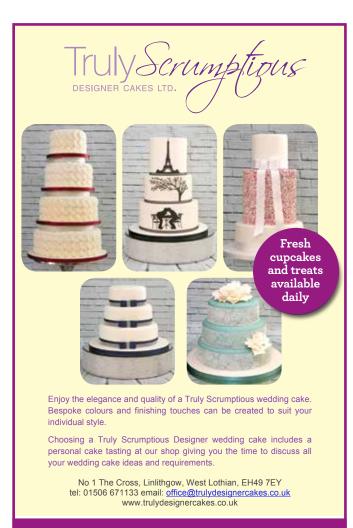


the BLACK bitch



PLUS

Folk Fae Lithgae, Mains Road Traffic Report, New Hopetoun Gardens, Police Scotland in the Community, Linlithgow BID, Book Review, Pets' Corner, Competition









WHAT'S ON...

January

Sat 28 7:30pm - 9:45pm, Concert -Scottish Sinfonia Orchestra

Sun 29 10pm, Pilates - Physio Led Classes (through Jan/Feb) Mackinnon Scout Hall

Mon 30 6pm - 7pm, 50+ Football (Walking), Rugby Club (through Jan/Feb)

Tue 31 7:30pm - 9pm, Spanish For Holidays II

February

Wed 1 7pm, SWI Monthly Meeting

8:15pm - 9:45pm, Table Tennis, Longcroft Hall, (all through February).

Thu 2 7pm - 9pm, Linlithgow Keep Fit Club, Linlithgow Academy (all Feb)

7:30pm - 9:45pm, Sambalistic, Academy

Sat 4 Linlithgow Jazz. Rose Room Entry £8.00. Virtuoso violinist and vocalist Seonaid Aitken, Jimmy Moon on double-bass, with guitarists Tom Watson and Tam Gallagher.

Mon 6 7:45pm, The Dressmaker Linlithgow Film Society, Linlithgow Academy Theatre.

Wed 8 7:30pm - 9:30pm, Transition Linlithgow Gathering, at the S&G

Floral Arts Club Wednesday 15 Feb

"All Washed-Up" **Audrey Buchan Montrose**

Friday 10 7:00pm - 10pm, Meditation Weekend Class (see website)

Sat 18 7:30pm - 9:45pm, Concert for String Quartet, Linlithgow Academy

Mon 20 7:45pm, Rams Linlithgow Film Society, Linlithgow Academy Theatre.

Wed 22 7:00pm - 9pm, Embroiderers Guild, Linlithgow Academy Library

March

Wed 1 7pm, SWI Monthly Meeting Blackness Community Hall

Mon 6 7:45pm, Bridge of Spies Linlithgow Film Society, Linlithgow Academy Theatre.

Wed 8 7:30pm - 9:30pm, Transition Linlithgow Gathering, at the S&G

Wed 15 Linlithgow Art Club Floral "A touch of Artistic License" Alison Christie, Balmullo

Sat 18 7:30pm - 9:45pm, Katona Twins and Carducci Quartet, Linlithgow Academy

Wed 29 7pm - 9pm Embroiderers Guild, Linlithgow Academy Library

Linlithgow

Saturday 4 March

Freddie King, Entry £8.00

Join the BB team?

We're always looking for volunteers....

Email: on.a.lead@gmail.com Tel: Editor on 07767 713024.

LINLITHGOW KEEP FIT

Meets every Thursday from 7pm - 9pm in the gym at the rear of the Academy. Contact Brian Gallacher: 07984 930235

LINLITHGOW RAMBLERS WALKING CALENDAR



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

Charity Film Night Friday 17 March

Pretty Woman, Linlithgow Film Society Linlithgow Academy Theatre.

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



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Mains Road in focus

Sunshine Sing-Along
Join in the fun

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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 22 Feb 2017

WIN A BOTTLE OF JURA WHISKY

Q. Where can you have your shirts pressed on the High Street?

GOOD LUCK WITH OUR COMPETITION



Email the editor at: on.a.lead@gmail.com

THE LINLITHGOW TWINNING ASSOCIATION NEEDS YOUR HELP



At Easter 2017, we have a group of 70 French visitors from our twin town, Guyancourt, coming to Linlithgow as part of the annual exchange. We are looking forward to welcoming such a large group to the town as it reflects well on the strength of the relationship and will introduce new people, young and old to twinning. However, we do need more people to help with hosting

our French guests.

We are looking for hosts for the following:

>>> A family of 4 with 2 girls aged 10 and 11

>>> A family of 4 with 1 boy aged 13 & a girl aged 11

>>> A family of 3 with 1 boy aged 16

>>> 2 retired couples

>>> 2 girls aged 16

If you haven't hosted foreign guests before it can seem a bit daunting, however it can also be a very rewarding experience as many long lasting friendships have developed from our Twinning links.

