



# the **BLACK** bitch

Linlithgow's news by Linlithgow people



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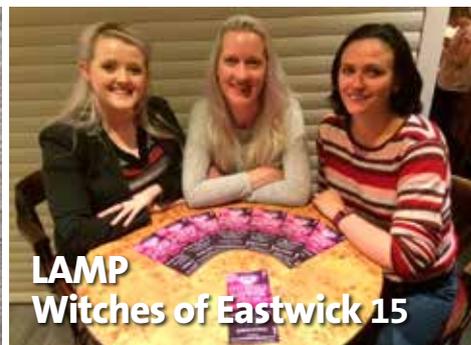
## A GREAT YEAR FOR LINLITHGOW BOWLING CLUB 16



**St Peter's Extension Plans 8**



**Burgh Beautiful Flower Displays 12**



**LAMP Witches of Eastwick 15**

**PLUS**

Folk Fae Lithgae, New Hopetoun Gardens, Transition Linlithgow, Virtue Money, Edinburgh Airport Consultation, Competitions, Book Review, Pets' Corner...



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# what's new...

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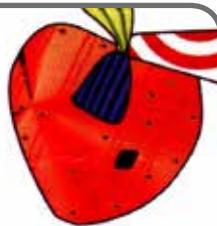
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# WHAT'S ON....

## October

**Fri 7** Matisse: Drawing with Scissors, Linlithgow Burgh Halls

7pm - 9pm, Charity Wine Tasting  
Mannerstons Cafe & Farm Shop

9pm - 11:59pm, Karaoke at the  
Star & Garter Hotel (Friday's - Oct)

**Sat 8** 3pm - 4pm, Peter and the Wolf,  
Linlithgow Academy Theatre

7:30pm - 9:45pm, Concert by the  
Anemos Ensemble (Wind Quintet)  
Linlithgow Academy Theatre

9pm - 11:59pm, Saturday Nite Live Music,  
Star and Garter (Saturday's - Oct)

**Sun 9** 2pm - 4pm, Fungi Day Foray,  
Hopetoun House Car Park

**Mon 10** 6pm - 7pm, 50+ Football  
(Walking), Rugby Club (all October)

7:45pm, Spotlight, Linlithgow Film  
Society, Linlithgow Academy

7:30pm - 9:30pm, Linlithgow String  
Orchestra Rehearsals, St. Peter's

**Thu 11** 7:30pm - 9:30pm, Linlithgow  
Speakers Club Meeting, Low Port Ctr

**Wed 12** 7:30pm - 9:30pm, Transition  
Linlithgow Gathering, Star & Garter

8:15pm - 9:45pm Table Tennis,  
Longcroft Memorial Hall (all Oct)

**Fri 14** 7:30pm - 10pm, Plays & Wine,  
Linlithgow Primary School

**Sat 15** 7:30pm - 10pm, Plays & Wine,  
Linlithgow Primary School

**Sun 16** starts 10:30am - 12:30pm  
Blood Transfusion Service, Low Port

**Mon 17** starts 2:30am - 4.15pm  
Blood Transfusion Service, Low Port

7:30pm - 10pm, LAMP,  
The Witches of Eastwick,  
Linlithgow Academy (until Saturday)

7:30pm - 9:30pm, Linlithgow String  
Orchestra Rehearsals, St. Peter's

**Tue 18** 7:30pm - 9:30pm, Linlithgow  
String Orchestra Rehearsals, St. Peter's

**Wed 19** 2pm - 3:30pm, Hopetoun  
does Hogwarts, Hopetoun House CP

**Thu 20** 7pm, Rotary quiz night,  
Mannerstons

**Sat 22** 10:30am - 12:30pm  
Drop-in Concert Linlithgow String  
Orchestra, St. Peter's

3:30pm, Remembrance Service,  
St Michael's Parish Church

**Sun 23** 2pm - 4pm, Fantastic Fungi-  
Final Flush, Hopetoun House CP

**Mon 24** 7:30pm - 9:30pm  
Linlithgow String Orchestra  
Rehearsals, St. Peter's Episcopal Church

**Tue 25** 7:30pm - 9:30pm  
Community Council meeting

**Thu 27** 7:00pm - 8:45pm, Keep Fit,  
Linlithgow Academy

**Sat 29** 10am - 1pm, Guild Coffee  
Morning, Longcroft Memorial Hall

4pm - 8pm, Magical Fireworks  
& Bonfire Night: Hopetoun House

7:30pm - 9:30pm, Recital for Flute and  
Piano, Linlithgow Academy

**Mon 31** 7:30pm - 9:30pm, Linlithgow  
String Orchestra Rehearsals, St. Peter's  
Episcopal Church

## November

**Wed 2** 7pm, SWI Monthly Meeting  
8:15pm - 9:45pm Table Tennis,  
Longcroft Memorial Hall (all Nov)

**Thu 3** 7pm - 8:45pm, Keep Fit,  
Linlithgow Academy

8pm - 10pm, Folk Session, Tap

**Fri 4** 9pm - 11:59pm, Karaoke at the  
Star & Garter Hotel (Friday's - Nov)

**Sat 5** 9pm - 11:59pm, Saturday  
Nite Live Music, Star and Garter Hotel  
(Saturday's - Nov)

## LINLITHGOW KEEP FIT



Meets every  
Thursday from 7pm - 9pm in the  
gym at the rear of the Academy.  
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## LINLITHGOW RAMBLERS WALKING CALENDAR



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## Contact the Black Bitch

For editorial and to advertise: [on.a.lead@gmail.com](mailto:on.a.lead@gmail.com)  
Editor: David Tait, 07767 713024



Copy deadline for next issue is 1 Nov 2016



BB MAGAZINE SUPPORTING SUCCESS...



Over 20 new families attend Forth Valley Orienteering event.

## In this issue

### EDINBURGH AIRPORT CONSULTATION

Developing flightpaths for the future – community consultation process.  
See page 6.



## In the next issue

### PEDAL FOR SCOTLAND 2016

Strong support in the town for the event, more attention to community needs for next year.

November issue.



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 through the year.



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# Folk Fae Lithgae

## THE BAIN FAMILY

**W**hen Sandy Bain senior signed up for the 1999 production of *Guys and Dolls* by Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions (LAMP), little did he realise that involvement in the group would become a real family affair and that the show would have such great significance for them.

Returning to Linlithgow in 1997 after a fifteen year sojourn south of the border, Sandy had thrown himself into various artistic endeavours, including guitar lessons in Edinburgh and singing with *Sangschule* and the *Rugby Club choir*. Not to be outdone, his wife **Eleanor**, who had taught English at the local Academy for ten years, joined Linlithgow Players and, at the age of 62, made her first appearance on stage. She soon became a regular in all of the Players' shows, both acting and directing, and will be seen in the annual *Plays and Wine* evenings later this month.

In 2005, Sandy and Eleanor took ten year old grandson, Sandy, to see the LAMP Children's theatre perform *Annie*. He immediately got the bug, as his Mum Sandra explained:

*"He sat on the edge of his seat through the whole show and declared that he was going to be in it next year! He auditioned for the next show – *Guys and Dolls* - and got a lead part,*

*at the age of only eleven. The curtains opened up with him centre stage and starting off the whole show. I was a nervous wreck that day, but he took it in his stride and from then there was no turning back."*

Young Sandy went on to perform in all of the LAMP Children's shows, including playing the lead role in the Scottish amateur premiere of *Billy Elliott* in 2010. **Mum Sandra and Dad Roddy** were roped in to help in numerous ways, including building sets and carrying out administrative duties. *Guys and Dolls* was again the choice for the adult company in 2012 and this time, Sandy junior won a leading role. Roddy decided to take the plunge and, as well as working behind the scenes, trod the boards for the first time.

