



the **BLACK** *bitch*

Linlithgow's news by Linlithgow's people

LINLITHGOW COMMUNITY MAGAZINE ISSUE 64 MARCH 2019

WHAT WILL FILL THE GAP?



SEE THE WHOLE STORY
OF VICTORIA HALL
BRUCE JAMIESON P22



NEW HOPETOUN
GARDENS P7



Choose
FAIRTRADE
PARTNERSHIP P14



MEET BANDIT
AND CLEO HUME P25

PLUS

Jonathan Mahoney - Folk Fae Lithgae, Burgh Beautiful, Town Centre BID, Police Scotland, Book Review, Paul Rolfe Property Review, Bruce Jamieson & Local History...

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ALICE FERGUSON MSYP

MEMBER OF THE SCOTTISH YOUTH PARLIAMENT
FOR THE LINLITHGOW CONSTITUENCY

> MENTAL HEALTH

Firstly, as part of my role as a member of the Mental Health Steering Group, I met with the CEO of NHS Lothian along with Directors of mental health services. The meeting was focused around the progress of, and feedback from, the implementation and use of the Transitional Care Plans (TCPs).

These are a set of resources, developed by a team of young people, including MSYPs, to support young people's transition from child to adult mental health services. **These documents put young people's voices at the heart of their journey and they will also ensure that young people have a full understanding of the transition.** The documents will also help clinicians to ensure that there is an easy and full transfer of knowledge which will help plan future support and accommodate needs. It was fantastic to see that the TCPs are being rolled out across NHS Lothian, with excellent feedback from clinicians and young people alike.

> HEALTH & WELLBEING As part of my role as Convenor of the Health and Wellbeing Committee, I was offered a brilliant opportunity to visit Oslo, Norway, and speak on a panel at the 'Press, Save the Children, Youth Seminar'. The topic of the seminar was 'Do You(th) matter?' which heard from organisations such as the UN to Mozambique Youth Parliament, about how young people can influence decision making - posing as a great opportunity to showcase the excellent work SYP does to voice young people's views.

My panel focused on successful health projects. This allowed me to speak about the 'Transitional Care Plans', and about the importance of free instrumental tuition provision in boosting young people's wellbeing. The trip was also a great opportunity to meet and



socialise with young people from a wide collection of countries across the world.

> SCOTTISH CABINET

In early March, I will be speaking at SYP's annual Scottish Cabinet meeting, held in Bute House. I will be addressing the cabinet on the topic of instrumental tuition and the value of the service to Scotland's young people. This comes after the WL music campaign I started in late 2017, which invited young people in West Lothian to share why they wanted the free service to be retained. The campaign showcased an array of powerful and purposeful messages that were spread all across Scotland; sparking greater conversation which lead to a parliamentary report and fed into the retention of the free service in Dundee. The meeting at Bute House will be an excellent opportunity for me to directly underline the service's importance to young people in the Linlithgow constituency.



Alice Ferguson MSYP

Website - <https://aliceruby.wixsite.com>

Twitter - @aliceMSYP

Instagram - @alicemsysp

Facebook - @aliceSYP



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WHAT'S ON - MARCH/APRIL

March

Tue 12 Nutriclub class, every Tuesday, 5.30pm, Cross House, Linlithgow.*

Thur 14 Linlithgow Keep Fit Club, 7:00pm - 9:00pm, Linlithgow Academy - Small gym*

Sun 17 Blood Transfusion Service. 10.30am - 12.20pm. New donors, welcome (i.e. anyone in good health, 17+ years). Low Port Centre

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

Thu 21 Exhibition talk - Australian Aboriginal Art, 6.30-7.30pm. Age 14+, £5 p/p, includes refreshments. Linlithgow Burgh Halls. Booking reqd

Tue 23 Friends of Low Port Primary Spring Fayre, a fantastic Spring Fair for the whole community

Sat 30 Easter Coffee Morning, 10:00am - 12:30pm, Cross House, 4th West Lothian Scout Group

Sat 30 Scottish Women's Institutes. Show of competition entries in both Handcrafts and Homeskills, 2:00pm - 5:00pm Linlithgow Academy

Sun 31 Mother's Day sparkling afternoon tea. 1:00pm - 4:00pm. Ssandwiches with scones, cakes, tea or coffee. Sparkling Prosecco for adults and sparkling mocktails for children. Bailie Hardie Hall, Linlithgow Burgh Halls

April

Tue 2 Nutriclub class, every Tuesday, 5.30pm, Cross House, Linlithgow.*

Sat 6 Linlithgow Arts Guild, Lana Trotovsok, violinist & Maria Canyigueral, pianist. Tickets £14, U26 £6, school age free. Linlithgow Academy.

Mon 8-13 LAMP Children's Theatre will be performing Barnum, The Musical, 7:30pm - 10:00pm, Linlithgow Academy.

Sun 21 The Easter bunny has been hiding his chocolates at the Burgh Halls! 12:00pm - 3:00pm. Free entry.

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.** Contact me in via social media, tel or email

Alice Ferguson MSYP

Twitter - @aliceMSYP

Instagram - @alicemsyyp

Facebook - @aliceSYP



Contact the Black Bitch

For editorial and to advertise:

on.a.lead@gmail.com

Editor: David Tait, 07767 713024



Copy deadline for next issue is 10 April 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

18 MAR

Death of Stalin

Recital for Violin and Piano, plus AGM 6 April

Music by Lana Trotovsok and Maria Canyigueral. Includes items by J S Bach, Clara Schumann, Vaughan Williams and Beethoven.

7:30pm - 10:00pm
Linlithgow Academy

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.

LAMP and LAMP children's theatre - coffee morning, St Michael's church Hall Sat 27th April from 10 till 12 noon. Tickets £3.00 per adult and £1.00 per child.

Reed Band Annual Spring Concert takes place in the Academy on Sunday March 31st at 7pm.

Perambulation of the Marches Wednesday 12 June, starting at about 7pm outside St Ninian's Craigmalen Church.

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

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

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. Images: A big thank you to all our photographers who support the magazine throughout the year.



WEDDINGS • EVENTS • PORTRAITS

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Folk Fae Lithgae

Jonathan Mahoney

Fifty years ago, Jonathan Mahoney's family were among the first to move into the Springfield estate. They came from Grangemouth, but had deep roots in Linlithgow. His Mum, Anne, grew up in the town. Her father, Davie King, worked for Aitken's brewery at the Mains Maltings. Like many other local men, he served with the famous "Terries" in the Second World War. Anne's sister Marlyn was the Gala Day Queen in 1958.

.....

"Springfield was a fantastic playground for kids", Jonathan recalled. "In the early seventies, health and safety didn't really exist and we used to clamber all over the roofs of the building site at Baronshill. There was an influx of young kids, all scattered around the edges of the greatest thing you could get as a child, which is a massive open space of grass to play on. So, we spent the first few months playing football and running away from Fred Benham, who was the groundsman for what was actually the West Lothian County cricket ground. Fred persuaded me and some of my pals to start playing cricket and with him coaching us, we became a pretty powerful unit. So much so, that we provided the platform for West Lothian winning the Scottish Counties championship fourteen or fifteen years later when we all grew up."

Jonathan played cricket during the summer for many years, but his greatest sporting love was always Linlithgow Rose. As a pupil at the neighbouring St Joseph's, the club was an early influence and he remembers writing match reports for the school magazine in P4.

In recent times, he was keen to get more involved and was one of the prime movers behind the formation of the "Friends of the Rose". Through monthly subscriptions, this group of supporters has provided the club with almost £40,000 over the last eight years. Jonathan then joined the committee and at the last AGM, he was elected as President. His term of office got off to a flying start with an all-ticket friendly against Hibernian on Saturday June 30th.

Jonathan is aware of the huge responsibility he now has and told me:

"You are following in the footsteps of giants, to be honest. The influence that Davie Roy has had on football in this town for sixty years is just phenomenal. He has worked for the club with every fibre of his being and still does. People like Les Donaldson and Sandy Fowler have also worked tirelessly. The tremendous facilities we have at Prestonfield are testimony to the dedication of these men and many others."

Jonathan believes that the structure set in place by Davie and the committee

over the years will see the club in good stead as it continues to make the difficult transition from junior to senior football through the pyramid system.