If you think you could help or if you are not sure and would like a chat to find out more please contact Rod Aird email: lintwinsec@gmail.com

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.



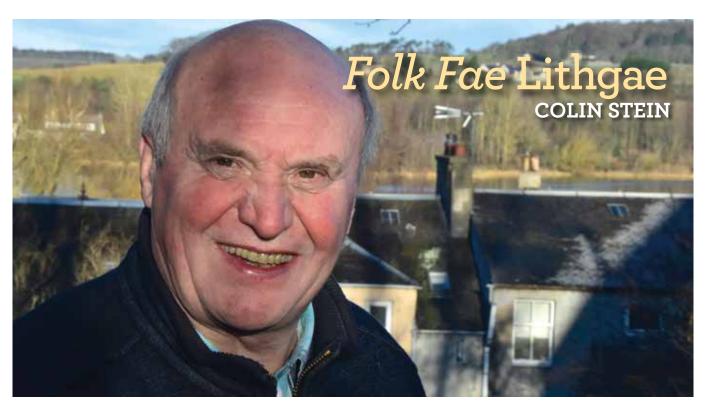
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Download the Linlithgow App Today!



Pride & Passion Linlithgow. Financially protected by Alan Steel Asset Management Linlithgow's National Award Winning IFA www.linlithgow.com/pride_passion.htm



ery few people can say that they have performed in front of a crowd of over 137, 000, but that's exactly what Colin Stein did in 1970 when he turned out for Scotland in the football international against England at Hampden. Two years later, Scotland appeared in the famous Maracanã stadium in Brazil, with its capacity of 200,000.

"I didn't play in the game but I was part of the squad and I remember walking out on to the pitch", Colin told me. "You felt so small inside this vast stadium. We lost 1-0 but it was great to go somewhere like that and to see it with your own eyes"."

Hailing originally from Philpstoun, Colin attended Linlithgow Academy and after leaving school, worked as an apprentice joiner with local building firm Robert Bennie & Sons. During the 1964-65 season, he was playing junior football for Armadale Thistle, the team whose defeat of Linlithgow Rose in the St Michael's Cup prevented the Linlithgow men from achieving a clean sweep of honours. Armadale went on to win the trophy, with Colin netting three goals in the final at Easter Road. The watching Hibs manager, Bob Shankly, liked what he saw and promptly signed Colin the next day.

He explained: "I was earning about

£3 a week as an apprentice with Bennie's and went on to earn £35 a week at Hibs. We had a good team then, with fine young players, like Peter Cormack, Peter Marinello, John Blackley and Pat Stanton."

Used sparingly in his first two seasons as a professional, Colin really began to make his mark in the 1967-68 season, scoring 29 times in 45 competitive appearances for Hibs. His goal-scoring prowess impressed the Rangers management and in October 1968, he moved to Ibrox for a record fee of £100,000 - the first six figure transfer between two Scottish clubs. He made an immediate impact, scoring eight goals in his first three games, including a hat-trick against Hibs. He was now earning over £100 a week, including bonuses, and bought a new car, a Ford 1600E.

Colin became a huge fans' favourite and the chant of "Colin, Colin, Colin Stein" could be heard all round the ground at a packed Ibrox, something Colin remembers vividly:

"If you get the support on your side and you hear them chanting your name, it's an unbelievable situation...60-70,000 people chanting, it's brilliant!"

Colin also became a regular internationalist. On May 10th 1969, he played and scored for Scotland at Wembley, as England romped to a 4-1 victory. A week later, he scored four goals in a World Cup qualifier against Cyprus; no Scotland player has since scored more goals in a single game. In June 1969, he married his fiancée, Linda Smith, in St Michael's Church and they set up home in the new

Deanburn housing development at

the top of Preston Road.

The undoubted highlight of Colin's career came on May 24th 1972 when he scored the opening goal in the Camp Nou in Barcelona when Rangers defeated Moscow Dynamo 3-2 to win the European Cup Winners' Cup. It is probably the greatest night in Rangers' history.

Colin moved to Coventry soon after, but later had a second spell at Ibrox. He retired from football at the age of only 31 and returned to his trade as a joiner. Bowls became a major hobby and Colin is still actively involved in Linlithgow Bowling Club. Last year, he was a member of the successful seniors' side, as well as runner-up in the club's senior championship. Bowls is a real family affair and Colin's interest is shared by wife Linda, son Martin, daughter Nicola, son-in-law Steven and granddaughter Emma.

Murdoch Kennedy



THE THIN BLUE LINE IN LINLITHGOW



irst of all let us introduce ourselves. We are Constable Andrew Murray and Constable Neill Drummond and we are the two community officers based at Linlithgow Police Station. Between us we have over thirty years of police service.