The Bain family has continued its involvement with LAMP, with Sandra on ticketing and front of house, Roddy now a regular performer and set builder and the two girls, **Catherine** (14) and **Lisa** (11) active in the children's' theatre. In their last production – **Seussical the Musical** – Catherine won rave reviews for her performance as the Cat in the Hat, while Lisa was a very entertaining Young Kangaroo. As well as musical theatre, they are all involved in drama at the Barony Theatre in Bo'ness, while the girls are also

active in the local gymnastics club and the Central Scotland Ballet School.

Pursuing his dream of a career in the performing arts, young Sandy's credits include a lead part in the hugely successful BBC children's spy-fi adventure series, *M.I. High*, and he is currently studying acting at Napier University. Through his involvement with the *Captivate Theatre Company* in Edinburgh, he has given many members of LAMP, Barony and the *Players* the opportunity to appear in productions at the Edinburgh Fringe.

Sandy Bain senior has recently been in Belgium with the *Rugby Club choir* and for the rest of the family, the next few weeks will be fairly hectic.

**The Players' Plays and Wine evening will be on Friday 14th and Saturday 15th October at Linlithgow Primary, the LAMP production of *The Witches of Eastwick* at the Academy will run from the 17th to the 22nd of October, and Roddy, Sandra and Lisa are involved with the Barony production of *My Boy Jack* from the 28th of November to the 3rd of December.**



**Murdoch Kennedy**

# Edinburgh Airport

Where Scotland meets the world



## AIRPORT FLIGHT PATH CONSULTATION

**I** write this as we bring to a close the first stage of 'Let's Go Further' - our public consultation on the airspace change programme that Edinburgh Airport is engaged in.

During the past 15 weeks we've been asking for your views on the potential impact of altering flight paths above Edinburgh and the surrounding areas. As part of our airspace change programme, we invited you to participate in this initial consultation phase by responding to the following question: "What local factors should be taken into account when determining the position of the route within the design envelope given the potential impacts, and why?"

My colleagues and I focused our efforts on the campaign to highlight this consultation and encouraged people living and working in the airport's neighbouring communities, including Linlithgow, to look at the proposal and give us their feedback.

The detailed changes to existing flightpaths are yet to be proposed and indeed need to be given the go ahead by the regulator, the Civil Aviation Authority, before any change is made.

Unfortunately this wasn't understood by a columnist in the Black Bitch's previous edition who stated speculation as fact, claiming new flightpaths were to be routed over Linlithgow. Hopefully I can offer a deeper understanding of the objectives of the first stage of the consultation and indeed what happens next.

From the launch of 'Let's Go Further' on 6 June we have been keen to give everyone a say in any future changes. We delivered leaflets to 640,000 homes, invested in a targeted advertising campaign to a TV audience of at least 900,000, advertised in local newspapers and plugged online every week on social media.

We have also been engaging with the people at a grassroots level and have attended 16 community councils, protest groups and local authority coordinated

meetings and drop-in sessions.

Further to this we've written to: 223 community councils and 334 councillors from East Lothian, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders, South Lanarkshire, and West Lothian; six MEPs; 59 MPs; 129 MSPs; and 902 other stakeholders including environmental watchdogs, tourism groups, visitor attractions, business, community groups, libraries, community centres, education centres and sports groups.

As I write this our data analysis team are working on a full report on the first stage of our public consultation which will be published in late October, but a quick glance shows we've had in the region of 80,000 website views, around 6,000 postcode searches and received more than 5,000 feedback responses.

Crucially the responses we received will also help us map the design of the proposals that we put forward for the second stage of the consultation - set to begin early in 2017.

We care greatly about our local standing as we are local ourselves. The vast majority of people who benefit from the 6,000 jobs across the Edinburgh Airport campus live near the airport - including some key members of my team who have homes in West Lothian.

We accept that Edinburgh Airport can be a noisy neighbour - and we recognise that people have very real concerns. The aim of the consultation process is to allow us to grow to meet the ever increasing demand on our runway at peak times while minimising disruption on the ground.

To this end we have implemented a new noise complaints policy, we are in the process of employing a dedicated noise expert, we have created an arrivals and departures guide to further explain runway procedures in place at Edinburgh Airport, and listened to local concerns. In the months ahead we will update our five-year noise action plan as well as the airport masterplan and we will be

reviewing the way we monitor and mitigate noise from our operations.

We also hope that some comfort and understanding can be gained from our commitment to enabling the creation of an independent noise management board (NMB).

The NMB will be a forum involving the airport, its neighbours and partners to ensure communities are involved, engaged and informed through open dialogue and clear data.

It will seek to work collaboratively to develop improvements to noise and aircraft track-keeping performance, as well as setting and monitoring noise targets.

Our proposal is for the NMB to be made up of representatives from community councils representing communities under Edinburgh Airport's flight paths to a height of 7,000 feet, local authorities, the Civil Aviation Authority, the airport, noise experts and our air traffic controllers.

The chair of the group will be elected from the community council representatives. Edinburgh Airport would provide the NMB with a sum to enable the board to hire its own independent noise and tracking advisers. We would also provide administrative support should that be deemed appropriate.

In January we will come forward with proposals for 'lines on the map' which will be put out to public consultation as the next stage of the airspace change programme. As we did in the first stage of our airspace change programme we will be open, transparent and upfront with everyone as to why we are putting these flightpaths forward.

**Gordon Robertson**, Director of Communications, Edinburgh Airport

# REFRESH YOUR GARDEN

Last week we lit candles on the supper table for the first time since the Spring. The days are shortening so fast and we can imagine going to work and coming back in the dark once again. But let's not be too downhearted, cosy evenings with candlelight and 'Strictly' and the smells and colours of the days of mellow fruitfulness and mists are all delightful things for us to enjoy. There's still time to cheer up your garden with some fresh bedding for now and bulbs for the Spring. Get the views from the house into your garden looking good and think about some outdoor lights for those long winter evenings.



Looking back over our articles this last year we came across our New Year's Resolutions. Resolution No 2 was our intention to visit more gardens this summer. We did fairly well with garden visits and even managed to pop up to Montrose early in September to visit the Gallery Garden. Ron, the head gardener, who has created the garden for its owner John Simpson over the last 25 years, was saying that it was past its best now and we should have come a few weeks ago! But we found it most delightful, sitting proudly on high ground above the River



North Esk in a wonderful setting and with surprises around every turn. We felt it was a garden for all seasons – great structure in its various rooms and each had a different feeling. You wanted to linger in each garden and savour the atmosphere. Ron was about to plant 5,000 tulip bulbs for his spring displays. Like all the best gardens this one would be great to visit in any season - we resolved to visit again at a different time next year!

Talking of visiting gardens, we have enjoyed some 'armchair visits' to other gardens over the last few weeks as we have received lots of photos of folk's miniature gardens arriving for our miniature garden photo competition that has just closed. What great imaginations you all have and such fascinating



miniature gardens, it's going to be very challenging for the judges to choose a winner. This picture sent in by Willow Tatton is such fun. She was inspired to make her fairy garden after seeing our miniature gardens here and made it on an old tree in Balerno on a local walkway. You can just imagine how surprised and amused folk will be to come across her wee fairy village. It made us think of the delightful gardens so lovingly created and cared for by Eileen Murray at Water Yett in Linlithgow – there is always something new to spot around the carpark edges.

