Dumfriesshire, where Mary was born, and it is on the River Annan which is likely to be the reason for the name of their house. The census confirms that she was working on her 'Own Account' and also that she was working 'At Home', meaning that her studio would have been part of the family home. This would have been an advantage in setting up in business and her father was a blacksmith and coachbuilder in the town.



The address on the photograph I bought is 'West End, Linlithgow' and is what is described as a cabinet card, with a photographic print pasted on to a piece of card measuring 6½ x 4¼ inches (16.7 x 10.7 cm). The style of the card and type of print corresponds to those produced around 1900. Cabinet cards were usually bought in multiple copies and given to family and friends. Mary would not only have been taking the photographs but looking after the processing and producing the final print.

The other commercial photographers tended to have their premises closer to the railway station which would be convenient for visitors. In 1900 **Andrew Clark's** address was 'The Studio, Station Gate' and **Norman Mackenzie** 'The Studio, East Port'. One of these was part

of the Star and Garter Hotel and I came across a report about an incident at this studio when I was looking for information about Mary. It was a Sheriff Court report in the local paper in December 1898 and titled 'Mischievous Boys' and about three 'young lads' who had broken into the studio and caused damage. Despite pleas that it was only a 'boys prank' and the damage was trifling' they were 'each ordered to receive eight stripes with the birch rod' as they all had 'previous convictions of malicious mischief'.

Information about Mary's photographic career is very scarce. She would have received training, and this was possibly with another photographer in Linlithgow but more likely with one of the larger commercial photographic businesses in Edinburgh. It is also difficult to determine how long she ran her business, but it was already established by the 1901 census and is likely to have ceased when she got married in 1904 to

**Alexander Hay**, the Cemetery Superintendent. Nothing has been traced of any further involvement by Mary in photography.

The photograph I bought is the work of a technically skilled and talented photographer with the two unknown children appearing at ease.

.....  
Mary's photographic career was apparently only a few years but what is perhaps most significant is that she had the independence and tenacity to start and run her own business which would not have been easy at the time and was very rare for a woman photographer.

## 'GROW YOURSELF HEALTHY'

We have just been reading about research from around the world that has confirmed something that many gardeners already knew – gardening is really good for you! The same report told us that 49.5% of us do some gardening every week, but this doesn't mean that the other half can't enjoy some benefits from gardens or gardening, even in the middle of winter – so let's grow ourselves healthy...



It's easy to understand that gardening can keep us active and fit as well as feeding our creative side. But you don't actually need to do any gardening for gardens to work on your emotions and make you feel better and give you pleasure. But to achieve this midwinter lift to our spirits we must be able to see the garden and if it is just outside our window the 'fix' can be immediate and continuous! Henry our cat is happy to stay inside when it's very cold and dark to enjoy the view out to the garden.



He gets more excited during the daytime when he can see the activities of our visiting feathered friends.

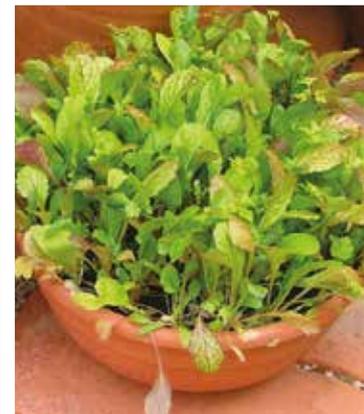
Luckily the visitors seem too clever for our rather idle cat! Try not to let your cats out at daybreak or sunset when the birds really need to feed in order to survive. Sitting inside watching these wildlife visitors is really rewarding and absorbing. The scientists have also shown that this gentle activity is good for us, and aids recovery if we have been ill and can also calm down over excited children.

But to really enjoy this daily performance there are a few things you must do: keep your feeders filled as your visitors

will come to rely on the food you put out for them; keep your feeders clean to avoid any build-up of diseases that can be as fatal as being caught by a cat; keep a supply of clean fresh water available especially when we have freezing temperatures.

For the half of you who want to be a bit more active on the gardening front why not start some pans of 'cut and come again' salads? Sowing seeds in pots on an indoor sunny windowsill of crops like Rocket, Mustard, Oriental vegetables or coloured lettuces you can very soon enjoy some exciting flavours to add to salads or garnishes. Cut off just what you need when the plants are 8-12cm (3-4") tall with scissors. You'll get three or four croppings and suffer no waste as you only cut what you need for each meal.