We are keen to get involved in the local community and want to hear your views and opinions.

We will be publishing an article in every issue of the magazine covering ongoing community matters which we are keen to address within the ward.

PARK AND STRIDE

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

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

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

Alternatively you could park legally nearby and walk (Park and Stride) this would be good for both the environment and the waistline!!!

Throughout the year Police and West Lothian Council Education will be working together to ensure school road safety.

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

PARKING ON HIGH STREET, LINLITHGOW

One of the main problems, which we have in Linlithgow, which has been highlighted on numerous occasions, is the ongoing parking issues in the High Street and surrounding streets.

Car journeys to the High Street, Linlithgow

Before you set out on a journey in your car ask yourself the following:Is my journey necessary?

- >>> Could I walk?
- >>> Could I use public transport?
- >>> Where am I going to legally park?

A proportion of the congestion on the High Street is caused by 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.

These savings come at the expense of other vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

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.

THE DREADED COMMUTE TO THE RAILWAY STATION

We realise that a lot of residents use the railway station to commute to and from work and that parking spaces are at times at a premium, however ask yourself these questions:-

- >>> Could I get up 15 minutes earlier and walk to the station?
- >>> Could I car share to get to the station?
- >>> Could I use public transport?

Could I get dropped off near to the railway station?

>>> Could I park legally nearby and walk (Park and Stride) this would be good for both the environment and the waistline!!!

It is far healthier and cheaper to do one of the above rather than risk a £30 parking ticket... This would make your commute slightly less stressful and healthier...

In the future West Lothian Council, Police Scotland and the Air Quality Management are looking into the traffic problems, congestion problems and air quality issues in the High Street and the surrounding areas, unfortunately these solutions and their implementation will not occur overnight.

OTHER ONGOING POLICE MATTERS IN JANUARY 2017

As from the 1st January 2017 you now require a licence to own / possess an air weapon.

To possess an air weapon without a licence is an offence.

YOUR VIEW COUNTS:

Could I encourage all readers to go to the website shown below and complete a quick survey regarding policing in your community.
It's you chance to have your say!!!!

Policing your community.
Tell us what's important to you scotland.police.uk/yourviewcounts

REMEMBER: If you want to report something anonymously call Crimestoppers 0800 555 111

Later in January / February 2017 we are looking to hold surgeries at local supermarkets on dates to be announced so why not come and see us!!!

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 Drummond.

Regards,
Your Local Community Police – Linlithgow
Website: www.scotland.police.uk
Twitter: @policescotland
Facebook:
www.facebook.com/policescotland

FAVOURITE PLANTS IN THE GARDEN

hat's your favourite garden plant? Imagine you are on Desert Island Discs and Kirsty Young tells you that you are allowed to take one plant to the island, what would be your choice? Recently she had a chef, whose name we forget, who asked to take a lemon tree as he uses so many lemons in his cooking. But this wouldn't survive outside in Linlithgow so it'll have to be something else!

Lesley was asked recently about her favourite plants by the Royal Horticultural Society who are promoting the 30th anniversary edition of The Plant Finder this year. She was allowed five plants but even this didn't make her choice much easier as she has so many favourites for many different reasons and seasons. In midwinter it's encouraging to look forward to the summer and one of her favourites is a 'twinspur' called Diascia Daydream. This is truly hardy, very long flowering and easy to grow, besides looking lovely.



In the summer we were asked by Geoff Hamilton's son Nick if we would donate a plant for Geoff's winter border which he was replanting at Barnsdale. Geoff was Lesley's first gardening hero so we had to come up with one of our favourite winter flowering shrubs to honour his memory. We managed to sneak in two: the small winter flowering cherry, Prunus autumnalis Rosea, with pink flowers all winter and to scramble up it the late-summer flowering viticella Clematis Etiole de Violette. Both are undemanding and very rewarding and should appear in most of our gardens.



When we got married our team at New Hopetoun Gardens told us that they wanted to give us a special plant for our garden to mark the occasion and what should it be? This had to be a classic and something that we would treasure for ever and give us continual pleasure... The Japanese Maple, Acer Osakazuki, graces our courtyard at home and we pass it every day in every season. The new leaves are slightly bronzy on the seven-foot

handsome shrub and come the autumn they turn the most fiery red before dropping off to expose some little pottery bells hanging from the branches. Its architectural shape is just perfect with white fairy lights at Christmas.



Dougal has fond memories of the shrub rose Maigold in his parents' garden. Treated like a climbing rose and trained around a seven-foot-high fence post it provides a column of richly coloured, fragrant flowers to give your garden instant height and it also offers a

regular sprinkling of flowers after its main performance in late May early June.