"The model that Linlithgow have followed is one of prudent steady progression, never being over-reliant on one source, because if that tap gets turned off, you still have to be able to turn up the next day and put the lights on."

The Rose are already a well-supported club, but Jonathan would like to see even more engagement from people in the town. He said:

"My message to the community would be - come and see us. Come and see the facilities we have at our social club, but most of all, come along and watch the team on a Saturday. There's a good standard of football played at Linlithgow. We would be delighted to welcome more people. We also have tremendous opportunities for the local business community and would love to hear from anyone interested in getting involved."

Murdoch Kennedy



RECYCLING LET'S GET IT RIGHT

Averil Stewart



In attempting to be responsible citizens I'm sure most of us try to do "our bit for the environment" by minimising waste and recycling what we can. We put our recyclables into our blue bins and the local council take away the contents. But what happens next? Members of Transition Linlithgow and Burgh Beautiful recently visited the Biffa Waste Recycling Centre in Broxburn to find out.

The centre is effectively a large, open warehouse which processes blue bin contents from both West Lothian and Edinburgh City councils. Trucks full of waste arrive every few minutes with waste then being shovelled onto a series of conveyor belts. Large revolving cylinders then sort the waste by size. From then on, it's a manual process to sort cardboard, paper, plastic bottles, tubs, and metal cans into storage areas below. It's a thankless task with everybody working at great speed, never taking their eyes off the seemingly unending line of waste.

At the end of the sorting process aluminium cans, steel cans, paper, cardboard and plastic are compacted into large bales which are then sold on to different companies for further specialised processing. Shockingly, there's also a huge mountain of discarded items which are sent to landfill.

So what did we learn?

About 30% of the blue bin material delivered from West Lothian ends up in landfill. This is due mainly to food contamination. Interestingly, this figure is much lower for Edinburgh council.

All items put into our blue bins therefore must be clean of food waste. Accidentally "binning" plastic containers with some of their food contents still inside will not only contaminate the contents of that bin but also the other blue bins that are emptied into the same waste collection truck, and potentially, more waste at the recycling facility.

Nothing should be put in plastic bags and then put into the blue bin. The sorting process goes at such a rate that the sorters simply don't have the time to empty these bags, so all will end up in landfill.

Check what types of plastic can be accepted on the West Lothian Council website. Materials such as clingfilm and items made from polystyrene cannot be recycled and go to landfill. Until recently much of this plastic was bought by China, but this stopped in January 2018, and so far, our own plastic reprocessing infrastructure has not developed sufficiently to cope with this type of waste.



The list of what can be put into our blue bins is on the West Lothian Council website at www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/2102/Blue-Bins. This includes the following:

>> Paper and cardboard (but remember to remove any plastic windows from envelopes and food packaging)

>> Plastic bottles (clear and coloured plastic is ok as are bottle tops. But all must be empty and rinsed clean)

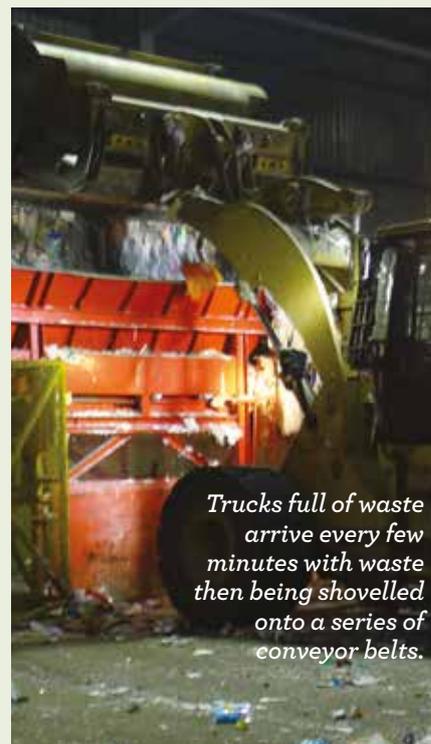
>> Aluminium and steel tins and cans (empty and rinsed clean)

>> Plastic food pots, tubs, cartons, trays and lids (all need to be empty and cleaned)



Waste management is a costly business. Our council pay BIFFA to dispose of our blue bin contents; a figure which increases the more they have to send straight to a landfill site.

Wouldn't it be great if we could all learn to recycle responsibly?



Trucks full of waste arrive every few minutes with waste then being shovelled onto a series of conveyor belts.

J Walker - Carpets



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HAVE WE MANAGED TO PERSUADE YOU YET THAT GARDENING IS GOOD FOR YOU?

We are still enjoying the winter display on our patio table at home but we have also had the treat last month of a week in Madeira. It was sunnier and warmer than here, but only just our team have been trying to convince us!



It's always fascinating to see the plants we try to grow in our own homes growing very happily outside in warmer climes. Madeira is full of plants from all over the world. It was a popular stopping off port for ships from Australia and South Africa heading for Europe and inherited every sort of plant you can imagine from these visitors.



The island can support plants from many varied climates, so the rain forest Swiss Cheese Plant (Monstera) is a great jungle climber here whereas succulents and cacti enjoy the varied



growing conditions as well. In our homes the succulents demand lots of light and very little watering but the rainforest plants enjoy more regular watering as the leaves lose water quickly and they don't tolerate such bright light.

Grouping plants together in our homes can make very bold displays and it also helps the



rainforest plants as a group of them will provide a more humid atmosphere than if you sit them on their own and this humidity is what they would have enjoyed in their native land.

Our 'Saturday Girl' Amy is in her third year at Stirling University and is typical of many of her peers in her love, and almost addiction, to houseplants. Here she is taming one of our climbing Philodendrons in the tearoom which seem to love the west facing windows but rather resist being tied to their moss poles. Amy has 72 houseplants in her flat and that doesn't even include all her Spider Plant babies!

If your houseplants are happy they'll make you happy - we keep trying to remind you that (indoor) gardening is good for you!

p.s. Be brave and throw out (into the compost bin) your unhappy houseplants!

Dougal Philip and Lesley Watson,
New Hopetoun Gardens



so much more than just a garden centre

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.

THE DOLLHOUSE

1st Birthday Celebrations



Hip Hip Hooray, Its Our Birthday!!

Spring is in the air, new life is popping up everywhere and excitement is bubbling down at The Dollhouse as it was our **1st Birthday on the 8th March!**

Our beauty salon has expanded so much over the past year with the nail bar offering sculpted and tip acrylic extensions, gel polish treatments, nail art and luxury manicures and pedicures. In our two pamper rooms you can have all your waxing needs as well as a whole selection of complementary therapies from traditional massage to reflexology, reiki and more.

In the last six months we have introduced new products including The Best British made aromatherapy **skincare range by Eve Taylor**. Eve Taylor is paraben free and have a range of products for even the most sensitive of skins. Our skin care treatments are offered in our pamper rooms or in our skin bar on the main floor.

We also introduced **Bondi Sands** in our tanning room; the leading Australian spray tan provides a coconut scented tan rich with Argan oil to provide a moisturising tan to last up to one week. We have three shades in stock light/medium,

medium/dark and liquid gold which develops in just two hours for that last minute tan you need.

The dolls are always pushing their skills to new heights from sculpting acrylic nails to creating our **hybrid lash extensions** and our latest creation at The Dollhouse is the **Dollhouse Brow**, move over HD the Dolls are here!! Offering a full eye package including eyebrow tint and wax/thread, eyelash tint and mineral brow powder to define and frame the face.

Something that our clients may have noticed in the salon is the new addition to our wall space – our **Dolls mood boards** for the month. These little works of art are where our dolls show off their skills and what the month means to them using a selection of colours from our ever expanding range. If clients choose the colours of the month for their own nails they receive 20% off their manicure.

We are so excited for the year we have covered and looking forward to the year ahead. To celebrate we welcome you down to party with us for our birthday for the whole month of March as we have some amazing offers for you.