Dougal Philip and  
Lesley Watson,  
New Hopetoun Gardens



## so much more than just a garden centre

[www.newhopetoungardens.co.uk](http://www.newhopetoungardens.co.uk)

NEW  
HOPETOUN  
GARDENS

IT'S A FACT...

### GARDENING IS GOOD FOR YOU!

Whatever level of enthusiasm you have for your garden let us help you to enjoy it even more. Many thanks and best wishes for a peaceful and prosperous 2019.



# SOCCER STARLETS GO STATESIDE

**O**n May 31st last year, Linlithgow Academy's senior girls' football team did the town proud when they were crowned national champions. A thumping 5-0 saw them bring home the Senior Girls' Scottish Shield for the first time. Academy teams had come close in the competition in recent years and the resounding victory sparked off amazing scenes of celebration involving players and coaches, as well as families who had travelled to the game.

Most of the successful squad were products of the girls' and ladies' set up at Linlithgow Rose Community FC and now two of them, Beth Hopwood and Anna Johnston, are following their football dreams in the United States, where they have embarked on soccer scholarships in Missouri and West Virginia respectively. The eighteen-year olds have already made a big impact and, unusually, were ever-presents in their teams in the autumn leagues. Given the large number of players involved, and the gruelling schedule of matches, squad rotation means that appearances are normally restricted.

### Beth told me:

*"I have classes for three hours a day at Truman State University and then we train for two hours at night. We can be away all weekend. Sometimes we left on Thursday afternoon and didn't get back until Sunday night. We could have a game six hours away on the Friday and then a game two hours away from that on the Sunday, so we would just stay in a hotel, as there's no point in coming all the way back."*

### Anna explained:

*"During the Fall (Autumn) semester, balancing soccer and academic work is challenging, because we have to travel for games and train most days as well. In Spring, it will be slightly easier to get a balance because we play fewer games."*

I caught up with Beth and Anna during their Christmas holidays back home and they brought along their Dads, Paul and Doug, who have done a tremendous job over many years

organising girls' teams in Linlithgow.

Beth and Anna were involved in these teams from the very start. In fact, Anna played for the boys' teams before a separate girls' operation was set up and, at one time, was reckoned to be the oldest girl playing boys football in Scotland. Both were part of the first girls' team that was set up at BFC Linlithgow, now the Rose Community Club. They also played for South East Schools at under 14 levels for two years, winning back-to-back national championships with this squad.

Although they took part in Scotland regional squads from the age of 13 and attended selection camps, they never got the call for international honours. It was this omission that led them to further their football careers elsewhere. Beth qualifies for Northern Ireland through her Mum and she was invited into their youth set up, where she has now gained several caps at under 17 and under 19 level.

Beth was a key part of the Goalkeeper School at the Rose Community Club and was also selected for five years involvement with the West Lothian Excellence in Sport programme. Anna was keen to widen her knowledge of the rules of football and had two years refereeing younger teams at the Rose as part of the referee school.

Women's football – or soccer as they call it – is huge in the United States and there is a different attitude to it.

*"Women's soccer is seen as a genuine girls' sport that men play", Beth's Dad Paul told me. "It's a different mentality all together."*

For the American coaches, getting the correct "fit" is vitally important and a huge amount of preparation went into getting Beth and Anna to the United States. This involved sending videos and having face-time interviews. Anna was lucky in that she got to meet her coach when he visited the UK. Having a scholarship is a great challenge, as Paul explained:

*"The scholarship is like them being*



*paid to play, but they have got to earn that money. Once they have got that scholarship, they have got to earn the right to keep it. Otherwise, next season, the coaches could lose interest in them. So, they have to prove themselves every week at training and in every game. In the close season, it's up to them to make sure they stay fit and healthy so that when the ball starts being kicked again, they are off again. They are well looked after by the coaches and it's the closest they can get to being a professional."*

Having enjoyed three weeks with family and friends over Christmas, Beth and Anna are now back in the US, gearing up for their new season which gets underway in the coming weeks. They were very much trail-blazers for girl's football in the local area and the work continues at the Rose Community Club. This year, they have five separate squads – two at under 15 level, one at under 13, one at under 11 and one at under 19. The club has around seventy registered female players from six to sixteen and training takes place on Tuesday and Thursday nights at the Leisure Centre. Head coach, Dave Signorini tells me:

*"We are all about having fun and enjoying our football".*

If you are interested in playing girls or ladies football in Linlithgow, please contact Dave Signorini at [dave.signorini@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:dave.signorini@blueyonder.co.uk) or access the Twitter account at @LRCFCGirls.