So whether you choose your favourite plant because of its performance, your memories, its fragrance, or how you use it, the great thing is to grow it in your garden!



Dougal Philip and Lesley Watson New Hopetoun Gardens



ROTARY FUNDRAISING DRIVE

DOING GOOD DOES YOU GOOD. WHO SAYS SO? THE MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION AND THE MEMBERS OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF LINLITHGOW GRANGE!

he motto of Rotary International says it all – 'Service above Self'.
Rotary exists to support communities, locally, nationally and internationally. It does so by raising funds for charities and other good causes or by direct involvement, where practical.

2016 was an important year for the Rotary Club of Linlithgow Grange as we celebrated our 25th anniversary. Club president John Reid's chosen charity is Scottish Disability Sport (SDS), the goal of which is 'Inspiring Through Inclusion'. As well as fundraising for the charity, John's vision was to demonstrate inclusivity by arranging events in conjunction with various sporting organisations, thus raising money for the charity and where possible, involving disabled sportsmen and women – in addition to our usual fundraising.

In conjunction with local bowling clubs we had a Bowling Fun Day, with twelve teams taking part, including visually-impaired and physically-impaired bowlers. We had a curling match at Kinross when teams from a variety of wheelchair curling clubs competed against able-bodied curlers from Abercorn and Linlithgow. We held a can collection at half-time during a Linlithgow Rose match raising funds for SDS. All this, together with proceeds from the annual golf tournament at Linlithgow Golf Club, ensured that at our anniversary dinner president John could hand over a cheque for £6,500 to Gavin MacLeod, CEO, SDS and Jamie Doherty, disabled sportsman.

The club also raised funds for international and local causes with a wine tasting at Mannerston's Café and Farm Shop and contributed to Rotary's End Polio Now campaign by holding our annual Scotch Hop. We paid for two youngsters to join an outward bound camp and two Linlithgow Academy S5 pupils to attend a young entrepreneur weekend at Carronvale House. We contribute monthly to West Lothian Foodbank - and so much more. Club members, in conjunction with Burgh Beautiful, planted out the West Port flower bed with the SDS logo and also tended the flowers around the well at St Michael's Wynd.

A new initiative for the club was Linlithgow's Rotary Tree of Light, celebrating the lives of loved ones. The tree situated outside Linlithgow Library was a beacon of light and hope, giving comfort to many people. We hope that the Tree of Light will become an annual community event raising funds for those in the







Linlithgow area living with chronic or age-related illnesses.

There is more planned for the remaining months of president John's term of office, beginning with the coffee morning in St Michael's Kirk Hall on Saturday 25 February from 10am-12noon, raising funds for youth activities and support. Our annual prize bingo night is scheduled for Wednesday 26 April in the Linlithgow Rose Club and our Marches variety show in Linlithgow Academy on Thursday 1 June.

We always welcome new members to help us in our work. Each Monday evening, we meet in Linlithgow Golf Club, for a meal – usually followed by a speaker, but once a month we have a business meeting to plan events and consider appeals. We have occasional social gatherings, where members and partners come together and enjoy each others' company.

Membership is open to all men and women. Using your time, talents and energy to improve the lives of others is a rich, satisfying way of giving something back to the community. It's fun. It forms friendships.

We are hosting a new members' evening on Monday, 20 February. Why not come along and learn more about Rotary and our club? Contact our club secretary, Phill Ratcliffe, on pratcliffe.rclg@virginmedia. com for more details.

UP AND COMING EVENTS

Coffee morning: Saturday 25 February

Prize bingo: Wednesday 26 April

Variety show: Thursday 1 June

New members' evening on Monday, 20 February



Gordon Young and John Leitch





INLITHGOW

LINLITHGOW FOLK FESTIVAL ASSOCIATION

lmost exactly 40 years after his tragic death in 1977, Folk music fans will pay tribute to the memory of the late great Matt McGinn at an evening of songs and music in the Linlithgow Academy Theatre on Saturday 4 March.

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

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

In recent years, Linlithgow Folk Festival Association has played a pivotal role in reviving Matt McGinn's work and presenting it in an innovative and entertaining way. Previous tribute nights in the town have played to packed houses. The 2017 event promises to be bigger and better than ever, with singers and musicians of all ages from throughout central Scotland interpreting their favourite Matt McGinn material.

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

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

Tickets for the Matt McGinn Night, priced £10, can be obtained from Far from the Madding Crowd at 20 High Street, from the Linlithgow Post Office at 266 High Street and from Linlithgow Folk Festival Association on 01506 670229. Email enquiries should be sent to lffamatt@hotmail.co.uk

An online ticket service is available through the website www.linlithgowfolk.yapsody.com

Murdoch Kennedy



LINLITHGOW BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT UPDATE



RETAIL CRIME FIGHTING PACKS

The scourge of fake banknotes being passed in businesses in the High Street has been halted thanks to a BID-funded initiative backed by Linlithgow's two community-based Police Scotland officers.