Present 1 :

Acrylic extensions £25 (no polish)

Present 2 : 20% off infills

Present 3 : Buy any treatment over £25 and receive one of these for just £1

Vinylux manicure/pedicure

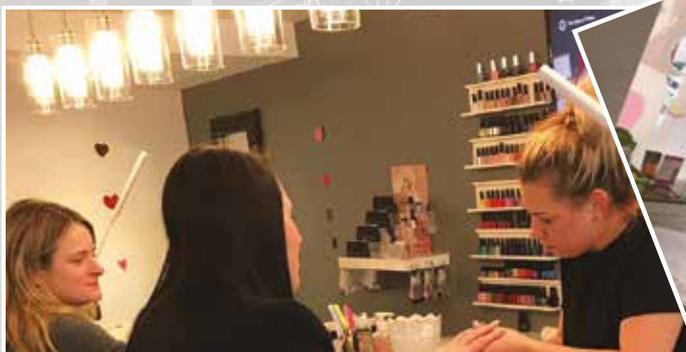
Back, neck and shoulder massage

Eyelash/eyebrow tint

Plus since we love our clients so much and appreciate your loyalty and custom we have a prize raffle in the salon, where everyone is a winner. Our prizes range from bath bombs, nail treatments, massages, eye treatments with our two ultimate prizes of gel fingers and toes, Bondi Sands full body spray tan and express lashes worth **£100**. The raffle money will be donated to Simpson Special Care Baby Unit which is a charity close to our heart.

You can keep up-to-date with what's happening in the Dollhouse by liking our Facebook page, Instagram or see our latest offers advertised here in the magazine.

The Dolls x



The Dollhouse

NAIL BAR & BEAUTY SALON

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Now open at 77 The Vennel, Linlithgow

LINLITHGOW TWINNING ASSOCIATION NEEDS YOUR HELP TO CELEBRATE ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY



In spite of the current political upheaval between the UK and the European Union it is heartening to note that the friendships forged between Linlithgow and Guyancourt are as strong as ever. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Twinning Charter between the two towns and many French friends will be travelling to Linlithgow at Easter, 19th - 22nd April, to join in our celebrations.

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Our programme over the Easter weekend will include the following:

1. A reception on the Friday evening at the Rose Club after which our visitors will join their hosts in their homes for an evening meal.
2. On Saturday there will be a day of entertainment for the French which will include a visit to the Battle of Bannockburn Visitor Centre and a performance by Quern of the Auld Alliance which will be staged in Linlithgow Palace, transport and lunch being provided by the Twinning Association. In the evening hosts and guests are invited to a dinner and ceilidh at the Beancross restaurant, arranging their own transport to and from the venue.



from
19-22
APRIL

3. On Sunday our host families entertain their French guests until the evening when there will be an informal musical event at the Masonic Hall which will include a light buffet.
4. On Monday our French friends will depart in the morning and be taken back to Edinburgh airport on a coach provided by the Twinning Association.

One of the reasons our links have endured over the years is that all visitors are home hosted providing them with an opportunity to get to really appreciate our culture. Whilst we are fortunate to have some regular hosts we are always looking for new families to join us .

This year we are seeking hosts for:

- >> A family of 4 with 2 boys aged 15 and 12, the boys enjoying basketball and rugby; and
- >> A lady currently in employment who enjoys dance, cycling and visiting historical monuments.

If you think you could help or if you are not sure and would like a chat to find out more please contact Gaynor Parry at email:

lintwinsec@gmail.com



Gaynor Parry

WHAT'S ON AT THE ROSE...

OPEN
7 DAYS

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>>> Remaining Heats 22 & 29 March 3 Final Qualifiers 5, 12 & 26 April, Grand Final 3 May Tickets only £5pp.</p> | <p>>> Curry Night PLUS Live Entertainment Saturday 6 April, BOOKINGS NOW BEING TAKEN.</p> |
|--|---|

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.

*** **£2,500 PRIZE MONEY** ***
2019 LINLITHGOW ROSE CLUB
SOCIAL CLUB TALENT COMPETITION
6 HEATS ACTS NOW BEING SOUGHT -
COMPLETELY SELF CONTAINED

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LINLITHGOW TOWN CENTRE BID, AS BUSINESSES WILL BE AWARE, COMES TO THE END OF ITS FIVE-YEAR TERM LATER THIS YEAR.



Rather than simply update the business plan and invite businesses to vote on whether to renew it, the BID has worked closely with Scotland’s Towns Partnership (the governing body for BIDs across the country), as well as community and corporate partners, to develop a unique, new type of BID, which not only invites involvement from businesses, but vastly improves collaboration between all bodies with the holistic betterment of Linlithgow at heart.

At two open meetings towards the end of last year, the overwhelming feeling among (some 90) attendees was that Linlithgow’s business community must work with other local and national groups to achieve meaningful improvement for the town at large. A Steering Group is now formally constituted and work underway to develop proposals for a “One Linlithgow” BID.

Out of 40 operational (and 60 developing) BIDs in Scotland, Linlithgow’s town centre and Mill Road BIDs would be the first to join forces

and work towards their common goals, all while exploiting economies of scale and reallocating savings to the delivery of effective projects and services for their respective stakeholders.

Of course, as with any Business Improvement District, businesses must always lead the charge, however with the pioneering new structure proposed, strong collaboration with other groups (such as Linlithgow Community Development Trust, Burgh Beautiful, Police Scotland, Historic Environment Scotland and Linlithgow businesses not yet part of either Linlithgow BID) will allow for implementation of a coherent vision for our town. Tourism, for example, is a growing revenue generator, specifically “film tourism” (see article below). With the release of several blockbuster films and series, Linlithgow must capitalise on this as a united, cohesive force.

Already, Linlithgow’s Town Centre BID and Community Development Trust are working closely, sharing office space at 28 The Vennel to provide a collaborative, vastly improved visitor information function, as well as cooperating on Linlithgow’s digital presence by producing an agreement to migrate the existing Linlithgow website to “MyLinlithgow.com”, creating a unified “one stop” website for all things Linlithgow, maintained by a team composed of BID, CDT and other partners.

Market research questionnaires have been issued to those businesses, which will be eligible to vote in the forthcoming ballot. The importance of completing the survey and submitting it as described, cannot be understated. All businesses in the proposed whole-town BID area should play their role in the development of the project plan, so that it effectively delivers for its members.

If you have a business in Linlithgow and have not yet received your all-important questionnaire, please contact info@linlithgow.info and we will supply one!



BUSINESS NEWS: JERSEY BEAN:

It’s been a talking point since Elysia Crichton opened the Jersey Bean café in the former Ellie’s Cellar wine shop on Linlithgow High Street just before Christmas.

Do they grow coffee beans on Jersey? The answer is “no” - but the unusual name is not something gimmicky plucked out of thin air: “I am a Jersey Bean”, explained Elysia, “just like you are a Black Bitch if you are born within a certain area of Linlithgow, or a Falkirk Bairn if you’re born in the town.”

“I was born on Jersey, and you’re called a Jersey Bean after a special bean that is used in many traditional dishes on the island.”

And Elysia’s decision to open the café is as logical as the choice of name: *“My parents met on Jersey and went on to be stewards at several golf clubs down South and in Scotland. I pretty well grew up in the kitchen in the clubhouse, and over the years developed a real passion for cooking.”*

After some 20 years in industry, starting in a basic job in administration, Elysia rose to being in overall charge of stock control for all 15 Honeywell Aerospace plants in Europe.



She then decided the time had come for a total career change. *“The Jersey Bean is something I’ve long wanted to do, and I was determined to do it before I was 40. I’ve just managed it with a few months to spare!”*

Elysia has a very imaginative menu for children as well as adults, but there is no doubt about the biggest hit with customers - toasties.

With a wide choice of bread, fillings, and accompaniments, customers can “construct” what they want, and make special requests for future visits.

Unsurprisingly, full-cream Jersey milk and cream make an appearance on the menu - either in homemade Jersey milk pancakes, or in luxurious hot chocolates.

Elysia added she could not have done it all without the “massive help” husband **Barry**, a systems analyst with Standard Life, had given her in setting up the cafe.



Lilypond Outlander sign.



A Wee Mindin' making the most of film tourism.



Papercraft's perennially popular pop-up cards.

FILM TOURISM

Businesses in Linlithgow have been urged to “grab with both hands” the opportunities afforded by the starring role Mary Queen of Scots’ birthplace, Linlithgow Palace, has in blockbuster films and a cult television series.