### Murdoch Kennedy



Sat  
2  
MAR



# MATT MCGINN TRIBUTE WILL BOOST FOLK FESTIVAL FUNDS



LINLITHGOW  
FOLK FESTIVAL  
ASSOCIATION

**T**he Linlithgow Folk Festival is celebrating its twentieth anniversary this year and plans are already underway to make sure that the 2019 event is the biggest and best yet.

Fundraising will continue on **Saturday March 2nd** when fans will pay tribute to the memory of the late great **Matt McGinn** at an evening of songs and music in the Linlithgow Academy Theatre.

The Glasgow singer, songwriter, poet and raconteur was Scotland's undisputed 'King of Folk' in the 1960s and 70s. The rare talents of Matt McGinn made him a household name in Scotland and in Folk circles throughout the world. In 1962 he sang in a concert in New York's Carnegie Hall with **Pete Seeger** and a young **Bob Dylan**.

Matt went on to be regarded as one of Britain's most powerful songwriters and became one of Scotland's leading folksingers of his time. He died in 1977 at the age of only 49, but left some 500 songs, many of which, such as the **Red Yo-Yo** and **Coorie Doon** have become classics.

In recent years, **Linlithgow Folk Festival Association** has played a pivotal role in reviving Matt McGinn's work and presenting it in an innovative and entertaining way. Previous tribute nights in the town have played to packed houses with singers and musicians of all ages from throughout central Scotland interpreting their favourite Matt McGinn material.

The **Matt McGinn Night** is a major fundraiser for the Linlithgow Folk Festival and all entertainers give their services free as a gesture of support. Proceeds from the show are used at the September Festival to organise an outdoor music initiative at Linlithgow Cross - **THE NORA DEVINE STAGE** - which gives budding artistes the opportunity to perform at the very heart of the Festival.

For many years, the late **Nora Devine** ran the famous Linlithgow Folk Club and brought Matt McGinn to the town on several occasions.

Tickets for the **Matt McGinn Night**, priced **£12**, can be obtained from "Far from the Madding Crowd" at **20 High Street, Linlithgow**, and from **Linlithgow Folk Festival Association** on **07910 729 736**

An online ticket service is available through the website [www.linlithgowfolk.yapsody.com](http://www.linlithgowfolk.yapsody.com)

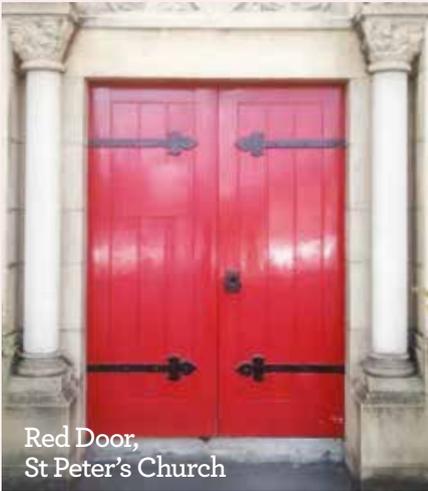


**Murdoch Kennedy**



# THE ARTS

## “AND ALL THAT JAZZ”



Red Door,  
St Peter's Church

Many of you will walk past the Red Door of St Peter's Church on the High Street regularly but may never have been through it. That might change if you go along to one of the “Red Door” events scheduled to take place here. Following a major extension and refurbishment project the Byzantine-style church is now an ideal venue for small concerts and events. I've been speaking to local solicitor (and keen amateur musician) Stewart Veitch who is a member of the St Peter's congregation and also a trustee for St Peter's. Stewart has enlisted the help of two Edinburgh-based friends, Robin Connelly and Rob Adams to help co-ordinate the Red Door concerts. Robin is involved in running similar events at St James Episcopal Church in Leith (Jazz at St James) and Rob is a music journalist and agent with connections throughout the Scottish jazz and folk scene.