With concern increasing among town centre businesses over the issue, the BID board invested £2,000 on prevention and detection packs before the end of the year - and an expected surge in the scams over the busy festive period.

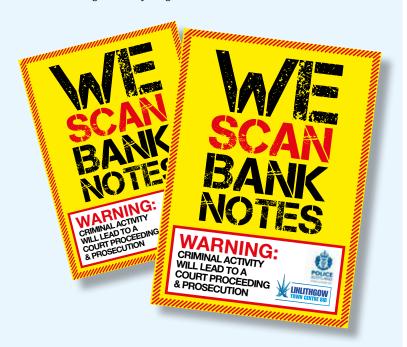
Since then the police have not had a single report of any attempts to pass counterfeit £50s or £20s, some of which have been remarkably well-replicated notes.

PC Neill Drummond said that since BID had issued the packs he was delighted to confirm that the police had not heard of any forged notes being presented in the Linlithgow area. He said:

"This is encouraging news, but we would like to emphasise the need for businesses to continue to be vigilant and to challenge any suspected use of fake notes."

Welcoming the news, the BID chair, Gail Boardman, said that it was an example of the board reacting quickly to concerns of its members. Gail, owner of the Line Gallery - and herself the victim of a fake £20 note scam - said that particularly effective had been the 'we scan notes' signs for widows and doors, and badges for staff.

She added: "The packs, and the widespread publicity BID generated over the problem, really seems to have worked. But like the police, we would urge continued vigilance by High Street businesses.



HIGH STREET AIR QUALITY

nere's a downside to Linlithgow's vibrant High Street. The sheer volume of traffic and resultant air quality has been of growing concern to businesses in the town centre, locals, and visitors.

Last year, in the starkest warning so far, Linlithgow failed an air quality assessment - doing nothing is not an option. West Lothian Council has designated the High Street an 'air quality management area' (AQMA) - and started a process aimed at tackling the problem.

Similar plans elsewhere have included promoting travel alternatives, adding traffic lights, and restricting heavy goods vehicles.

Linlithgow Town Centre BID has an important role to play to ensure the voices of its members the length of the High Street are heard on an issue that is so vital to them. The BID wants to know how traffic issues, congestion, and car parking have affected businesses and visitors.

The management plan will propose changes – BID wants businesses and locals to have their say to ensure that they have an influence on the final shape of the plan.

Two questionnaires will be made available at www. linlithgow.info. One will be for businesses, the other for locals and regular visitors. Hard copies will also be available in the local library.

Taking part gives the chance of winning £50 shopping vouchers. Thomas Kane will also be visiting all town centre businesses on behalf of BID to discuss any issues or concerns. Thomas can be contacted at thomas.kane@4-consulting.com

FESTIVE LIGHTS

he impressive new Christmas lights installed in the Regent Centre for £5,000 by BID have been voted a great success by shoppers and the businesses around the Court.

White LED lights on three trees - matching the much-lauded displays elsewhere in the town centre - and 100 metres of icicle drop lights on all the premises lining Regent Court - gave the centre is first-ever proper festive look.

Steven Hunter, store manager at Tesco's, said the lights had given a much more festive feel than in



the past, and had brightened everyone up.

"Particularly from a Tesco point of view we felt more part of the local festivities by being included in the lighting display. It was great."

The new displays, along with new wall motifs from The Cross to the Star and Garter, have brought the BID's total spend on Christmas lighting to around £40,000.

LATE NIGHT SHOPPING

The pre-Christmas late night shopping evening in Linlithgow has been given a resounding 'thumbs up' by the 40 businesses which took part.

A survey by **Stewart Ness**, co-ordinator for BID, found an overwhelmingly positive response among participating High Street businesses, particularly gift shops and cafes.

One enthusiastic participant was Gordon Forrest, who runs Linlithgow Papercraft with his wife Cathy.

Gordon said: "This really was a good idea which encouraged the shoppers to come out in numbers.
Although the evening was slow to start, it really
picked up, with the footfall up almost to a Saturday day-time level."

He said there had been a 'bit of buzz' about the town, with customers commenting how nice it was that so many shops were taking part. The BID promotion - a special one-night draw from its loyalty lottery scheme with a £100 first prize- really did work, and the special BID late night festive shopping 'bags for life' had gone down a treat.

Gordon added: "I would certainly encourage more businesses to come on board next year. More shops would in turn encourage more trade.'