Among those encouraging businesses to get involved is **Gordon Forrest, owner of Linlithgow Papercraft and Vice-Chair of Linlithgow Town Centre BID**, which represents all businesses on the High Street: *“The town has already benefited from a big increase in visitors, who are fans of the hugely popular Outlander television series (heavily featuring the Palace and other locations nearby). Now we all hope that the films “Outlaw King”, and “Mary, Queen of Scots” will lead to a further increase in visitors.”*

Gordon is certainly speaking from first-hand experience: *“Immediately after Burns Day, and coinciding with the release of the Mary Queen of Scots film, I promoted paintings by local artists of Linlithgow Palace in my window. I sold all the paintings over the weekend, and I’m hoping local artists can do more for my walls because I’ve got a waiting list.”*

In another example of the appeal of the Palace, Gordon has sold a lot of small pop-up postcards in poplar plywood which are flat-packed for sending or transporting abroad.

Yvonne Sherratt, proprietor of the popular gift shop “A Wee Mindin’” is anticipating a further boost in sales of her “Luckenbooth” jewellery range: *“The pieces originate from a gift given to Mary Queen of Scots as an engagement present by the Dauphin of France.”*

She added, *“Since we opened in 2012 we have stocked a range of brooches and necklaces in silver, and brooches, necklaces and quiches in pewter as our link to Mary Queen of Scots.”*

Evelyn Noble, co-owner of Lilypond Crafts and Gifts, said that in their first year they had been amazed at how popular Outlander had been: *“We decided to stock the official Outlander merchandise, and it’s flown out the door and online.”*

Added Evelyn, *“Outlander has brought many customers to the town, and we are waiting in anticipation that Mary Queen of Scots will do the same.”* Lilypond Crafts & Gifts will soon enter its third year of trading on Linlithgow High Street.

Linlithgow's Antique, Vintage & Collectors Fair



Sat
16
MAR

On 16th March Linlithgow's Antique, Vintage & Collectors Fair will open its doors to the public for the fifth time. The Fair might only be a few years old, but it has already proved itself a popular fixture in the Scottish antique fair calendar. All seventy tables sold out within days and there is a long waiting list of would-be stallholders.

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It's great news for visitors to the Fair: buyers will have an extensive range of antiques and collectibles to choose from, and sellers will have an equally extensive range of experts to sell to.

"We have stalls offering jewellery, militaria, retro, art deco and general antiques," says local resident and Fair organiser **Bob McMillan**.

"There are books, postcards, kitchenalia and advertising. In fact, I think most collecting fields are covered."

He says that stallholders come from all over Scotland to take part, and that this year someone is travelling from as far afield as France.

"It's not just stallholders either," says Bob. *"People come a long way to visit the Fair – I think last time someone came*

over from Dundee. It helps that there is a good atmosphere. We tend to be busy and there is a real buzz about the place, so people make it part of a day out. They combine a visit to the Fair with a trip to see the sights in Linlithgow."

"So come along," he urges. *"You might find something of interest. There's always a chance of finding that item that's been eluding you for years, for your own personal use or for your collection."*

The Antique, Vintage & Collectors Fair runs twice a year, in Spring and Autumn, and has grown since it was first run in April 2017. The first Fair took place in Queen Margaret Hall, with 30 tables, but has now more than doubled in size to 70 tables, boosted by the addition of a pop up café, with hot food and ice-cream supplied by Mannerstons.

"There's home baking too," says Bob. *"Volunteers from the Linlithgow Heritage Trust will be providing tea, coffee and soft drinks, and there's also a raffle to raise funds for the new museum."*

The new Linlithgow Museum is due to open to the public in April, replacing the old Annet House Museum, which closed in 2018. The charity behind both Annet House and the new museum - the Linlithgow Heritage Trust - has been working very hard behind the scenes, moving the Trust's collection of objects and photographs and preparing them for exhibition in the new premises.

The new museum is located in the centre of town, on the second floor of the new Partnership Centre in Tam Dalyell House. There are three new galleries and a bespoke community space, which the Trust hopes to use to bring the museum right into the heart of the community.

According to **Willie Morrison**, Chair of the Linlithgow Heritage Trust, *"The new museum will not only*



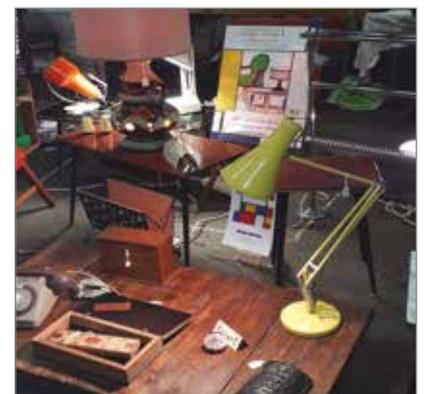
showcase Linlithgow's history but will give local people the chance to get involved in heritage, through tours, workshops and events."

"But we are all volunteers," he adds, *"and while we were lucky enough to obtain funding from a number of organisations to help us relocate the museum, going forward we will have to cover a lot of the running costs ourselves. Events like the Antique, Vintage & Collectors Fair are vital if the new museum is to succeed."*

In fact, the Fair is the main fundraising activity carried out by the Trust, and all proceeds raised will go towards the new museum.

The Spring Fair takes place at Linlithgow Academy between 9 am and 4 pm on 16th March. Tickets cost £1, with no charge for accompanied children under 14. Parking is free and Mannerstons will be running a pop-up café, supplying hot food and ice-cream. Tea, coffee, soft drinks and home baking will also be available to buy.

Helen McKenzie



Saturday 16th March Linlithgow's Antique, Vintage & Collectors Fair

THE THIN BLUE LINE IN LINLITHGOW



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

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!

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



Bogus callers to rogue traders: doorstep criminals are cunning creative and very skilled at deception. They will use a number of ways to try and gain entry to your home to steal and trick you out of money.

Often they will pretend to be someone they're not, claiming to be Council staff, meter readers and even Police Officers. In reality, they are criminals who are trying to steal your cash and valuables.

"Rogue traders" usually cold call, claiming to be workers offering to make repairs or carry out work on your house, garden or driveway. They will charge over inflated prices for work that is often of poor quality or completely unnecessary.

Whilst bogus callers can be very deceitful, there are a few simple precautions you can do to stop yourself becoming a victim

- > Be on guard if someone turns up unexpectedly.
- > Use a door chain or bar and keep it on whilst talking to callers. If you don't have a door chain, check on the person from the window.
- > Don't feel embarrassed - genuine callers expect you to be careful.
- > If you're not sure about the person, don't answer the door.
- > Always ask for identification.
- > Do not feel pressurised into agreeing 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 101.

PARKING IN LINLITHGOW

Police Scotland are disappointed to report that despite numerous appeals to the

residents that inconsiderate parking is still continuing to blight the High Street and surrounding streets.

Despite previous articles highlighting the congestion on the High Street, the selfish attitudes of drivers who wish to flout the parking restrictions that are currently in place to save themselves walking short distances or a few minutes continues.

There is no excuse for parking on zig zag areas, in disabled bays or bus stops

Should the attitudes of these drivers continue then action will be taken against them.

Please as a resident of Linlithgow if you do need to drive please do not be a selfish motorist, park legally and adhere to the parking restriction signs.

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>

And follow the link to JOIN



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 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

FIFTEEN YEARS - AND STILL GOING STRONG



What were you doing 15 years ago? Was it a special year for you? Well, it was a special year for Linlithgow, because in 2004 Linlithgow became a Fairtrade Town. At the time, it was the first Fairtrade Town in West Lothian and the fourth in all of Scotland.

And what a lot has happened since then! There have been Fairtrade fashion shows, and producer talks, and 'café evenings', and a schools extravaganza, and talks on climate change, and ..., and ..., and... there has even been a bazaar with belly dancers! All featuring Fairtrade and its importance in the world.

Now, in 2019, there are Fairtrade towns and villages all over the area, and West Lothian is itself a Fairtrade Zone. Scotland has become a Fairtrade Nation - the second nation in the world to do so, after Wales. So now Linlithgow is part of a network of towns and communities promoting Fairtrade, which wasn't dreamt of 15 years ago.

Fairtrade has changed in our shops, too. In 2004 you had to search out a specialist shop or go to a Fairtrade stall or mail order stockist if you wanted to find a fairly traded item. But now Fairtrade has gone 'mainstream'



and you can find Fairtrade goods on the shelves of all our supermarkets. And for clothes, gifts and the more unusual Fairtrade items there is Linlithgow's own High Street Fairtrade shop, Fair Tradewinds.