The aim of Red Door is to host intimate concerts in the unique St Peter's setting and it's an integral part of St Peter's community involvement. The concerts to date have been an eclectic mix of folk, jazz and world music. They are ticketed at a break-even price sufficient to cover a fair fee for the artists and given the small size of the audience, you'll see top class performers up close and personal! I've only been able to go to one event so far, but I was very impressed with both the facilities and the quality of the performance. I never imagined I'd see a traditional Indian violinist in Linlithgow,

and I was certainly not disappointed with Jyotsna Srikanth. Red Door is an amazing addition to the local Arts scene.

The next concert is **New Focus jazz duo (Konrad Wiszniewski- tenor sax & Euan Stevenson- piano)** on 31st January, followed by up and coming singer/songwriter **Rory Butler** on 22nd February. Wiszniewski was winner of the Best Instrumentalist title at the Scottish Jazz Awards in 2017. Hopefully there will be an event every month from January to June. Details can be found on the St Peter's website and Facebook page and tickets are available from Far From the Madding Crowd (FFTMC).

**Red Door PRESENTS**

**New Focus**  
KONRAD WISZNIEWSKI | EUAN STEVENSON  
THE CLASSICAL CONNECTION

TWO OF SCOTLAND'S LEADING JAZZ MUSICIANS EXPLORE INFLUENCES FROM CHOPIN TO ELLINGTON AND BARTOK TO CHICK COREA, IN A THOROUGHLY NATURAL AND ENTERTAINING PRESENTATION.

8PM (DOORS 7.30PM) THUS 31ST JANUARY 2019  
ST PETER'S CHURCH, 153 HIGH STREET, LINLITHGOW  
TICKETS £12/£8(16 AND UNDER) AVAILABLE FROM: 07849 509407 AND 'FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD', 20 HIGH STREET, LINLITHGOW, TEL. 01506 845509

Sponsored by Veitch Solicitors & Notaries

### Burgh Halls

A new exhibition opens on 25th January with Art from the other side of the world. The Aboriginal tribes of Australia are the longest surviving continuous culture in the world and the oldest population of humans living outside of Africa. Aboriginal art tells their history with signs and symbols that have been used for thousands of years. It is a record of their knowledge of plants and animals and a map of their lands, as well as their sacred Dreamtime stories. In the 1960s, five desert tribes were controversially resettled by the Australian government. Before then, most indigenous art was drawn in the sand and painted on the body, but a school teacher, Geoff Barton, recognised the importance of their art and encouraged the senior men to permanently record

their work on boards. This was the beginning of the modern Aboriginal art movement. This exhibition will include original works from various artists. Curator Nadia Philips and her guest speaker will have an in-depth conversation on Aboriginal art on Thursday 21 March from 6.30-7.30pm. Tickets are £5 per person including tea/coffee and biscuits and can be booked on 01506 340700. Nadia will talk about the work of the artists' communities, the symbolism of the imagery in the paintings and her personal reflections on travelling between cultures.

**JOIN US...**  
and play in  
our **Next** concert.

New adult string players welcome  
Age 16 years + appx grade 5.  
Monday Evenings  
@ Linlithgow Masonic Lodge  
7.30 - 9.30 pm

For more information contact:  
linlithgowstringorchestra@gmail.com

### Linlithgow String Orchestra

The Orchestra is looking to recruit some new string players and would love to see you at their next Monday session. If you are 16 or over and at approximately Grade 5 level why not take on a new challenge this year? See the advert for details.