**Dougal Philip and Lesley Watson**  
New Hopetoun Gardens

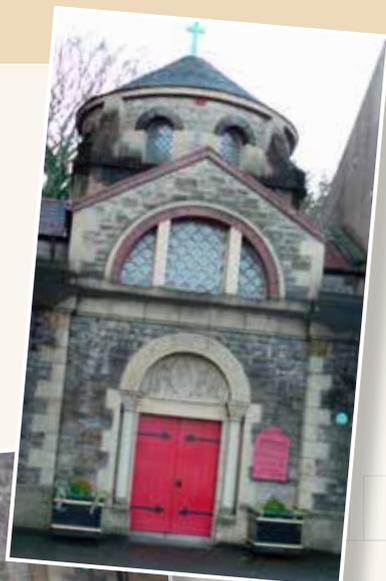
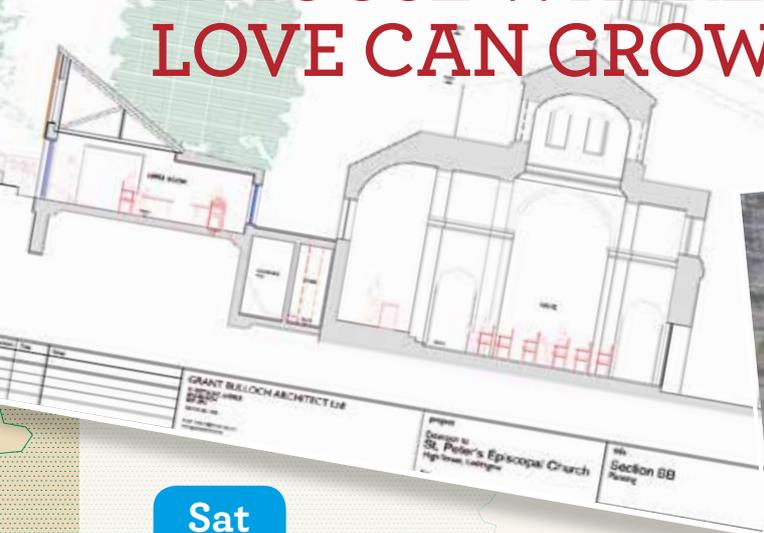
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# ST PETER'S: A HOUSE WHERE LOVE CAN GROW



Sat  
22  
Oct

**T**hese could very well be the words at the forefront of George Walpole's mind as he set sail at Easter-tide in the year 1926. George Walpole, the much loved Bishop of Edinburgh during the late 1920s crossed the heaving waters of the North Atlantic to the eastern seaboard of America. His mission was one close to his heart, to raise enough funds to allow the building of a little church on the High Street in the Royal Burgh of Linlithgow.

His journey was not in vain and he returned triumphant from his lecture tour with a promise of £500 towards the £1,000 build. The latest of God's houses in Linlithgow was soon to become a reality, and on a damp day in May 1927 the foundation stone for the church we now know as St Peter's was laid.

The fortunes of the Episcopal Church in Linlithgow have risen and fallen like an Atlantic swell during the past 88 years, but now, St Peter's is bursting at the seams with a growing congregation and also a growing awareness of its unique position in the town. Our red doors open regularly to warmly welcome all those who walk through them.

However, St Peter's is suffering from the ravages of time. Its antiquated narrow kitchen is used as a vestry and robing room for our rector, a preparation area

for refreshments and a through-way to our tiny toilet, which is unsuitable for anyone other than the young or agile. There are no facilities for the growing Sunday School meaning the children having to walk along the often wild and wet High Street from the Guide Hall where they meet.

**It is clear that our church building needs to grow to cater for not only our own congregation but also in offering a special place to be used by the Linlithgow community.**

So while others were enjoying the lazy days of our summer, those involved in finding funding for our bright and modern extension into our church garden, were working without cease, filling in complex application forms and sending them off with hope in their hearts for successful and generous outcomes from their efforts. **We have, over the past 12 months, raised half of the £250,000 needed to build the extension, being constantly amazed by the generosity of not only funders, but of our sister churches in Linlithgow and Bathgate, our neighbours and our friends, old and new.**

The architect's plans, incorporating the wishes of the congregation, have been approved by the planning department, our diocese and the good people of

Linlithgow. Once the building warrant is received and the funding in place the digging will begin. That huge step of faith which Bishop Walpole took many years ago will be renewed and strengthened by the efforts and beliefs of those who work and have worked so tirelessly over the intervening years for our small church.

Open gardens day, toy sale, jewellery sale, a drop in concert, an inter-church quiz night – just a few of the fund raising events which are planned. Now with community fundraiser **Pamela Barnes** helping fire the ingenuity and imaginations of the congregation we will, without doubt, be well on our way to opening the latest chapter in the history of St Peter's.

**St Peter's will now grow and extend into our beautiful garden, grow into a future where all who enter our red doors then onwards and upwards will enter a unique space. A place where God and the love he has to offer each of us will dwell and grow.**

10.30am, Sat 22 October.  
Informal Concert.  
**LINLITHGOW STRING ORCHESTRA**  
Donations welcome

Jane Ramsay

## NEW FOR OLD - LINLITHGOW'S COAT OF ARMS RESTORED



**L**inlithgow's coat of arms was granted in the 17th century, 500 years after Linlithgow was created a Royal Burgh. Unusually, Linlithgow had two coats of arms, one of the well-known 'Black Bitch' chained to an oak tree on an island in the loch and the other depicting St Michael slaying a dragon holding a shield bearing the Scottish Royal Arms.

In 1975 the Scottish Royal Burghs were abolished by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and the official recognition of their town councils' coats of arms was also discontinued. The official use of the Linlithgow coat of arms was raised during discussions in September 2013 concerning proposed pavement mosaics depicting the two former town council seals. At this time there was no official organisation that owned the right to use the Linlithgow coats of arms. It was decided by the Linlithgow & Linlithgow Bridge Community Council that this situation should be rectified. In its approach to the Court of the Lord Lyon, the heraldic authority for Scotland, the community council requested that both coats of arms be reinstated. The Lord Lyon was minded only to grant one coat of arms, which left the dilemma of which to choose.

The problem of which to choose was solved during a meeting with the Lyon Clerk who explained that it's the words in the Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland which is of prime importance and that a pictorial 'quotation' can be taken from the description. The solution was to adopt the coat of arms depicting St Michael but holding a shield bearing the traditional 'Black Bitch'. The latter well-known symbol of Linlithgow can therefore be used on its own being a 'quotation' from the full coat of arms, so that, in effect, the community council can use two coats of

arms with the traditional depictions of St Michael and the 'Black Bitch'.

There have been a number of mottos associated with the coats of arms over the centuries. The community council has decided that the most appropriate motto is 'St Michael is Kinde to Strainers' which is the motto on St Michael's well (outside RGM on the High Street).

The community council is grateful for the generous grant from the Linlithgow & Linlithgow Bridge Town Management Group and also to West Lothian Council for its endeavours in unlocking money from the almost depleted Common Good Fund which was set up in 1491 for the "commoune gude of the toune and to be spendit in commoune and necessare thingis of the burgh". It was judged by all that the reinstatement of the town's coat of arms fell exactly into the terms of the fund.

**A ceremonial presentation of the coat of arms is currently being arranged with the Lord Lyon's office.**

**John Kelly  
and Ron Smith,  
Linlithgow  
and Linlithgow  
Bridge  
Community  
Council**



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## LOYALTY SCHEME

The Loyalty Scheme continues to enjoy great uptake and success, with the number of lucky winners growing every month. To date £260 worth of vouchers have given out to residents and visitors who have supported local businesses. The scheme rewards customers for their loyalty when they shop in selected High Street outlets by entering them into a draw to win vouchers. There is £100 in vouchers to be won every month and they can be spent in participating premises. One business taking part is **Nifty Needles**, and **June Stevenson** described the project as a great idea:

*"It has been very well received by my customers. It's encouraging people to shop locally, and they can use the vouchers in other shops. It's much better than having my own loyalty card – it gives freedom of choice. If someone wants to use a voucher towards a steak from the butcher, that's fine."*



### LOYALTY CARD WELL RECEIVED BY MY CUSTOMERS

June Stevenson, Nifty Needles

June added that she would like to see more town centre businesses taking part in this 'win-win' loyalty scheme. So far there have been two shops with multiple winners – **Fairtrade Winds** and **Ellie's Cellar**, leading to speculation that these are particularly lucky shops. Why don't you pay them a visit and find out?