The range of Fairtrade goods nowadays is truly massive. It's not just tea, coffee and chocolate! There's wine, and gold, and footballs, clothing, beauty products, quinoa, jewellery, honey, olive oil, ... in fact, over 4,500 items have been registered to use the Fairtrade Mark.

So is that the problem solved?

Fairtrade goods are easily available in High Street shops and online, so can we tick the box and move on? No, not at all. There's much more to do.

World markets still take advantage of those who have no power and little protection. Whether it's exploitative practices and unsafe working conditions in the sweatshops that provide us with cheap clothes, or the continual pressure from supermarkets and processors to reduce the cost of raw materials for the food we eat, farmers and small-scale producers are exploited all over the world.

A cocoa farmer in West Africa, for example, needs to earn just £1.86 a day to achieve a living income. Not much, you might think, but currently a typical cocoa farmer in Cote d'Ivoire has only about 74p a day on which to live. It is only by buying Fairtrade chocolate and cocoa products that we can guarantee them a fair and sustainable living wage. And when world cocoa prices crash, as they did at the end of 2016, that's when the Fairtrade guaranteed minimum price kicks in to ensure farmers receive a fair price which allows them to survive the rough patch.

And it's often these same farmers who are on the receiving end of climate change. Here in the UK, we might be inconvenienced by changeable weather patterns and unusual levels of snow or rain, but

for farmers in the developing world it can be disastrous. If you are a small farmer whose only income is reliant on a single crop, what do you do when your whole crop shrivels in the ground because the rains don't come when they always have in the past - or too much rain falls and your crop is washed away in a flood? That's why Fairtrade works with farmers all over the world to help them to build resilience by diversifying, or by developing practical strategies to cope with drought or flood.



So far from being over, after 15 years there is still much to do. We can all continue to play our part by looking out for the Fairtrade Mark, and including one or two Fairtrade items in our weekly shop. When you see the Fairtrade Mark on an item you know that the farmers who sweated to provide it have received a fair price for their efforts.

This year, instead of holding a main event for Fairtrade Fortnight, the Linlithgow Fairtrade Partnership is giving a series of talks to schools and community groups across Linlithgow. If your group would like a talk on Fairtrade, or simply want to find out more about the work of the Partnership, then just email us on linlithgowfairtrade@hotmail.com or contact us via Facebook.



Ian Fowell
Fairtrade Partnership





BARNUM

Sat
16
MAR

LAMP'S SPECTACULAR "BARNUM THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH"

"Roll up, roll up, the circus is coming to town!" The extravaganza of the Barnum and Bailey circus is the subject of this year's LAMP Children's Theatre show "Barnum" and, inspired by their massive success with "Les Miserables" last year, they are raring to go.

"Barnum" will play in Linlithgow Academy Theatre from the 8th to the 13th April and with its amazing singing, dancing, acrobatics and circus skills, it looks like it will be a spectacular show. I caught up with **Annie Knox**, who is playing the role of Charity Barnum, to chat about the show.

AT: What are you most looking forward to people seeing in the show?

AK: It's quite different to other LAMP shows in its staging and the fact that it is non-stop. The show combines traditional musical theatre with the atmosphere of the circus. The audience will feel part of the show.

AT: Why do you think Barnum's story is still popular? What are the messages people can take from it?

AK: I think it's because it portrays the American Dream: if you follow your dreams and work hard, you can achieve success. It's also about being true to yourself, something that Barnum has to learn. He is a flawed character, very human, and people relate to that. It's a love story too. His wife loves and cares for him despite his insecurities and mistakes.

AT: What attracted you to the part of Charity?

AK: I was very excited when LAMP announced we would be doing Barnum. It's easily one of my favourite musicals. Charity is a great role because she's a sympathetic character and her husband's anchor in his chaotic schemes. She also has some great songs to sing.

AT: What has it been like rehearsing for this show? Any particular highlights?

AK: Learning the circus tricks has been a real challenge but great fun. I have loved seeing what everyone else can do. I can nearly juggle now, though I have quite a way to go before I'm ready to show an audience! Luckily I don't have to walk on stilts!

AT: What do you like best about being in LAMP?

AK: Rehearsals with LAMP are always great fun and I have made so many good friends over the years. There's a real camaraderie. Show week is crazy and exhausting but so very worth it. Whether you are a principal or a chorus member you feel included as part of the family and everyone works together with energy and enthusiasm. We've devised some pretty cool dance routines backstage. Actually, shenanigans backstage would make an excellent musical in itself! By nature I'm quite a reserved person. People are often surprised that I love acting because I'm quiet at school. However, LAMP has helped me become less shy and I find it really liberating becoming another person on stage.

AT: Why should people come and see the show?

AK: The great music, energy, spectacle... In Barnum's own words, "It's the greatest show on earth!"

Thank you to Annie for answering those questions for me.

Other cast members include James Bradley as James Bailey, Oscar Davies as the Ringmaster, Caleigh Gordons as Tom Thumb, Kirsty McEwen as Joyce Heth, Alana Robertson as Jenny Lind and Josh Ure as P.T Barnum himself.

This show marks the 25th anniversary for LAMP children's theatre and the company consistently put on shows of the highest quality and energy.

So if you want to run away and join the LAMP circus, tickets are now on sale! They can be purchased from www.linlithgow-musicals.co.uk/ tickets, through any cast member or by phoning the box office on 07949 475932.

Tickets cost £14/£12 (concessions Mon-Fri) £48 (family, 2 adults/2 concessions Mon-Fri).

Alison Train



Sat
22
JUNE

GALA DAY APPEAL

PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY AND RETURN YOUR ENVELOPE.



Over the last few decades, the Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Children's Gala Day has developed into one of the biggest and best events of its kind in the country.

Taking place in the Peel, against the magnificent backdrop of the Palace and St Michael's Church, the Gala Day has always had a setting which is second to none. Nowadays the spectacular procession, featuring a whole array of musicians and all the local Primary schools with decorated vehicles and characters in fancy dress, can lay strong claim to be one of Scotland's most impressive civic events.

The hard-working and dedicated Gala Day committee are constantly looking for improvements and they have now identified a new stage as an urgent requirement. Readers of the Black Bitch magazine will have an opportunity to donate to this very worthy cause by using the special envelope which is being distributed with this issue.

I met up recently with three office bearers – **Anne Wilson** (Secretary), **Bruce McCallum** (Vice-Chair) and

Marion Fleming (Chair) - and was astonished to learn that last year's Gala Day cost £27,000. With more bands having already been booked, that figure will be even higher this year. An appeal has now been launched to raise additional funds, which will be used specifically for a new stage.

"The old stage is no longer fit for purpose", Bruce McCallum told me. "It's very labour intensive and very heavy to move about. You need a team of at least six or seven experienced joiners to build it. On top of that, you need four or five labourers to help them out. It can take from Wednesday evening until Friday afternoon to get it built, sometimes in adverse weather, and people are having to take time off work. We just don't have the manpower, so we decided to look for an alternative."

The Committee are in discussions with a specialist company, who will design a stage to their specific requirements and rent it to them every year. The stage will be modular, which means that there will be scope for making it bigger, so that more children can be involved. There are already plans to expand

the numbers this year, with six extra fairies, flower girls and junior guards; the new stage would mean that numbers could be further increased in the future, as the Gala Day continues to grow.

"It's going to cost money every year now", Bruce McCallum explained. "Over and above the cost of the Gala Day, we will have to raise between 5 and 6 thousand pounds extra. We are a very small committee producing a bigger and better parade every year. The benefits for us are that the hire company are going to come in and take over all the responsibility for the stage, including building it and taking it away. It will be a huge weight off our shoulders."

If you would like to contribute to this tremendous community cause, please return the envelope you will find in the magazine to the Tesco supermarket, the Spar shop at Springfield or Elle hairdressers at 264 High Street. If you are unable to return the envelope in person, please contact one of the telephone numbers provided. There will also be a JUST GIVING page on Facebook.

The Gala Day committee would also be delighted to hear from anyone willing to help in any way on the big day on Saturday June 22nd and volunteers should contact the phone numbers on the appeal envelopes.

Murdoch Kennedy





LINLITHGOW ACADEMY WORKS TOWARDS BEING AN ECO-SCHOOL WITH GREEN FLAG STATUS

This is an internationally recognised award for excellence in environmental action and learning.