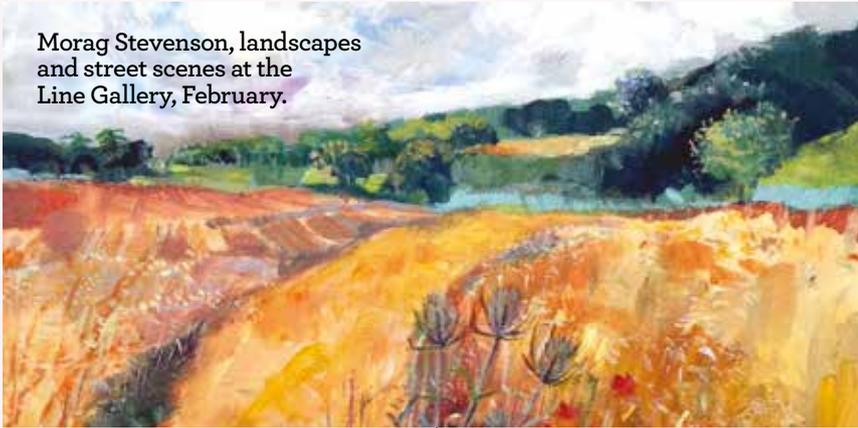


### Linlithgow Civic Trust

James Crawford is a writer and broadcaster and will present the LCT annual lecture on Tuesday 5 February 2019 at 7.30pm in the Burgh Halls, in association with Far From the Madding Crowd. He leads, develops and delivers publishing for Historic Environment Scotland, and having heard him speak before, I can recommend taking time to attend this event.

In 2018 he scripted and presented “Scotland From the Sky”, a landmark

Morag Stevenson, landscapes and street scenes at the Line Gallery, February.



three-part BBC One documentary series. He has previously written a number of photographic books, including "Above Scotland", "Victorian Scotland", "Scotland's Landscapes", and "Aerofilms: A History of Britain from Above". This is a free but ticketed event - tickets from programme@lbt.scot or from FFTMC.

#### The Line Gallery

Morag Stevenson is an artist well known to many in Linlithgow. Teaching at Linlithgow Academy for a number of years, she encouraged and played a significant part in

the development of many a young student, some of whom have gone on to develop full time artist careers of their own. For this solo exhibition Morag has painted a range of landscapes and more intimate street scenes, often from around the High Street. The exhibition runs from February 2nd to 26th.

#### Linlithgow Jazz

Linlithgow Jazz have the amazing Rose Room on 2nd February and tickets are now available to buy in advance from FFTMC or Eventbrite. There may be some on the door but

the venue reached capacity at the Christmas event so booking is advised.

#### Linlithgow Pottery

Linlithgow Pottery have a couple of exciting new classes coming up - a weekend printmaking class in Collagraphy on 16th-17th February and Linoleum cut Valentines Day Card making classes on 2nd, 9th and 10th February 2019 at 12-1:30 and 2-3:30. Details on Facebook or email LinlithgowPottery@gmail.com.

There's a lot going on - join in! 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

"today is a perfect day for opening a new door"

## BOOK REVIEW BECOMING MICHELLE OBAMA

"I'm an ordinary person who found herself on an extraordinary journey."

The former First Lady of America, Michelle Obama, has written an autobiography. And it's brilliant! Honest, witty, self-deprecating, inspiring - this is a must read narrative for people at any stage of their life, from all walks of life.

Michelle writes about her life from the very earliest days, when she was a child growing up on the South Side of Chicago, with her parents, Fraser and Marian, and brother, Craig. They lived together on the top floor of a small upstairs apartment and her life then consisted of school, friends and learning to play the piano with her formidable aunt Robbie. Her family were tight-knit and she credits them with the development of many positive attributes. Her parents sacrificed many luxuries in their own lives in order that their

children might have the opportunities they did not.

Michelle gives many insights into what life was and is like for African Americans growing up in a country where both power and influence are governed by those who are mainly white and mainly men. Opportunities do not come easily to those who have been considered as minorities for much of history. Michelle's response was to work harder, dig deeper and not set limits on what is possible. She had high expectations for herself - both academically and in her personal life - and was conscious to make the most of every opportunity that was afforded her while she was growing up. When reading this autobiography it is easy to see the roots of the Obama catchphrase "they go low, we go high."

Michelle is generous in her life's reflections. She credits so many people with helping to

shape the woman she has become and acknowledges moments, both good and bad, which have led her to where she is now in her life. She acknowledges she is not perfect; the fact she has a deep sense of self-reflection and passion to improve not only her own life but the lives of those around her, provides her with a reserve of wisdom and sincerity which can be called upon in times of crisis.

I enjoyed reading Michelle Obama's autobiography. I enjoyed reading about her early life and learning of the positivity and affirmations surrounding her recurring messages: everyone has potential; believe in yourself; respect those around you; work hard, put in the effort and the rewards will pay for themselves. I enjoyed the detail she included of the inner life of the White House and her efforts to ensure that her daughters had as normal a life as possible even although they were living at one of the most famous addresses in the world for the majority of their teenage years. Michelle Obama's journey is real, her effort is real and her intentions are real. I defy



anyone to read this autobiography and not enter into thoughts of self-reflection and feelings of motivation:

"In sharing my story, I hope to create space for other stories and other voices, to widen the for who belongs and why...It's not about being perfect. It's not about where you get yourself in the end. There's power in allowing yourself to be known and heard, in owning your unique story, in using your authentic voice."