## ADVENT FAYRE

The 2016 Advent Fayre will take place on Saturday 26 November and for the first time in a decade it will have a Victorian theme. The BID is involved in the planning and delivery of the event, and businesses will have the opportunity to sell 'torch tickets' in advance of the grand torchlight procession. We are currently planning a late night Christmas opening event in November/December and would be keen to hear from businesses who are interested in taking part, or would like to sell torch tickets. Please contact: [info@linlithgow.info](mailto:info@linlithgow.info)



## NEW BUSINESS - QWORTH

Welcome **QWorth**, setting up shop at 207 High Street, offering a diverse and growing range of fashion clothing and accessories. Owner **Dorothy Flynn** said:

*"Since opening on 3 August, customers have expressed how convenient it is to have unique, branded fashion products right on the High Street. Older customers are glad to pick up essentials without having to travel to other towns. The range of stock is steadily increasing and hopefully from mid-November, we'll be hosting activities in the shop, allowing invited customers to try out new in-season stock over some drinks and fun. Through this, we'll look to raise money for local charities."*



### WE WELCOME CUSTOMERS TO VIEW OUR NEW SEASON STOCK

Dorothy Flynn, QWORTH

## CROSS WELL RENOVATION

Businesses will be aware of the works taking place at the **Cross Well**, which involve repairs to the structure and the reinstatement of the flowing water and the feature lighting. Local companies are involved in the refurbishment work. The Linlithgow town management group has contributed capital funding to the project and the Linlithgow Town Centre BID has agreed to fund the ongoing costs for the water and lighting, ensuring that the well is as attractive as possible for visitors and residents. Without this support from the BID, it would have been difficult to deliver the water and lighting element of the project. **The works are scheduled to run until 4 November, so that the well is fully operational in time for the Advent Fayre.**

**Stewart Ness** BID Manager

# ALE TRAIL

A warm welcome to the Kelpies Bar joining the Linlithgow Ale Trail. The trail, promoted by Linlithgow Pub Watch and funding provided by Linlithgow Town Centre BID, has proved massively popular, giving away more than 2,200 t-shirts to intrepid real ale fans visiting all venues on the card. Pick up a card from the West Port or Star & Garter hotels before completing the trail at your leisure.



# PREMISES IMPROVEMENT GRANT

The continually popular premises improvement grant scheme allows businesses to access funding for a range of projects that add economic value to their premises. Previous applicants have used the funding for lighting, carpeting, new equipment and replacement windows. The scheme has seen £12,877 of investment in the town centre in its second year, bringing total investment to more than £33,000 since launch, and an average BID contribution of 47.6 per cent.

Please contact the BID for more information.

## £33,000 INVESTMENT INTO LINLITHGOW SINCE LAUNCH

Linlithgow BID



## Mill Road Website Debuts

The new Linlithgow Mill Road Industrial Estate BID website launched on 17 August 2016 and has been warmly welcomed by resident businesses and local customers.

One of the key features of the new web site is the business listings section, and many of the industrial estate businesses have been keen to take advantage of the free advertising opportunity this offers. With around forty business listed within the first month of launch, customers now have access to more information about local businesses, trades and services.

If your business is on the estate and you'd like to be listed on the website, contact [Bridgette.Kleinman@linlithgowmillroadbid.com](mailto:Bridgette.Kleinman@linlithgowmillroadbid.com) for more information.

The vacant premises section enables landlords to advertise industrial units or office space available to let on the industrial estate, and this free service is

proving popular with landlords and potential tenants.

If you prefer to 'keep it local' and are looking for a trade, service or business, or maybe wanting to rent office space or an industrial unit, check [www.linlithgowmillroadbid.com](http://www.linlithgowmillroadbid.com) for information.

## CCTV

The board are pleased with the progress made on the bespoke CCTV system installation and are delighted to announce that the install date will be mid-October at three locations throughout the estate.

It is anticipated that the work will be completed within a week and the system goes live shortly after. We are continuing to work with Police Scotland, reviewing feedback from businesses on potential areas where security needs to be improved.

## Addresses

A sub-group of the board have been developing a proposal for landlords and tenants to consider which aims to reorganise the current confusing address system, and make it easier for visitors to find businesses.

The sub-group have been consulting with statutory bodies on the different aspects involved in this process and are looking to answer businesses concerns raised in the consultation event carried out last year. There will shortly be a feedback session organised by the BID, where businesses who are interested can attend and ask questions about the proposal.

Details of this event will be circulated by email and on our website.

## Business Improvement Grant

The business improvement grant, which is exclusive to Mill Road BID businesses, provides a grant to go towards a range of improvement projects.

Previous applicants have used it for the purchase of new equipment, upgrading fire alarm systems and social media training. The board are keen to hear from business on what their improvement projects are and how the grant funding can help deliver.

For further information contact:



[www.linlithgowmillroadbid.com](http://www.linlithgowmillroadbid.com)

[stewart.ness@linlithgowmillroadbid.com](mailto:stewart.ness@linlithgowmillroadbid.com) / 07717865225

[Bridgette.Kleinman@linlithgowmillroadbid.com](mailto:Bridgette.Kleinman@linlithgowmillroadbid.com)

**Stewart Ness**  
BID Manager



## COMPETITION TIME!

Can you identify which images go with the locations below? Some show the work of Burgh Beautiful volunteers, some of work by community gardeners and others are due to the interest and support of shops and businesses.

- >> 1. Outside Nifty Needles
- >> 2. Preparing baskets at Clarendon
- >> 3. The Star and Garter
- >> 4. Young volunteers in action
- >> 5. A colourful corner by Regent Centre car park by a local resident
- >> 6. Amazing Alstromeria at the Water Yett by local enthusiast
- >> 7. By the flats off St Ninian's Way; and towards the car park by a resident and BB volunteer
- >> 8. Opposite St Ninian's Craigmailen Church by local resident.
- >> 9. Barrels by the Maltings
- >> 10. Braehead corner
- >> 11. Bug hotel at the Water Yett
- >> 12. The Spar bed at Springfield

One lucky winner will receive a floral arrangement. **Email the editor at: [on.a.lead@gmail.com](mailto:on.a.lead@gmail.com)**





# HASN'T LINLITHGOW BEEN LOOKING GREAT THIS SUMMER...



...and this is despite so many uncertainties when West Lothian Council withdrew its planting and Burgh Beautiful sought more volunteers and funding to take on the extra beds. The townsfolk rose to the challenge with more people coming forward to offer practical help, and sponsorships and donations. Facebook likes, emails and passing comments suggest that what has been achieved this year has been excellent and enjoyed. But is this sustainable? Can we look forward to similar support in 2017 and, after a three year gap, once again enter the town to seek to be the best in Scotland.

**In addition to Burgh Beautiful's volunteers, many others have taken initiatives to making the town look good.**

There are flower tubs of varying sizes outside shops, baskets hanging from hotels, window boxes, retail outlets' shrubberies and spontaneous gardening in public spaces by local residents. West Lothian Council's reduced and crude grass-cutting has raised many comments. However, thanks to donations, BB has had the ability to pay Alan Agnew, a previous council employee, to mow and cut edges round key beds. This sets them off so much better. In addition, some residents seem to have taken responsibility for cutting and raking grass outside their properties and what a difference that makes to overall appearance. It shows that we care!

**It is not only the centre of Linlithgow that gets that care, for there are several beds on the perimeter tended by Burgh Beautiful volunteers.** You cannot miss the barrels at every entrance to the town, but have you seen the various colourful beds within estates such as the Spar bed at Springfield and one at Braehead?

**October brings autumn clearances and winter plantings.** This year, thanks to the Town Management Group enabling the purchase of more baskets, there will be

**a full complement of 120 baskets.**

In addition there are more than 50 barrels, planters and beds where volunteers will be continuing to help brighten up our town. If you would like to add your support, either to join in one of the teams or contribute in some other way, you are warmly invited to email [burgh-beautiful@lct.org.uk](mailto:burgh-beautiful@lct.org.uk). We will be planting up baskets mid-October and sponsorship renewals for 2016-17 are now underway.