In autumn 2018 a number of pupils from across the years put themselves forward to be part of the Eco-Committee. With the support of staff, they have given up lunchtimes to meet once a week since then.

The Eco-Schools Scotland programme contains Seven Elements that form the basis for action working towards the Green Flag Award. It must be pupil-led, linked to the curriculum and involve the whole school and wider community. Academy pupils have identified various initiatives toward making environmental changes in the community and in the school area itself.

The Group started by doing a survey relating to attitudes towards litter. They are now making plans for addressing the issue within the school as well as planning a litter pick targeted to a vulnerable lunch-time route.



There have also been discussions regarding the use of less - and more environmentally friendly - packaging of take-away foodstuffs. Pupils have drawn attention to possible improvements in the use of food-packaging materials in the school's own canteen facilities.



As Aimee says, 'Stage 1 last term was about drawing up plans. Stage 2 is pursuing action.'

The Eco-Committee has set up an Eco Board to help inform other pupils of plans. Minutes are kept and shared along with proposed activities.

Rebecca believes meetings are helping her 'develop management and leadership skills with the long-term aim to spread the message beyond families and the school, and so work towards a healthier environment'.

Partnerships have been forged with 'Burgh Beautiful', and various other local businesses. West Lothian Council representatives have come in to discuss energy strategies and waste management. The latter is leading to an educational visit to the nearby Biffa recycling plant. (See report on p5).

Eco-Schools are required to focus on 3 specific topics, one of which must be Litter out of a list of 10. Linlithgow Academy pupils have chosen Energy and Schools Grounds to complete their trio.

A visit from Peter Roger (Climate Building Control, West Lothian), revealed that the energy value for the school building is currently D grade. It is to be hoped that by raising awareness and identifying possible energy saving devices such as more economical light provision and heat distribution, this might be raised to grade C.

There is also a proposal for improving the school grounds. As the spring approaches there are plans involving planting of bulbs, perennials and shrubs which will encourage and support growing numbers of bees and other wildlife.

Stage 3 is about drawing on the wider community. The Eco-Committee will be very happy to welcome involvement by more pupils who in turn can spread the message further. There is a lot to contribute and learn.

Contributed by members of the Eco Group

THE ARTS

The British Book Awards recently revealed the regional shortlists for the 2019 Independent Bookshop of the Year and **Far From The Madding Crowd** (FFTMC) is one of six in Scotland to be shortlisted for the region. FFTMC won the Scottish heat in 2017 and were shortlisted in 2018. To vote for our local bookshop follow the link on their Facebook page, or online at www.thebookseller.com/tell-us-about-your-favourite-independent-bookshop. Given the ease of acquiring any book from the shop, the friendly staff, the availability here of tickets for lots of local events and the number of literary events organised by FFTMC, surely they warrant a vote?

LINLITHGOW LITERARY LUNCHES

Something new for your diary!



Far From The Madding Crowd
and
Granary Café
bringing you the best in
food and books



First Monday of the Month!

- * 4th March, Brigid Benson
- * 1st April, Chris Long
- * 6th May, Sue Lawrence
- * 2nd September, Claire Askew
- * 7th October, Sandra Ireland
- * 4th November, To Be Confirmed

Check
www.maddingcrowdlinlithgow.com
or Facebook for more details!

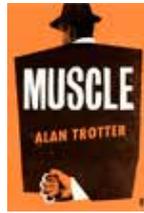
This month saw the first (sold out!) **Literary Lunch** take place in The Granary café. More dates are already planned and tickets can be purchased from FFTMC. See the attached poster for future dates. How civilised to take a few hours out of your day to listen to an author speak while someone makes lunch for you. The price for these events is £20 which includes a delicious lunch and a discount if you buy the book on the day. I seem to be able to write about new ventures in the Arts in the town regularly – long may it continue.

FFTMC also have some author events coming up, including:

The first is a double author event with

“LINLITHGOW LITERARY LUNCHES LAUNCHED”

Far From The Madding Crowd Presents
David Keenan
And
Alan Trotter



Two remarkable Scottish talents
FOR THE GOOD TIMES
and
MUSCLE



Wednesday 20th March
Linlithgow Canal
Tearooms
7pm
Tickets £8
WWW.MADDINGCROWDLINLITHGOW.COM

David Keenan and Alan Trotter. The reviews for both of their books have been astonishing and it's a real coup to have them in town. **Wednesday 20th March, 7.00pm, Linlithgow Canal Tea Rooms, £8.**

Author and historian **Simon Winder** will be discussing the final part of his European history trilogy, *Lotharingia*. This 'lost country' of Europe comprised Belgium, the Netherlands, the Rhine and Lorraine. Simon's writing style is similar to Bill Bryson and this will be a fascinating romp through European history. **Tuesday 2nd April, 7.00pm, St Peter's Church. Tickets £8.**

A book signing by **Morgan McGlynn** should prove popular for cheese lovers in the shop on **Thursday 28th March**, and her book *The Modern Cheesemaker* would make an ideal Mother's Day gift.

Linlithgow Writers' Circle
If writing is more your thing you may be interested to know that **Linlithgow Writers' Circle** published their first collection of writing last year. The book contains short stories, poems and non-fiction pieces from the writing group and is on sale in FFTMC. The **Writers' Circle** meet monthly in the **Black Bitch** (on Thursday), to share works in



progress and discuss different aspects of writing. Everyone is welcome, from published authors to keen hobbyists. If you are interested in going along please contact linlithgowwriters@gmail.com or see their Facebook page for information on the next meeting.

It's all about words this month but before you sit down with a book or a pen and paper, please remember to vote for our local independent bookshop.

Linlithgow & District Art Group

The group are hosting a local free exhibition to celebrate their 30th Anniversary on **Saturday 30th March** in the Burgh Halls. The members have been busy preparing items of work for sale which include a choice of framed art and cards in watercolours, oils, acrylics and pastels. From small beginnings at The Low Port Centre, when it was called the Low Port Art Group the group has expanded, changed its name and settled into its current accommodation at Linlithgow Academy. New members are always welcome. Please contact the Secretary on 07906021875 if you have any questions.

The group meets each Tuesday evening during term time for a variety of informal self-directed classes and tutor led sessions. The exploration of different painting techniques is shared between members throughout the year, while the tutor led sessions are more structured to encourage development.

The group has been inspired by several informal visits, which included a Gallery Talk and a day trip to the Pittenweem Arts Festival. They are thinking about reintroducing outdoor sketching and painting sessions during the warmer weather, so look out for them around town. The members recognise that their success has been enhanced by financial support through the award of grants from West Lothian Arts Council for which they are very grateful. This has allowed them the opportunity to enhance their learning through tutor led sessions and also to showcase their work.

Red Door

The last Red Door event was a sell-out so I recommend you get your tickets well in advance if you want to experience this intimate venue. **Laura Macdonald** and **Steve Hamilton** explore the *Great American Songbook* on **22nd March**, and on **26th April** there is **Graeme Stephen's Letters**



for Peace, music inspired by letters from WW1 conscientious objectors. Details can be found on the St Peter's website and Facebook page and tickets are available from FFTMC.

Linlithgow Jazz

Tickets are now available to buy in advance from FFTMC or Eventbrite. Plan ahead and pop the dates in your diary – 6th April, 4th May, 1st June and 6th July. The April gig will give you a chance to hear the lady behind Linlithgow Jazz, Sue McHugh, sing with her house band and special guest Stewart Forbes on sax.

The music of Chet Baker is brought to life in May, there's a 17-piece big band in June and the **Gin Mill Genies** bring prohibition-era blues to town in July. BYOB too!

If you want to hear Sue sing before that, then pop in to **Du Vin Bouchers** from 2pm on Mother's Day, where **Stolen Chords** are performing an acoustic set.

Linlithgow Pottery

Linlithgow Pottery are taking bookings for the next six-week Pottery sessions starting 18th April on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. On 13th April there will be a linocut workshop from 12-4, with all materials included in the price of £80. Details on Facebook or email LinlithgowPottery@gmail.com.

And briefly, Linlithgow Floral Art Club's meeting on 20th March is called **Artistic Licence** (01506 842939 for info), the **Aboriginal Art** exhibition continues at the Burgh Halls, The Line Gallery host Sarah Keast till 26th March, and **LAMP** perform Barnum from 8th to 13th April at Linlithgow Academy.