#### Lisa Nettleton

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



# WOMEN AND RETIREMENT

Susan Ralston, Virtue Money



Virtue Money

Both Aegon and Scottish Widows have recently conducted surveys to see where women are, regarding their pension provision.

Unfortunately, the findings of the surveys prove grim reading as both show that women are woefully under prepared for their retirement compared with men!

**Aegon's study found that 15% of women have no pension provision at all compared with 11% of men and that women are half as likely as men to be confident about their ability to have a comfortable retirement.**

Although, this year's **Scottish Widows** report findings are encouraging as they show that women are starting to save more for their retirement with auto-enrolment really helping to highlight to both women and men the need to save for retirement.

However, the report also shows that the narrowing gap is happening slowly and in part can be attributed to the fact that the number of men saving enough is in decline.

**Aegon's survey findings echo a 2017 AJ Bell survey which found that on average women are retiring with a pension pot of around £59,000 which is around two fifths of the average men's pension pot of £143,000.**

**Here are some of the reasons for this pension gender disparity -**

> The gap between women's and men's pay mirrors the retirement savings gap, lower pay equals lower retirement savings.

> Women may have breaks in their careers or reduce their working hours to have or look after children.

> Women may also take breaks or reduce their working hours to care for elderly relatives.



**So, how can women concerned about their lack of retirement saving go about tackling this issue?**

**The best way is to have a plan and ask yourself questions like –**

> How much do I need in retirement to cover my essential expenses?

> Find out what your State Pension Entitlement is, you can do this by visiting the Government Pension Service website.

> What pensions do you have? If you've had several employers throughout your working life you might have old pension schemes with them. Have a look through your paperwork or contact your old employers directly to find out what you have and where.

> Do you want to consolidate all these old "pension pots" this may help you keep track of your pension savings and could save you money on charges? It's always a good idea to seek financial advice before doing this though to make sure it is actually the best option for you.

> If you can then put a plan in place to begin increasing your pension contributions. If you are finding money tight then why not consider putting your bonus in as a one-off contribution

or increase monthly contributions if you get a pay rise!

> If you're in your employer's pension scheme then check it out, what fund is the scheme's default. Remember this is your money and you do have a say in where it is invested.

> What other assets do you have, do you have property or savings? These together with your pension pot(s) might mean you are in a better retirement position than you think.

**If you want guidance on pensions, then there are several websites you could look at -**

> Pension Wise

> The Pension Advisory Service

> Unbiased

**If however you feel that you would like some financial advice on your pension (or investments or protection for that matter) then please either call me on 0345 034 3424 or email me at [susan@virtuemoney.com](mailto:susan@virtuemoney.com) and I can make an appointment with one of our advisers.**

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Information Sources – Scottish Widows Women in Retirement 2018 – the Barriers to Savings Report, AJ Bell's The Pensions Freedoms 'Engagement Gap' & Aegon's Article Pensions - the other gender pay gap

This article is intended to provide a general overview 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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## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Bruce Jamieson

*Manuel Nunnery – some two miles from the Royal Burgh of Linlithgow.*

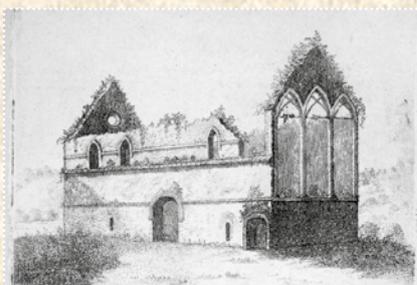


This image was engraved for “The Antiquities of Scotland”. The author, Captain Francis Grose met Robert Burns who was so impressed by him that he wrote a poem in which appear the lines:

**“A chiel’s amang you takin’ notes,  
And faith he’ll print it!”**

The name ‘Manuel’ is not one you might associate with Linlithgow. Originating in the Holy Land, as a shortened version of the Hebrew ‘Emmanuel’ meaning ‘God with us’, it came to Britain from the Byzantine Empire, via Spain and Portugal, in the 12th century. Its earliest connection with Linlithgow was the Manuel Nunnery – a Cistercian establishment on the River Avon founded by King Malcolm IV around 1160. It was never a very important institution, housing only a small number of nuns, but it still possessed influence locally as the establishment had been granted control of the three Burgh Mills. Anyone in the locality who wished to have their corn ground had to use these mills (under the feudal obligation of thirlage) and pay for the privilege – the payment being known as multures. The nuns also maintained the ford which crossed the river at that point – and this gave them added significance. The nunnery is mentioned in a 1335 charter of English King Edward III. In it, the monarch offers compensation to the nuns following some damage done during the invasion of Scotland in the Second Wars of Independence.