If anyone wants to sponsor a pair of hanging baskets, a tub or a flower bed, for the first time, do get in touch.

**Should we aim for GOLD in 2017?**

**We have every confidence that this is sustainable if we maintain the same level of sponsorships and donations.**

**But not everywhere is carefully tended!**

**What about the Falkirk Road by G&M Carpets or litter bins that cannot cope with the volume of rubbish which folk choose to dump rather than take home.**

**Can you do your bit? Even picking up someone else's litter or ensuring that dog owners clean up!**

**Averil Stewart**

## GREAT NEWS...

**>> Burgh Beautiful gains an 'Outstanding Award' for its three entries in Keep Scotland Beautiful – It's Your Neighbourhood.**

**>> The West Port Bed, The Vennel Bed and Serpentine Bed – *more details next issue.***

**Want to help?**  
*We're always looking for volunteers....*

**Email: Jean Long at [burgh-beautiful@lct.org.uk](mailto:burgh-beautiful@lct.org.uk)**

# I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU... RETIRED!

## PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINAR & PRIZE DRAW COMPETITION

**R**etirement planning is as exciting and overwhelming as planning a wedding; the Big Day and life as a married couple.

There is so much to consider, irrespective of whether it's a wedding or retirement; which date should you choose? Where should it happen? Should you be on a beach, or here at home? How much will it cost you? The first day of your married life, or the last day of your working life should be a day to be remembered.

It goes without saying that both a wedding and a retirement will be extremely difficult, if not near impossible, to plan overnight and knowing what to expect and how it will make you feel on the day should be a priority.

In the longer term, you have to consider what you would like to achieve; the experiences, the journey. The family and friends who will be with you. Right down to the simplest things, like how you will fill your time?

Preparing for a long and happy marriage/retirement is full of compromise, patience and planning. Whether you are five or ten years from retirement, it is crucial that you know what your later life goals are. How will you spend your time in retirement? What do you need to make your retirement special, and most importantly, is it affordable?

The majority of the population know what they want and need as they enter into retirement, however many do not know how to start the process.

**We understand that this is an extensive task which is why Virtue Money has been working together with a number of specialists, to offer that service to you, all in one place.**

Our pre-retirement seminar provides you with an opportunity to hear from, and speak to Financial Advisers, a local Solicitor, a Tax Specialist as well as retirees who are keeping busy in later life and sharing their own experiences. Our Seminar will offer the support and guidance you need to help you make informed choices about your future.

**We are a family-run firm and are proud of our family values, which is why our seminar will also provide you with information on families in later life and what steps you can take to ensure your later life, finances and legal matters are taken care of.**

### >>> PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINAR

**Our next pre-retirement seminar will run on Wednesday 26 October 2016 at our offices in the Oracle Campus, Linlithgow between 9am – 1pm.**

We also welcome you to join us for lunch afterwards. As spaces for our seminars go quickly, please contact **Lauren Blake** on 0345 034 3424 (extension 704) or [lauren@virtuemoney.com](mailto:lauren@virtuemoney.com), to secure your place.

### >>> PRIZE DRAW COMPETITION

Virtue Money are proud sponsors of the fantastic Braehead Clan, and we are offering the opportunity to win a family day out to Braehead's Intu for a meal, followed by the exciting experience of watching Glasgow's favourite ice hockey team - The Braehead Clan. This is a prize for a family of four to enjoy together.

### >>> TO ENTER...

To enter, all you have to do is tell us what you are looking forward to most in retirement. Email [lauren@virtuemoney.com](mailto:lauren@virtuemoney.com) with your answer. Our competition will close on Friday 21 October at 4pm. Any emails received after this time will not be entered. The winner will be selected after this date and contacted with details of the next available hockey dates.

**We look forward to seeing you at our Pre-Retirement Seminar and wish you good luck in our prize draw!**



Virtue Money

Oracle Campus, Linlithgow

Wed  
26  
Oct

Our pre-retirement seminar provides you with an opportunity to hear from, and speak to Financial Advisers, a local Solicitor, a Tax Specialist as well as retirees who are keeping busy in later life and sharing their own experiences.



# ORGANISERS TOAST ANOTHER 'BEST EVER' FOLK FESTIVAL!

The organisers of the 18th Linlithgow Folk Festival are toasting the success of this year's event and pledging to make it even better next year.

Last month's celebration of traditional music dance and song in the Royal Burgh had something for everyone, including three concerts, an outdoor family ceilidh at the Vennel, a musical cruise on the Union Canal, pub sessions, and a packed two-day programme of free music on the outdoor Nora Devine Stage at the Cross.

The comprehensive list of events attracted an appreciative audience of locals and visitors alike, some of the latter coming from as far afield as Guyancourt in France, Germany, the United States, South Africa, Canada and Australia. There was also a fair contingent from Yorkshire and two regular visitors from Israel made a welcome return.

The headline concert with the brilliant young musicians – The Outside Track – was the highlight of the weekend and the band spoke warmly of the wonderful response they had received on their second appearance in Linlithgow.

Many budding artistes appeared on the Nora Devine Stage at the Cross, including students from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow, 5 Strings from Livingston, the thirty-strong Falkirk Young Trad Band and local children Jamie McGinley, Joe Tunnicliffe and Stephanie McCormick, who took part in a show called 'Weans' World'. There was also a debut appearance on the stage by the Linlithgow Ladies' Choir.

Folk Festival Chairman, Murdoch Kennedy, said: *"The Festival gets better every year and we had record numbers at the Bluegrass concert, the Blues Night and the outdoor Family Ceilidh. From the opening night in the Bowling Club to the final party in the West Port, we heard some of the best music we have ever had, including a fantastic Bluegrass concert at Queen Margaret Hall with The Daddy Naggins and some superb performances by artistes of all ages on the Nora Devine Stage."*

Murdoch Kennedy praised the efforts of his committee, who work so hard to provide the community with a top quality music festival.

He said:

*"Several first-time visitors said it was the best festival they had ever been to and one that people from all over the country should attend. That reputation is down to the hard work and dedication of our committee and the support of partner organisations such as the local licensed traders, canal society, the ATC, LYPP and the business association. Our sales outlets – Far from the Maddening Crowd and Norman Cummings – also played a pivotal role and we are indebted to them."*

*"We are constantly trying new things and look forward to doing so again next year. We already have some tremendous partners and hope to encourage many more local organisations and individuals to get involved in what we hope is fast becoming one of Scotland's best folk festivals."*

Jonathan Moore



## WITCHES OF EASTWICK...



From  
17-22  
Oct

LAMP's October show this year is 'The Witches of Eastwick'. Based on the movie of the same name, this is a modern musical full of great songs and cheeky humour. I caught up with Claire Withnell, Siobhan Smith and Hannah Easton who are playing the witches to find out more about the show.

**What is the show about?**

**C:** The show is about three single ladies with a history of failed relationships who dream up the perfect man. They come to realise that and that they just need confidence in themselves and each other.

**H:** Alex, Jane and Sukie, are bored of their lives as outcasts in the small town of Eastwick. Their desire for 'all manner of man in one man' comes to life in the charismatic, devil-like stranger Daryl Van Horne. However, their behaviour soon upsets the town.

**S:** I think it is about three women realising their potential.

**Describe your character?**

**H:** Sukie is very naïve. Although focused in her work, writing for the local paper, she is extremely scatter-brained and tends to speak faster than she thinks causing her to stutter and trip over her words.

**S:** Jane is quite prim and proper. She has a lot of passion but she has been taught to be restrained and stick to rules so she doesn't let her passion show. She's a bit cheeky after a martini or two though.

**C:** Alex is the eldest of the witches. She has a protective and motherly nature, not only to her son, but to the other two witches. She's independent and a bit feisty.

**What has your character learned by the end of the show?**

**H:** By the end Sukie has learned that she doesn't need a man to be confident in herself. She realises that she didn't need anyone else for her to reach her full potential.