LINLITHGOW MILL **ROAD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE BID**

Mill Place Lighting Upgrade

Following concerns about the poor lighting and the safety of late night working in Mill Place, the BID consulted with the Mill Place businesses and it was agreed that the external lighting should be improved.

During the week of 19 December the work to upgrade the external lighting to brighter LED with PIR was carried out as a BID funded project, and Mill Place is now benefiting from significantly improved lighting with no cost to the businesses.

Regrettably the work to install the CCTV system within the estate has been met with some unfortunate delays, however the issues have now been resolved and work is underway again. We have been able to progress with a small amount of the installation work during the festive holidays, and are now waiting for confirmation of a date for Scottish Power to install the required meters. Once this has been completed we will be able to confirm a date for the actual CCTV equipment to be installed.

Goodbye and Thank You! Everyone at Mill Road BID would like to say a huge 'thank you' to Siobhan Smith as she steps down as chair from the Mill Road BID board of directors. Siobhan has worked hard to help BID projects move forward and to encourage other businesses to become involved with BID activities.

We would like to wish Siobhan every success for the future.

Hello and Welcome!

We may be saying goodbye to Siobhan, but we're saying 'hello and welcome' to Nicholas Gribben as the new chair of Mill Road BID. Nick joined the board as a director

representing Mike's Taxis earlier in 2016 and in December he agreed to take up the role as chair.

Nick has already helped to co-ordinate the lighting upgrade work at Mill Pace and is keen to play an active role in BID projects and work with the businesses and the project team.

A word from the Chair When the opportunity presented itself to be considered for the position of chair of the Linlithgow Mill Road BID, I was thrilled. However, I also tempered that enthusiasm by reminding myself that the position of Chair was one of

great responsibility to both the businesses within the BID area and the wider community of Linlithgow.

I get to put my knowledge and experience to use while working with the BID, which I've developed throughout my career in human resource management. I also spend some of my free time volunteering, helping people in recovery from issues with addiction, which has helped me build strong ties with third sector agencies and community groups in the area.

The work that the two Linlithgow BID companies do is fantastic, both in Mill Road and the town centre and I believe there's a huge potential for growth, if we make use of the biggest commodity we have in Linlithgow: passionate, skilled and dedicated people. Collaboration and partnership are at the heart of BIDs, where smaller organisations and businesses pool resources to deliver projects beyond what their standard budgets or taxes can alone. BIDs also brings together people with different skill sets and talents to solve issues or concerns that individual organisations might not have the assets to solve by themselves, and as someone with a background in human resources, the BID approach of cooperation and unity is very appealing to me.

I'm now looking forward to leading the Linlithgow Mill Road BID with the board of directors, into our bright new future and the exciting projects that will bring, while getting the opportunity to meet

local business leaders and community members. If you're interested in being part of that future, you have questions about the Linlithgow Mill Road BID or you have an idea you would like to discuss, please don't hesitate to get in contact with me at chair@ linlithgowmillroadbid.com.

Business Improvement Grants -(BIG scheme)

The start of the New Year seems an appropriate time to remind businesses on Mill Road Industrial Estate that business improvement grants are available for up to 75 per cent of the cost of the project. Successful applications have included social media training, interior decoration, office / catering equipment, signage etc.

For more information or to download an application form visit www.linlithgowmillroadbid.com

Signage – New Maps

During the latter part of 2016 we've been pleased to welcome several new businesses to Mill Road Industrial Estate, and as a result we've taken steps to update the maps at the entrance and within the estate.

The new maps should be in place mid January, and will be updated on a quarterly basis to reflect any changes throughout the year.

For further information contact:



www.linlithgowmillroadbid.com

stewart.ness@linlithgowmillroadbid. com / 07717865225

Bridgette.Kleinman@ linlithgowmillroadbid.com

Stewart Ness BID Manager



NEW HIGH STREET BUSINESS Stewart Ness, Town Centre BID Manager

Many of you will have noticed Im-Pressed, which has opened at 269 High Street.

In a memorable television ad in the 70's, American entrepreneur and parttime British resident Victor Kiam told how he liked his Remington electric razor so much he bought the company - turning it from a loss-making outfit to a hugely profitable concern.

The same business maxim was adopted by **Donna Davies**, but in relation to a service rather than a product - and she decided that Linlithgow would be the ideal place to relocate to.

It was 10 years ago, as a busy mother-of-two boys and living in Blackness with her husband Den, she valued being able to take much of her laundered clothes to an ironing business on the outskirts of Bo'ness.

"It was a godsend," she said.
"I was really upset when the owner told me he was closing, and nobody was taking the business over, I got to thinking about it, and I told him I wanted to buy it. I needed to keep having my ironing done!"

Donna said that as she was carrying her soon-to-be born daughter he agreed he would keep the business going for a year till she was in a position to take over.