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

"never trust anyone who has not brought a book with them"

BOOK REVIEW

THE HUNDRED YEAR OLD MAN WHO CLIMBED OUT OF THE WINDOW AND DISAPPEARED

JONAS JONASSON

The tag line on the blurb of this book states "you're never too old for an adventure" and this is certainly true of the narrative contained within this story. The main character is Allan Karlsson, a one-hundred year old man who, at the start of the story is waiting dependently in an old people's home for a birthday party to begin which will celebrate his centenary. He makes his spontaneous, unconventional escape by climbing unsteadily out of his ground floor bedroom window and landing somewhat unceremoniously in the middle of the flower bed below wearing only a brown trouser suit and his brown indoor slippers. By his own reflections, a fashionista he is not.

Initially, Allan's sole motivation is to get as far away as possible from the old people's home in Malmköping and its formidable matron, Director Alice. He moves as fast as his "creaking knees" will allow towards the bus station

where he encounters a long-haired youth who entrusts him temporarily with his big, grey suitcase. When the next bus pulls into the terminus, Allan makes the split-second decision to "say yes to life", boards the bus, suitcase and all (with the help of the kind bus driver) and makes his unlikely getaway with his newly stolen property.

As Allan's whimsical adventures take shape, we learn lots more about his former life - his younger days - and we come to realise how and why this centenarian has the drive, determination and wherewithal to survive in the unusual circumstances in which he finds himself catapulted. Behind the facade of frail, elderly gent, his life has been fantastical and he has found himself unwittingly influencing some of the most historic events and figures of the twentieth century.

The author of this novel is

Jonas Jonasson, a Swedish journalist and writer who writes with simplistic ease, using sentences that are short and factual yet brimming with description, pace and a wry sense of humour. Apart from the plot twists and turns - each one more imaginative and ludicrous than the one before - the real humour in this story is the certain passive indifference by which Allan reacts to the chaos unfolding all around. Jonasson often digresses in flights of fancy from the main plot of the story only to masterfully pick it up again, pages later, most likely in a new context which is both nonsensical and entirely plausible in equal measures.

The best way to read this story is with the express understanding that it is a farcical fable. There are dark undertones that pervade the real-time story and its histories that are perhaps to be expected in the literature of a Scandinavian writer which serve to add to the appeal and unique voice of the overall story. Jonasson is a skilled and effective storyteller who defies the normal confines of narration continuously



throughout the novel, not least with his choice of main character who has more spirit, drive and ingenuity than many a fraction of his age. The final words are best left to the enigmatically unobtrusive Allan Karlsson, who muses near the novel's conclusion that "it has been exciting, the entire journey, but nothing lasts forever, except possibly general stupidity."

Lisa Nettleton

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



TAKE TIME TO SPRING CLEAN YOUR FINANCES

Susan Ralston, Virtue Money



Virtue Money

It's that time of year again, the nights are getting lighter, the bulbs you planted last year are starting to flower and our thoughts turn to spring cleaning our homes.

Perhaps we should also take this opportunity to spring clean our finances, take stock of what we have, think about where we would like to be financially and actually make changes with a view to making positive differences.

Look at things like your household utility and mobile phone bills – are there savings to be made if you switch providers?

Debts – credit cards – what do you owe and how much are you repaying each month

Savings – have you taken advantage of the ISA allowance (currently £20,000 in the 2018/19 tax year)

Remember that **Help to Buy ISAs** are only available to new savers up to 30 November 2019 but if you opened your Help to Buy ISA before then you can keep saving into your account. You must claim your bonus by 1 December 2030.

Lifetime ISA's are available however you must be 40 or under to apply for one. If you are over 40 and looking to potentially buy your first home before 1 December 2030 then perhaps you may want to take advantage of the Help to Buy ISA before November 2019.

Full details of these ISAs can be found on the Government's "Money Advice Service" website along with a host of other free and impartial money advice.



What to do with the money you saved well, as regular readers will know we at Virtue Money specialise in pre-retirement. We are firm believers in alleviating the "Cost of Delay" regarding pensions. In effect this means that we advocate utilising as much of your available pension input as you can afford, as soon as you can, to maximise growth.

In a previous article, we talked about you helping your children or grandchildren and the fact that you could aid them in their retirement, by starting to contribute to a pension for them now. Anyone can contribute £2,880 (£3,600 after tax relief), or have contributed on their behalf, annually whether they have "earnings" or not.

What about you though, and your pension, have you checked your annual statement recently? Do you have an idea of how you would like your retirement to look?

We all like to have the occasional daydream where we are as smart as Stephen Hawking, as rich as Onassis or have the foretelling abilities of Nostradamus. However, there is a big difference between daydreaming and reality.

Sir Francis Bacon is attributed as saying "Knowledge is Power" and nothing is truer when it comes to your pension and future retirement. Understanding what your retirement will look like, and how you can perhaps change it is hugely important. Remember "procrastination is the thief of time", if you want to have a clearer understanding of your pension and other issues surrounding retirement then don't wait, take the bull by the horns and do something about it today.

If you would like to make an appointment to speak to one of our advisers, please contact me, Susan Ralston, directly on 0345 034 3424 or email me at Susan@virtuemoney.com. Your first meeting with an adviser at Virtue Money is completely free of charge so you have nothing to lose.

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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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THE RISE AND FALL OF THE VICTORIA HALL

Bruce Jamieson



The year 2019 is the 200th anniversary of the birth of Queen Victoria - after whom Linlithgow's Victoria Hall was named. Its recent demolition has occasioned new interest in the building and its origins.

The saga began in 1883 when Provost Mackie set up a committee to investigate the possibility of building a public hall to replace the unsuitable facilities in the town hall where the only access to the third floor venue was a narrow spiral staircase. Plans were submitted to build a new hall to the east of the Burgh Halls - on the site of the town's old Fleshmarket. Unfortunately, difficulties arose over the purchase of the site and, on the untimely death of Provost Mackie, aged just 39, the project collapsed.

Three local entrepreneurs, W. H. Henderson, William Dougal and Colonel Gillon of Wallhouse, decided to form the Linlithgow Public Hall Company and raise funds to build on a High Street site they had purchased for £800. This was Brockley's Land - a 17th century tenement which had been bought in 1803 by George Brockley, a local coppersmith. In 1885 it was owned by Helen Brockley and it was pretty dilapidated - recorded in the 1881 census as accommodating five families. With no doubt some relief, the owner sold it to the triumvirate who were hoping to build on the site.



Wood's 1820 map showing the property owned by Archibald Brockley.

Unfortunately, insufficient funds were forthcoming and the company was wound up. The new provost, local doctor Andrew Gilmour, was approached and he persuaded the Town Council to buy Brockley's Land. A handsome donation of £800 from Miss Jessie Baird, the sister of a local surgeon, enabled the purchase to go ahead, on the condition that the site and the building upon it were to be declared inalienable - they could never be sold but should be used forever by the people of the town. Another implication of the declaration of inalienability was that no money could be borrowed upon the security of the site so all moneys would need to be raised by the townsfolk themselves. The council could only find £450 towards the estimated £2800 cost - a result of the bankruptcy occasioned by losing the case against the Railway Company. However, donations amounting to £1680 came in and the remaining £1120 was raised at a Grand Bazaar held in the County Hall

The foundation stone of the Jubilee Hall was laid on 31st December 1887 by Mr M'Lagan, Masonic Provincial Grand Master of the County. The ceremony was a grand affair, beginning with a procession from the West Port. Over 450 took part including representatives from all the town's fraternities and incorporations, workers from St Magdalene's Distillery and from Lochmill and Avon Mill paper manufactories. The band of the Rifle Brigade led the way - eventually halting beside the site of the new hall where speeches were made followed by the placing of a time capsule into a specially prepared cavity in the foundation stone. In the glass bottle were placed, to quote the West Lothian Courier, "twelve coins of the year 1887 from the sovereign downwards". In addition, there were placed copies of current newspapers: Scotsman; Scottish Leader; Glasgow Herald; Scottish News; West Lothian Courier; Falkirk Herald and Bo'ness Journal. (The Linlithgowshire Gazette did not appear until 1891.)