**S:** Jane has learned to embrace her passionate side and is a bit more willing to let go.

**C:** She can protect others but she has to put herself first sometimes too.

**How would you encourage people to come and see it?**

**H:** It is not your stereotypical

musical. It has upbeat show tunes and adult content. This is a great night out without having to bring the kids along especially if you want a night of laughs and great music.

**S:** I would say that it is a big cheeky show - big songs, big characters. It's a bit of a grown up musical; perfect to get some of your friends together for a fun night out.

**C:** It's a very funny show! No it's not for young kids but there is nothing wrong with a little adult humour sometimes.

**What has been the highlight of rehearsals?**

**H:** There has been a lot of hilarity in rehearsals, especially with the nature of the show.

**S:** I always like when the whole cast gets to see the principals doing their scenes for the first time.

**C:** The music - it's fab and really looking forward to hearing the orchestra.

**What are you most looking forward to for the show?**

**H:** The main thing is actually performing it in front of an audience as this always helps lift the show to the next level.

**S:** I love hearing an audience react, whether it is an intake of breath at something shocking or getting a big laugh at a funny scene.

**C:** Being with LAMP family all week.

**One word to describe the show?**

**S:** Magical **H:** Devilish **C:** Powerful

'Witches of Eastwick' is on at Linlithgow Academy Theatre from 17 - 22 October at 7.30pm. Tickets can be ordered online at [www.linlithgow-musicals.co.uk](http://www.linlithgow-musicals.co.uk) or by calling the Box Office on 07949475932. There is a 2-for-1 deal on tickets for the Monday night.

Ticket holders will also receive 10 per cent off food bills on pre theatre meals at the Star and Garter and the Ashmaan Restaurant.

Alison Train

# ANOTHER GREAT YEAR FOR LINLITHGOW BOWLERS

**F**resh from their momentous 150th anniversary in 2015, Linlithgow Bowling Club members have enjoyed another very successful year.

On June 30th on their home green, the gents won the County Triples, with the trio of **Andy Cruickshanks, Mark Graham and Steven Fleming** ensuring that the trophy stayed in Linlithgow for the first time in ten years. A few weeks later, that long-awaited success was followed by another one, when the gents won the **County Top Ten** for the first time since 2003, beating close rivals, Kirkliston in the final at Bellsburn Bowling Club. Victory at the County level means that Linlithgow will represent West Lothian in the Scottish Inter County Top Ten competition in May of next year, against all the winners from the other counties and regions within Scotland.

The ladies have also enjoyed a notable term, with nine times champion, **Lorna Smith**, winning the District singles, East of Scotland singles and County Champion of Champions singles. The club is particularly excited about the progress of two young members, **Chloe Hutchison and Emma Fleming** - daughter of Steven - who have a very bright future ahead of them.

The achievements of the gents' seniors, i.e. players aged sixty and over, has been very pleasing to everyone associated with Linlithgow Bowling Club. A spokesman for the seniors told me:

*"We've had a terrific season. In the Linlithgow area seniors' Top Ten league, which is played every Monday afternoon, we played eighteen matches, won fifteen, drew three and lost none. We won the league by three points over Kirkliston and that put us through to the County finals, which we narrowly lost to Kirkliston. We also won the Summer Cup, which is played on a Friday towards the back end of the season."*

*The last time Linlithgow seniors won the local league was 2008 and the last time they won the County was 1995, so this year has represented a significant improvement in our performance levels and in what we've achieved. It's been a good year for us and we will just have to try to go one better next year."*

At the other end of the age scale, Linlithgow Bowling Club runs a very active youth programme, which tries to develop an interest in the sport among young people in the town. Working closely with local schools, three experienced club coaches, **Ann Robertson, Gary Smith and Alistair Stenhouse** provide tuition for youngsters on Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings.



A spokesman told me:

*"We just hope that we can retain a few and that they progress and retain their keenness into the future. We already have some really good prospects and hope to build on this."*

**Murdoch Kennedy**

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In their regular column for the Black Bitch, Stuart and Suzi from the Westport Veterinary Clinic tell us about one of their regular customers. This month it is cat Pita Averill.

Pita is a Maine Coon, the only indigenous species of cat in the USA.

**Moving to Linlithgow:** Pita moved with his owners from Texas, and he thoroughly enjoys the Scottish climate.

**Favorite activities:** Playing with his mouse toys, rolling on the patio, and chasing wood pigeons.

**Favourite thing:** Food. In fact Pita loves it. He has been on a diet and is losing weight, but seizes every opportunity to remind his owners that he likes to eat.

**Bad habits:** He has been found licking the pan where chicken was cooked and knocking leftovers onto the floor (see diet, above).

It's Autumn and time to keep your eye out for the acorns, conkers and beechnuts which are shed from trees at this time of year. Please don't let your pets eat them - they can be highly toxic if ingested in high quantities.

Potentially all parts of the Horse Chestnut tree are toxic but it tends to be the conkers and spiky casings that are consumed by animals. The most common

signs are retching, vomiting, restlessness and abdominal tenderness which are often followed by diarrhoea and dehydration. Most animals recover with supportive care, however, there have been isolated cases with fatal outcomes.

Same is true of the Oak tree which contains toxic tannins but it is mainly the acorns that are eaten by pets. If eaten this usually results in mild gastrointestinal problems similar to eating a conker. Again if eaten in significant numbers the animal will need to be monitored and observed by veterinary staff.

Finally, Beech nut ingestion is less common but the sap found in the nut is potentially toxic. It is important to have your pet checked over to make sure they don't become dehydrated.

If you have any concerns about your pet please bring them in to be checked over. Appointments can be made by calling the Westport Veterinary Clinic team on 01506 844165.

**Stuart and Suzi**



Hello  
I'm Pita



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# TRANSITION LINLITHGOW UPDATE

**A**s a member and chair of Transition Linlithgow I'm sometimes asked questions like; What is Transition? What are we transitioning to or from? Who else is doing this? Why do we need to?

I have to agree that the word 'transition' isn't the perfect word to describe what our charity does, but it does help to encapsulate the collective shift that many communities around the world are undertaking as they seek alternatives to a highly dependant fossil-fuel based lifestyles.

.....



**We are on a societal journey.** From one lifestyle to another. From centralised intensive carbon based energy to distributed renewable energy. From over-extracting finite natural resources to circular economies. From a heavy reliance on imports to growth of locally produced items. From being disconnected from nature to a realisation that all life on earth is inter-connected and inter-dependent. From growing obesity and ill-health to active lives and greater wellbeing.

In this journey, we are not all the same. Some choose to focus on eco-bling, the technology side, solar panels, electric cars, LED lighting, heat pumps, etc.

Some choose to re-imagine our food systems with support for local producers, local markets, organic practices, slow money (investing in soils), etc. Some are fit and active and promote walking and cycling at every opportunity. Others focus on the health of the volunteers doing stuff and ensure we don't burn-out in the process.

## It's a rich tapestry of action, of change, of transition.

Yet to write down a 'vision' for what our transitional destination looks like is almost impossible. Where are we heading? What will a low-carbon future look like? Will we all be working in the fields at harvest time, cycling on empty streets, eating turnips in March? Is the future similar to now but with everything electrically powered? Will we still be flying? What kind of jobs will we have? I think you'll agree that 100 years ago few could imagine what we have now, and equally it's just as challenging for us to imagine life 100 years from now, except to say that it's very likely to be different from now.

Transition is therefore a range of community journeys, some with clearer vision than others. There's a lot of experimentation going on. It's a people-led, bottom-up social experiment on a giant scale. Some projects fail, some succeed. There are examples that you hear of in other communities which are inspiring and tempting to copy, but you know they wouldn't work here. Equally there are projects that don't succeed elsewhere but just might work here because we have a different landscape, population, opportunities, etc.