By the early 16th century, the nunnery must have been in decline as King James IV suggested that it should be closed on account of the fact that only five nuns were in residence. The Reformation finally ended the nunnery’s existence and in 1560 the last Prioress, Jean Livingston, handed over control of the Burgh Mills to the Burgh Council.



*A sketch of the Manuel Nunnery made in 1739. Today only one gable end still remains to mark the historic site.*

Gradually, the religious building fell into decline – much of the stone being taken away and re-used by local farmers. Its demise was hastened when the River Avon (whose traditional course had been altered) swept away most of the remaining walls, and the associated cemetery, during a heavy rainstorm in 1783.

An interesting tombstone which had previously been recorded was never found. It depicted the figure of Prioress Alice holding a spinning distaff with a dog at her feet. Her name appears in the Ragman Rolls when she swore fealty to King Edward I in 1296.

The name ‘Manuel’ lingered on however in the Manuel Mill – an 18th century corn mill next to the site of the nunnery and driven by a large water wheel. Today the well-preserved, listed building reveals it to have been one of the largest mills ever built in Scotland.



*Manuel Mill today.*

Nearby is Manuel House and Manuel Mill Farm and just up the road is the site of the former Manuel Brickworks. This was opened in 1928 – some 5 years after a seam of fireclay was found at a spot called Manuelhaugh, near Whitecross, close to the site of the Manuel Nunnery. At its height, the refractory brick company of John G. Stein and Co. (later G. R. Stein) employed 1200 people and the tiny hamlet of Whitecross grew in size to accommodate the workers.



*An aerial view of the Manuel Works.*

Under new management, the brickworks closed in 2001 and plans were made to redevelop the 120-acre site and increase the size of Whitecross. The village’s railway station, Manuel Junction is now used as the terminus of the Bo’ness & Kinneil Railway, operated by the Scottish Railway Preservation Society. So, in many ways, the name ‘Manuel’ lives on.



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Figures from the Scottish Registers for the last available quarter (3rd Quarter 2018) show that in the year to the 30th September 2018 the average house price in Scotland rose by 1.8% to £181,572 for Scotland as a whole. In terms of percentage increase West Lothian though, out-performed the Scottish average, seeing a rise of 3.8% to £172,381.

The volumes of property sold in the 3rd quarter of 2018 compared to the same quarter in 2017, showed that Scotland, as a whole, remained more or less static reflecting a 0.7% increase in the volume of property sold in the 3rd quarter of 2018, at 28,721 properties.

Linlithgow remains particularly in demand in this part of West Lothian. As at the end of November 2018 here at Paul Rolfe at least, almost 80% of sales agreed in 2018 in EH49 were above the Home Buyers Report Valuation.

Across the UK it is a varied picture; in London and the South East house price growth has effectively stalled, but in the North of England house price growth was approximately 3% over the last year. This probably reflects house price levels relative to where they were in 2007, immediately before the financial crisis. In the North West of England prices are broadly back to 2007 peaks, yet in London they are more than 50% higher.

Property condition is key, when it comes to getting the best sale price possible. Buyer's expectations on property condition continue to rise. Our experience is that property features most in demand are modern Kitchens and Bathrooms, an Ensuite and a property layout that facilitates open plan Kitchen/Dining.

The fundamentals for a good sellers market remain, record levels of employment, a growing economy, albeit at relatively modest rates of growth, a growing population and rates of new house building below government targets.

At Paul Rolfe we pride ourselves on offering a professional service to sellers and buyers alike. We know how to create maximum impact through a tailored approach to marketing, which is customised to suit each property we sell – we offer a series of optional extras to our clients including professional photography, internal and external videos and home staging, to name a few.