"I decided a little while ago that I wanted to move Impress to
Linlithgow, although it was doi
well in Bo'ness. I already had a
small domestic cleaning servic
in the town, and I'm really fonc
of Linlithgow."

Donna said that in her short time at the west end of the High Street the business had really proved the value of the move, and was growing by the day. with custom continuing from a number of Bo'ness residents.

She was now taking in laundry which was done the by the laundrette of a good friend at hers, and dry-cleaning which was done by a Livingstonbased company.

Donna added:

"I'm so glad I made the move. I've had a great feedback from my new customers - it's all been really good."



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THE FURTHER FROM FESTIVAL Sally Pattle

from10

he Further From Festival is back! Now the only literary festival in West Lothian, this year's festival has been extended to three days, offering a wide range of events from poetry, to nature writing, to crime and even the Gruffalo.

Big names such as Andrew Greig, Lin Anderson, Jim Crumley and Stuart Cosgrove will be joined by a range of newer authors, illustrators and performance poets making for a very eclectic programme, we're sure there's something for everyone.

Friday 10 February is given over to music and poetry. Stuart Cosgrove, perhaps more well-known for his antics Off The Ball on BBC Radio Scotland, is also a huge Northern Soul fan. He'll be talking about his books Detroit 67 and Young Soul Rebels. Next up is wordsmith extraordinaire Ash Dickinson, joined by Claire Askew and local poetry star Ian Macartney in an event that is sure to rival last year's evening with William Letford and Liz Lochhead. To finish off Friday evening we have something very special indeed. Andrew Greig, polymath of Scottish literature, is teaming up with acclaimed musician Rachel Newton for a one-off event blending poetry, prose and some truly beautiful music: definitely one not to miss.

Saturday 11 February kicks off with a return visit by nature writer **Jim** Crumley and local artist Leo du Feu, joined this year by photographer Polly Pullar. They'll be discussing their different approaches to observing and recording the natural environment around us. We have a debut author event with two rising stars on the scene, Shelley Day and Sandra Ireland, who have received great reviews for their first books, The Confession of Stella Moon and Beneath the Skin respectively. Our Crime Panel is headed by the incomparable Lin Anderson, a dovenne of Tartan Noir who always makes for an entertaining event. She's joined by Neil Broadfoot and new kid on the block Claire Macleary. To finish off Saturday's programme we are delighted that illustrator Kate Leiper will be doing a demonstration of her stunning techniques and talking about her inspiration for the wonderful creatures she draws. Kate has recently collaborated with James Robertson on The Book of the Howlat, is also the illustrator behind An Illustrated Treasury of Scottish Folk and Fairy Tales, and the more recent An Illustrated Treasury of Scottish Mythical Creatures. This event is suitable for families as well as those interested in Kate's art.

Sunday 12 February sees the return of the Gruffalo to Linlithgow. The Gruffalo's Picnic promises to be loads of fun with stories, face painting and of course the guest of honour himself, the Gruffalo. This event is sold out.

All events take place in Queen Margaret Hall, St Michael's Presbytery, Blackness Road Linlithgow. They are all ticketed, with weekend and day passes also available. Please contact Far from The Madding Crowd for tickets and more information: 01506 845509 / sally@maddingcrowdlinlithgow.co.uk.

PROGRAMME

Friday 10th February

6.00pm: Stuart Cosgrove £8 7.15pm: Poetry & Words & Such Like £8 8.30pm: Andrew Greig & Rachel Newton £10

Saturday 11th February

10.00am: Our Natural Environment £8 11.30am: First Things First £8 12.30: Crime Writers Inc. £8 2.00pm: Kate Leiper Workshop £8/£10 (family ticket)

Sunday 12th February 2.00pm & 3.00pm: The Gruffalo's Picnic £10 (family ticket)



From top left: Ian Macartney, Ash Dickinson, Stuart Cosgrove, Claire Askew, Polly Pullar, Jim Crumley, Kate Leiper, Leo du Feu, Shelley Day, Sandra Ireland.

LINLITHGOW GIRLS TAKE ON A NEW CHALLENGE IN 2017

fter a very successful 2016 season, where they completed their Lizzie Arnott League campaign with a 100 per cent record to win the title, Linlithgow Rose U15 Girls are about to embark on their first season of full 11-a-side football having played in the South East Scotland seven-a-side leagues for the last four years.

The girls are already well used to weekly matches at seven a-side, playing against other girls teams from across East, Mid and West Lothian, but will now step up to full 11 a-side games starting in March and going right through to October. As part of their preparation the girls have played several transition games including against Stenhousemuir, Bonnyrigg, Bayside and Boroughmuir. It's so far so good, since they coped very well and looked like they'd been doing it for ages. They're scheduled to play Cumbernauld at Broadwood Stadium in January as preparation continues.