We appreciate that not all of us can cycle. Not everyone enjoys kale. Not everyone is at a point in life where bigger changes can be made. Add to that the complexity of human behaviours and the challenges of supporting people to take alternative decisions when choices are presented to us and you have a complex puzzle to solve.

Yet if you zoom out and look at all the people within the International Transition Network you see common passion for three main things. The core 'ethics' of transition.

**Earth Care** - we need to improve how we look after our home planet. The air, soils, oceans, forests, swamps, plants, animals, etc. We are fouling on our own doorstep in a million subtle ways and it can't continue like that.

**People Care** - we've been distracted by consumerism, political drives for growth to hide mountains of debt and of corporate over-dominance in life priorities, and have partially lost sight of the importance of caring for each other. We are working ourselves into the ground - for what? People are exhausted, seeking time to recover from a life with little spare time except that driven by national

holidays and events.

**Fair Shares** - inequality is spiralling out of control. The divide between the few who have a lot and the many who have little is growing. Whether that's at a corporate level with tax avoidance, or food banks, access to land, rights of indigenous peoples, access to healthcare, etc. the benefits of living are not being distributed evenly. We are numbed by the individuals being rewarded for failure with bonuses, the corporations with more money than some countries, while child labour, poverty, famine and other major issues still exist globally.

## Transition around the world takes on many guises.

In Favelas of Brazil, the focus is on collecting rainwater and teaching people to seal tanks from mosquitos.

In Japan it's villages investing in solar co-ops and learning to move away from nuclear power which isn't the smartest strategy for an earthquake prone part of the planet.

In the UK its often about local food, sustainable enterprises, active travel, renewable energy, local currencies, growing food, etc. A Scottish transition hub is also forming, see: [www.transition.scot](http://www.transition.scot)

In France, Holland, USA, Australia, Portugal, Denmark and many other countries it's about the things that are relevant to their neighbourhood.

So what about Linlithgow? Surrounded by farmland but little food grown for local consumption, dependant on a national power grid yet soaked in free sunshine (sometimes), a perfect sized town to cycle or walk for most short trips yet choked with 16,000 car journeys per day. This is a friendly, vibrant and well connected community which includes a great bunch of folk figuring out how to 'transition'. We're not perfect but we hope our actions are positive and beneficial to people and planet.

**So hopefully we've debunked a few myths about transition and intrigued some you too. Get in touch if you wish to join in. Our membership is free. Our actions are driven by the folks that participate. We strive to find our own unique transition pathway towards a more caring and positive future.**

**Look out for our future initiatives on solar, local food, library of stuff, repair cafe, film festivals, pot luck dinners and much more. Further details at: [www.transitionlinlithgow.org.uk](http://www.transitionlinlithgow.org.uk).**



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## FOCUS ON: LINLITHGOW ART COLLECTIVE

[www.linlithgowartcollective.com](http://www.linlithgowartcollective.com)



**T**his creative hub continues to shine in the heart of the community where **Peter Scott** (fine artist and art teacher at Linlithgow Academy) drives the Linlithgow Art Collective (LAC) forward and offers continuous support for young up-and-coming artists and creatives from the town of Linlithgow.

With initial support from the Line Gallery and thatstudio architecture practice, the collective has slowly but surely established a footprint in our creative community.

More recently the collective has established a creative home at the Vennel - the Linlithgow Centre for Contemporary Arts (LCCA) - which has quickly developed into an art gallery and teaching space. Peter utilised the space to provide teaching, generating the main source of income that pays for utilities, materials, promotion and maintenance.

Peter has hosted several shows by collective members in the gallery charging them a commission of 25 per cent on sales, 10 per cent of which goes back into the Collective and 15 per cent into running the space. Peter's priority is to support local talent and therefore keep the commission low.

### The Future: making the project work.

In the coming weeks and months, Linlithgow will see higher profile shows taking place including works by Peter Howson, Ken Currie, Alasdair Gray, Elizabeth Blackadder, John Byrne and Adrien Wizniewski from 9 September.

Plans are also in progress for a public art project which has the support of Ross Sinclair and the interest of Martin Boyce and Dave Sherry.

With two collective shows already completed, Peter exhibited his own show in August where work could be purchased at a reduced rate to raise money for the space. With great generosity Peter provided the gallery and collective 75 per cent of the proceeds from sales at the exhibition.

In reflecting on development so far Peter said:

*"This is a small enterprise but it has big ambitions and it would be wonderful if both national and local arts journalists were to support the venture with some media coverage. There are many in the community who have the town and local young people's interests - as well as our nation's rich cultural heritage - at heart and by supporting the gallery you are directly supporting and nurturing the growth of this within the town. A town ideally located between Edinburgh and Glasgow for becoming a rich creative hub."*

### Community membership and patronage scheme.

The LAC would like to offer the community an opportunity to support our future endeavours and as such have decided to open up a membership and patronage scheme. **The collective is looking for 100 people to become non executive members of the organisation. For the small sum of £5 a month you would receive:**

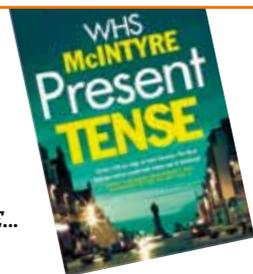
- >> A signed limited edition A4 print by Peter J Scott.
- >> A five per cent discount on any collective members' art that you buy either via the gallery or the website.
- >> Automatic invitation to all private viewings and exhibitions at the LCCA.
- >> Two postal mail outs a year, with limited edition posters and invitations.
- >> 10 per cent off any drawing, painting or printing courses running at the LCCA, by collective members.
- >> Access to private members facebook page, where we will keep you updated first on any news we have.

Should you wish to donate to our collective or the LCCA gallery as a patron, Peter would be happy to discuss this on an individual basis.

For more information please contact **Peter Scott:** [info@peterjscottfineart.com](mailto:info@peterjscottfineart.com)

**BOOK REVIEW**  
**PRESENT TENSE**  
**BY WHS MCINTYRE**

**WRY SENSE OF HUMOUR MAKES THIS NOVEL IMMENSELY READABLE...**



**Present Tense is the latest novel in McIntyre's Best Defence Mystery series. It is a carefully thought out crime novel which follows the trials and tribulations of criminal lawyer Robbie Munro. While life is not plain sailing at the best of times Robbie does seem to have more than his fair share of problems and is facing pressure from all angles in both his professional and personal life. He is back living at home with his dad, has a new found daughter in his life and his career prospects seem to have taken a distinct turn for the worse. Set in Linlithgow local readers will find much to interest them with well-placed references to nearby landmarks.**

At the beginning of the novel Robbie is preparing in his haphazard, unconventional manner to defend a family man accused of a horrendous crime

by his neighbour's daughter. We learn quickly that while Robbie is a sharp witted, observant lawyer he does have a somewhat relaxed approach to the necessary documentation and paperwork that goes with the territory in many professions. This manifests in Robbie's first major problem which comes in the form of a meticulous Scottish Legal Aid Board auditor who finds his laissez faire approach to the regulations far from satisfactory. This leads to Robbie being forbidden to provide legal aid services and throws his future into jeopardy.

Leaving the fate of his practice in the more than capable hands of his assistant Joanna, Robbie finds a welcome distraction in the mysterious package that has been left in his care by one of his more dubious clients, Billy Paris. As he starts to tease apart the subterfuge that surrounds the seemingly

innocuous cardboard box - and is visited by several menacing characters along the way - Robbie quickly realises that he is in a race against the shadowy forces which are working against him to eradicate the contents of the package. Robbie doggedly works to unravel the truth and is taunted by the fact that the answers are always just out of his grasp. His optimism, determinedness and wry sense of humour make this novel immensely readable.

Upon reading the author's note at the end of the novel, we discover that writer WHS McIntyre is a highly experienced criminal defence lawyer himself. This intricate knowledge of the Scottish legal system shines through in the novel giving authenticity to the characters and situations; he provides a rare glimpse into the inner workings of criminal law. As with any profession there are certain individuals who lend themselves well to representation and we get the sense that WHS McIntyre is a keen observer of character. Certainly the casual, off-the-cuff remarks between his protagonists are a lesson in the everyday vernacular that comes naturally to certain people in our lives.