As well as this, we offer a professional accompanied viewing service – we do not just show buyers round your home, we sell your home. By doing the viewings for you we are able to build a relationship with prospective buyers and gain a clearer understanding of what they are looking for. We also provide regular feedback to all of our clients after each viewing, meaning you are fully appraised of any developments throughout the process.

In the end, all of this helps us negotiate the best possible price for sellers and enables us to find local buyers their dream home.

**Paul Rolfe**



West Lothian out-performed the Scottish average house price increase, seeing a rise of 3.8% to £172,381.

3.8%

*The 'year' average house price increase in West Lothian, upto 30th September 2018*

Stuart from the Westport Veterinary Clinic tells us about some of his regular customers. Westport's Pet of the Month is Rosa the one year old Pug!

Rosa's favourite walk is going up through the woods of Callendar Park. She likes chasing the birds at the park, hates the telly and thinks her reflection is her sister... who gets barked at a lot!

She loves treats, especially broccoli, eggs and blueberries and her favourite toy is a pig who came all the way from Mexico. Rosa is a super happy girl, whose full of beans and loves to make new best friends with everyone she meets!

We have been very lucky this festive season to have had such mild weather! However January-February can prove to be chilly months so we advise precautions are taken to ensure your pets are kept warm and protected from the dangers that cold weather brings.

Smaller animals, such as hamsters, can go into hibernation if it's too cold so consider the position of their cages and ensure they are kept away from draughts. Insulation is advised for pets in outdoor hutches or preferably bring them indoors over winter.

Anti-freeze for defrosting car windscreens is particularly toxic and can be fatal in cats who come into contact with it. Ensuring that if any is spilt it must be removed immediately and keep the bottle safe and securely closed, stored away when not in use.

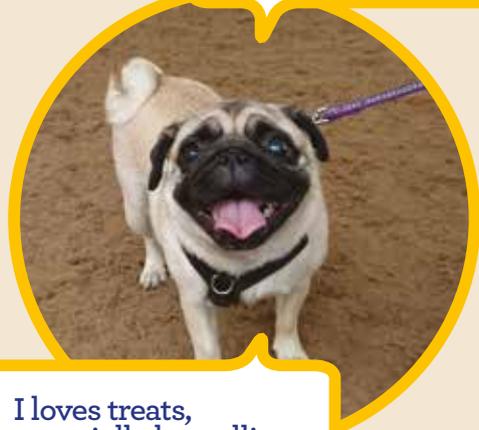
Grit may cause pain or irritation in your pets paws - particularly if it becomes impacted with snow. The salt content in grit also makes it hazardous if ingested and can cause lethargy, even kidney damage in severe cases.

If your pet wears a coat or jacket, we advise that this is not only correctly fitting but care is taken to ensure it is removed when wet as this can leave them even colder! Also removing waterproofs when indoors as this can cause them to overheat.

When getting your pet used to wearing a coat or jacket it is recommended to build up to its use using lots of treats when it's out and when putting it on. Many dogs take time to adjust to the noise of waterproof coatings and velcro attachments so a gradual build up with treats can help them to feel comfortable when worn.

Take care to clean your pets' paws after walks and monitor them for any signs of irritation or discomfort, and any changes to their normal behaviour.

Hello  
I'm Rosa



I loves treats, especially broccoli, eggs and blueberries.

*If you suspect your pet may have ingested any toxins or you have any concerns please contact Westport Vets immediately on 01506 844165.*



SEE PAGE 6



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# 2ND LINLITHGOW BOYS BRIGADE

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In November, The Junior Section from 2nd Linlithgow Boys Brigade did their bit to support Blythswood Care's Shoe Box Appeal.

The Boys in Junior Section cover 5 elements in order to achieve their badges. For session 2018/19 to help them work towards the Community part of their badgework they filled 28 shoe boxes, and wrapped them. These precious boxes were then collected and sent to vulnerable children and adults in Eastern Europe. Each shoe box is filled with items that we think are basic i.e a bar of soap, but to the individual that receives a box, it's a luxury.

Every box makes a difference, it let's someone know that they are loved and brings hope and joy to people living in desperate poverty.

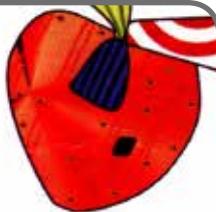
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**Lisa Callaghan**



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