The bottle also contained "an excerpt from the disposition of the site relative to Miss Baird's donation; a list of the 1887 Town Council; a copy of the circular inviting subscriptions for the hall fund and a print of the order of the procession which "preceded the laying of the foundation stone in honour of Queen Victoria's 50 years on the throne"



An 1887 gold sovereign - showing Queen Victoria - and, on the reverse, Saint George slaying the dragon.

The finished hall opened its doors just over a year later and was described by Provost Gilmour as "a fitting ornament to Linlithgow - aptly called the Windsor of Scotland." Two principal donors, Andrew Carnegie and the Earl of Hopetoun had been invited but neither was able to attend. Instead, the hall was officially declared open by Lord Rosebery - who 7 years later was to become Prime Minister. The building was described by its architect, Russell Walker, as "a mix of Scottish baronial and French gothic - reminiscent of the chateau of the Loire." However, it also occasioned some criticism as "too elaborate and not in keeping with the town's vernacular manner".



The rear of the building showing the 70' X 453' hall.

For over 60 years, the hall provided the town with a venue for concerts, church meetings, political gatherings, dances, quadrilles, conversaciones, musical concerts, plays, roller skating, pigeon shows, etc. Catering was often provided by the Victoria Restaurant which was established in one of the buildings on either side of the hall and built for an additional £1200.



By 1956, the building was showing signs of deterioration and the Town Council estimated that it would cost several thousand pounds to put it right. Consequently, it was decided to sell it at auction. The asking price of £8000 was not met so it was agreed to sell it to a Cinema Company who had given up on their plans to build a new "Super Cinema" on a site acquired before World War 2 (now the site of Brae Court.)



The area earmarked for a "Super Cinema" at 221- 223 High Street.

The sale eventually went through for £6500 – a sum which was not actually paid for some time as the Council had to get

retrospective permission from the Court of Session to remove the inalienable conditions. For some years, the Victoria Hall became a picture house under a variety of names, including "The Empire" and "The Ritz". Unfortunately, to reduce maintenance costs, the Cinema company removed the ornate towers and the large, frontage picture window. They also demolished the upper section, lowering the roofline and concreting it over.



The Victoria Hall in the late 1980s.

In that battered state, the hall struggled on into the 1990s – hosting a variety of functions, including a bingo venue and an amusement arcade ('the Puggies'). In emulation of the late 19th century plans, an effort was made

by a local Trust to buy it for town use - perhaps as a cinema and theatre complex. By then, little remained of the original building. From the rear, traces of the old cinema seating could once be seen but after most of that was knocked down in 2008 all that was left was the sad façade. Negotiations broke down and a development company opted to demolish what was left and create a new usage for the site incorporating two commercial units and sixteen flats.

The building remained controversial to the end. The Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland described it as "the centerpiece of a small grouping of bold Victorian interventions in an older high street" while eminent architectural historian Colin McWilliam called it "wildly out of scale with the street of predominantly two and three-storey town houses."



The last remnants of the hall's interior.

The final controversy came over the discovery, during the final stages of demolition, of the time capsule buried beneath the foundation stone. After considerable negotiations and following discussions with the Scottish Treasure Trove Unit, the capsule is now in the hands of West Lothian Council - as the heirs of the Linlithgow Town Council. It is hoped that the contents will be displayed in the soon-to-be-opened Linlithgow Museum.



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Two months into 2019 and the housing market in Scotland and West Lothian in particular, continues to perform better than many other parts of the UK.

Latest available figures for the final quarter of 2018 show that whilst the volume of property sold in Scotland compared to the final quarter of 2017 rose marginally by 1.8%, in West Lothian it actually fell by 1.3%.

However, whilst the average price of a property in Scotland as a whole in the last quarter of 2018 had risen by 3.2%, compared with the last quarter of 2017; in West Lothian it had risen by 4.8%. Further evidence that a tightening of supply leads to more upward pressure on prices.

Meanwhile according to Zoopla property prices in the South East of England have fallen by 2.27% over the last twelve months.

Within the estate agency business there have been some significant recent announcements. The on-line agency E-moov went into administration earlier this year. Respective Heads of operations at Purplebricks both here in the UK and in the USA left the company on the back of revenue forecast warnings which also saw their share price take a big hit. General opinion remains divided as to, can on-line only agents be both profitable and offer customers the levels of service required to deliver a good result for their clients? In other news, the company LSL which owns amongst others, estate agency brands Reed Rains and Your Move, announced the closure of 43 branches, including the Your Move office in Linlithgow.

The Scottish Executive earlier this year passed some new legislation that affects all homeowners. From the 1st February 2021 it will be a legal requirement for all residential properties to have smoke alarms in the main daytime living area, any access way (This means halls and landings) and a heat detector in the Kitchen. These devices must all be interlinked (if one alarm sounds, the alarms on the other devices in the property will also sound). Similar, but not exactly the same, legislation has applied in the private rented sector for some years. The Scottish Executive has though relaxed the requirement that applied in the rented sector that these alarms



Average price of a property in Scotland as a whole in the last quarter of 2018 had risen by 3.2%, compared with the last quarter of 2017; in West Lothian it had risen by 4.8%

4.8%

Average house price increase in West Lothian, during last quarter of 2018.

should be hard wired. Homeowners will be allowed to install alarms with tamper proof 10 year Lithium batteries, rather than connect them to the mains supply.

After the 1st February 2021 any property coming to the market that is not compliant is likely to have this fact detailed in the Home Buyers Report by the Surveyor, which in turn may become the trigger for the relevant authorities to take enforcement action. After this date all properties must be compliant, whether or not the owner intends to sell.

Our property presentation tip for this issue.

It is said many people make up their minds as whether they like a property within 90 seconds, we believe this is often the case. So, we have very little time

to make a good first impression. Therefore make sure your front garden is looking neat and tidy, grass cut, borders weeded, shrubbery pruned etc. If required, give the front door a fresh coat of paint or varnish, make sure the letterbox and door bell are in good working order and fix any loose steps or paving.

Paul Rolfe

Stuart from the Westport Veterinary Clinic tells us about some of his regular customers. Westport's Pets of the Month is Bandit and Cleo Hume

Bandit and Cleo are both rescue dogs; Bandit is a Flat Coat Retriever cross, and Cleo is a Collie cross. Bandit had been abandoned when he was only a year old and Cleo had been left in woods tied to a tree before they found their forever home in Linlithgow.

Bandit is a very clever lad with an inbuilt body clock that's accurate to the second for breakfast, dinner and supper time. He grins when he's super happy and even though he's nearing 11 years old, he still loves nothing more than long walks and getting attention.

Cleo is about 7 years old and, despite what humans put her through in her previous life, she has an absolute and complete love for everyone and anyone she comes across! Super affectionate, she just adores getting (and dishing out) attention.

They love each other's company and charge about like puppies together. Their favourite walks are off-lead at Beebraigs and along the canal. They also love trips to Loch Lomond and can spend hours in the water where Cleo chases waves but has limited success in catching them!

Their family say they are an absolute joy to have and they believe that rescue dogs make the best companions!

Taking on any animal is a big responsibility and making the decision to take on a rescue is very rewarding; however additional considerations

should be taken before you commit.

One of the simplest things to consider is now the right time for you to rescue? If you are planning a holiday, a house move, a new baby or a new job within the coming months, it might be a good idea to postpone adoption until all of these distractions are out of the way.

When a new dog comes into your life, whether a rescue or not, it's important that you can always give them your full attention. Rescue dogs can be nervous in their new environment, and we don't always know what trauma they might have encountered in previous life. A lot of time, patience, understanding and knowledge is required.

Consider your own level of handling, experience and your lifestyle. Do your research on breeds; consider the level of exercise, care, mental stimulation and grooming requirements they will need. Consider the environment - can you give them what they need? What other animals, people and/or children might they meet?

A rescue centre can talk through your needs and help you find a suitable companion - they can offer advice and have lots of information available through their websites. Be careful looking online - make sure the source is reliable. Don't be afraid to take your time when choosing a rescue - it is a lifelong decision!

Hello
We are Bandit
and Cleo Hume



If you would like any advice on taking on a rescue, or animal in your care contact Westport 01506 844165.



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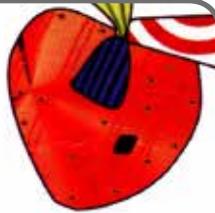
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