The genre of crime fiction is

propelled by the somewhat voyeuristic nature of our society and the innate sense of justice that is instilled in us from a very young age. As law abiding citizens we learn to place our faith in the justice system. McIntyre casts many interesting observations in Present Tense about the best way to achieve results in the eyes of the law - for example what to say and what not to say in a police interview! The character of Robbie Munro is not a conventional hero - he has a casual disregard for many aspects of the legal system and at times his methods are far from conventional - yet we are firmly behind him in his honest quest for justice and his loyalty to discovering the truth...no matter what that truth may be.

*Willie McIntyre was born in Linlithgow attending Linlithgow Primary School and Linlithgow Academy. He studied law at the University of Edinburgh.*

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



**WHAT IS THAT ODD-LOOKING INSTRUMENT CALLED?**

**On the weekend of 25 - 27 November Linlithgow will host an invasion of autoharps.**

This is the first time an autoharp weekend has been held so far north. There have been events down in Moniaive, and south of the border there are several such each year. Now the **Low Port Centre** will have performances, taster workshops and sales of autoharp arts and crafts.

So what is an autoharp anyway? You may have seen one played on stage by Billy Connolly and wondered at that sweet jangling sound coming from that flat board held against the chest.

Imagine a small harp, with 36 metal strings. Instead of plucking them with your bare fingers, you put plastic or metal fingerpicks on. Across all the strings are a number of bars, felted on the underside. You press a bar down, hit a bunch of strings, but only the ones that sound a good chord together ring out, while the felt mutes the ones in between. Easy as that to make a pleasant initial sound.

Of course you then have to learn how to play in rhythm, to change bars to create melodic accompaniments, or after years of work, become a virtuoso soloist.

The instrument was invented in the USA, and made famous there by **Mother Maybelle Carter** of country music pioneers the Carter Family. Scotland's best known exponent is **George Haig of Dunfermline** who has his own custom-made instruments, and is called on to judge autoharp competitions in the USA. George will be performing in concert with other tutors on the Friday evening and will teach an Intermediate level workshop on Saturday.

Saturday night's concert features the **Okefenokee Reunion and the Ian Walker Band**, both regular attenders at the Linlithgow Folk Festival. During the day, local resident Ewan McVicar will run a workshop on playing the autoharp and singing. He will also give an insight into what was known to Mary Queen of Scots as the trump, now called the Jew's harp.

Ewan explains: *"I first met the autoharp, and learned how to play the trump, in 1965. I had travelled across the USA from San Francisco on Trailways buses, stopping several times to sing for my supper. Last stop on the journey home was Cambridge Mass, where my host, Jack Parmley, ran a string shop. Jack had played autoharp on stage at the very first Newport Folk Festival. He invited me to stay on, teach guitar in his shop, and form a trio with mountain*

*dulcimer wizard Tom Kruskel.*

*When I came home to Glasgow, the only other autoharp player around was Billy Connolly, at that time revered locally but unknown nationally. One evening he came to my bedsit to see if he could pick up tips from my playing, but I used fingerpicks and he used a plectrum. No benefit."*

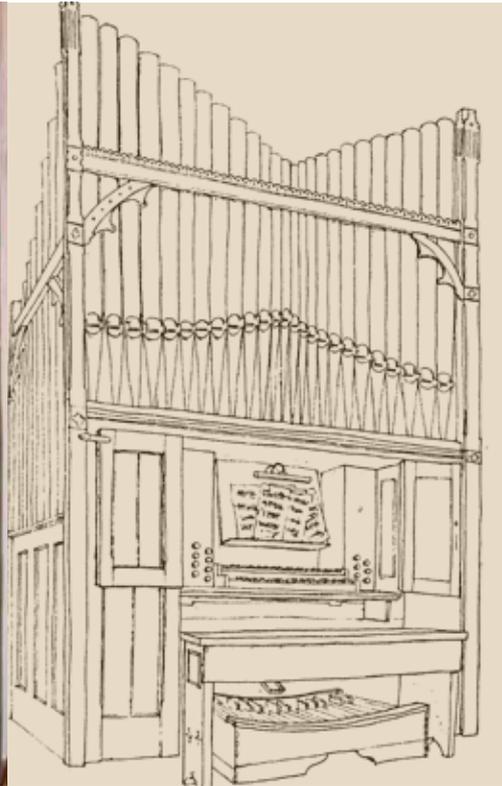
Information about the Autoharp Weekend can be found at: [www.ukautoharps.org.uk/events/uka\\_linlithgow.htm](http://www.ukautoharps.org.uk/events/uka_linlithgow.htm).

**Sandy MacPherson**

**From 25-27 Nov**



# THE ORGAN OF ST MICHAEL'S RC CHURCH



**O**ne of Linlithgow's less well-known treasures is the organ in St. Michael's RC Church in Blackness Road, which is notable for a number of reasons. It was originally built for the Old West Kirk on the Esplanade in Greenock by William Hill and Son of London in 1874. They were one of the most famous organ-building firms of the Victorian era. Pipe organs were individually designed, so it is likely that the Linlithgow organ is unique.

The story of how the organ came to Linlithgow is also part of its appeal. There was a pipe organ in St Michael's when it was first built but that was replaced successively by a reed organ, a harmonium and latterly an electronic organ. Father Ferrari, who became parish priest in 1986, had a particular interest in the fabric of the church and decided that a pipe organ should be re-instated. As luck would have it, the Hill organ in Greenock became available. With the help of some fundraising by the parish, led by organist Evelyn Stell and the church choir, it was purchased. In another of the twists linking the instrument to Linlithgow, the Old West Kirk in Greenock happened to be the church attended by Evelyn's mother. The restoration by Glasgow organ-builder, Michael Macdonald, took two years and was completed in time for the confirmation visit by the then Archbishop in April 1989.

Although the Hill organ is nearly twenty years older than the church, the pairing of the two could be described as a 'match made in heaven'. The church was designed by Peter Paul Pugin, of the distinguished Victorian firm of architects Pugin and Pugin. Pugin churches are renowned for their acoustics and this makes St Michael's the ideal home for the Hill organ. Although it is a small pipe organ, its richness of tone combined with the responsiveness of the acoustics create a very special sound. The organ has attracted wide attention among the organ fraternity at home and abroad and has been classified A1 by the Scottish Federation of Organists. More importantly, however, it enhances the quality of the music for church services. Evelyn Stell has been playing the organ since its restoration.

*"It is a joy to play", said Evelyn. "It is wonderful to hear the congregation respond to this beautiful instrument, whether it is at mass on Sundays or at the big occasions such as Confirmation or Midnight Mass. It is truly uplifting."*

Evelyn herself has been a passionate advocate for the organ. Through her involvement with the local organists society, she organises occasional organ recitals in the church. In September, the audience at a performance by well-known recitalist Robin Bell, was thrilled by the sheer beauty of the Hill organ as Robin played. His varied programme, including pieces by J S Bach, Alain and early

Scottish composer Kinloch, displayed the rich diapason stops and lovely flutes while all the weaving strands of Bach's counterpoint could clearly be distinguished.

Evelyn has also been active over a number of years in promoting and publishing organ music in Catholic churches in the Diocese. Much of this music, including some of Evelyn's own compositions, is aimed at training organists to play in church. She is currently training new organists in St Michael's to ensure that there will always be someone to play this lovely instrument. Parish priest, Father Paul Kelly, sums up the feeling of the parishioners when he says:

*"We are proud of this very fine instrument; but at the end of the day it only becomes fine when it is played! We are perhaps more fortunate than most in having a gifted organist in the person of Dr Evelyn Stell, who not only enhances the liturgy in her own playing but also teaches others to do the same."*

**Patricia Russell**

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