The U15 girls, who are all in S1, S2 or S3, are part of the well-known Linlithgow Rose Community Football Club (LRCFC) which has girls teams playing from age nine through to adult. As a true community club, the ethos is based around encouraging involvement and participation, so players of all abilities are welcome to come along, give it a try and get involved. There is real talent at the club too with several players representing

Linlithgow at the SFA's West Lothian advanced player development squad and four girls recently being asked to trial for the SFA regional development squad.

As well as developing their football skills it is also a great way to exercise, meet new friends and learn valuable life skills like teamwork, self-discipline and communication - and there's lots of fun too, of course.

Head coach Gill Scott said: "They are a fabulous group to coach and I'm delighted that last year the team got the reward for the hard work and dedication they put in at training, and of course on match days. We're all looking forward to 2017 and the new challenge of 11-a-side football. The enthusiasm and passion we've seen in the $11-\alpha$ -side matches we've played so far sets us up for an exciting season.

The LRCFC girls section is always looking for new players so anyone interested in coming along to have a go should contact Doug Johnston at lrcfcgirls@gmail.com.

Finlay Scott

LINLITHGOW YOUNG PEOPLE VOLUNTEERING



olunteering plays an important part in making Linlithgow a better place to live for all of us and many of our younger residents have been making a significant contribution recently through their participation in a little known programme called the Junior Award Scheme Scotland (JASS).

JASS is a progressive learning programme for young people, which has been designed to recognise wider achievement. A key aim has been to meet the challenges of the transition from primary to secondary but in practice it can be used at either level as well as with wider age groups in additional support need settings.

The objectives of the JASS programme are aligned with the wider learning objectives of the Curriculum for Excellence, the Outdoor Challenge, and Key Stages 2 and 3 of the National Curriculum, making it easy to run alongside and incorporate existing curricular activities.

JASS develops the whole individual by offering recognition in four key areas regular physical activity (Get Active, Stay Active), exploring a personal interest (My Interests), working for the good of the community or the environment (Me and My World) and completing an outdoor activity or challenge (Adventure) and is designed so that participants move from bronze, to silver and then to gold with increasing levels of, commitment, learning, and challenge.

JASS is often compared to a mini Duke of Edinburgh award and as such, it is a great way for younger people to help out in their community while increasing their confidence and having fun at the same time.

Local groups such as Burgh Beautiful, Linlithgow Scouts and this very magazine have all benefited from children completing the Me and My World section of the award. Whether it has been selling raffle tickets at the Advent Fayre, planting bulbs throughout the town, packing bags in Tesco to raise money or delivering the Black Bitch magazine through your letterbox, Linlithgow children have helped to be part of this.

While not all of our local schools offer JASS as part of their subjects, JASS is open to anyone who wishes to take part. It can be arranged through your school but equally is open to children who wish to complete it on their own.

If you'd like to find out more, please check out www.jasschools.org.uk for further information.



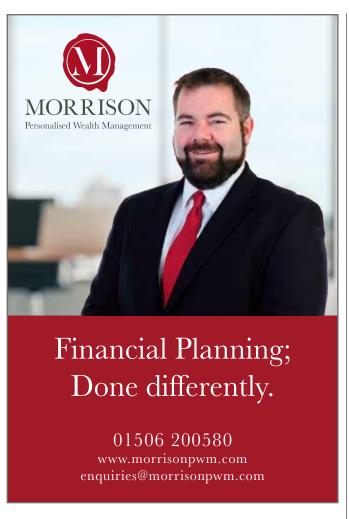


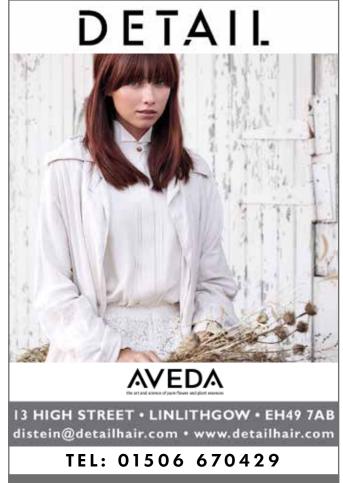
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PETS' CORNER

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 Kate and Lesley's houseful of rescue animals – Cleo, Finn, Sally and Ruby.



Cleo is a 17-year-old rescue cat from Edinburgh. She is deaf and on a load of tablets but refuses to act her age.

Loves: Her owners are convinced she thinks she's a dog – she loves being in the garden with the dogs and tries to come on walks.

Naughty habit: Stealing bits of chicken off the dinner plates.

Finn is a 12-year-old Labrador cross rescue dog from the SSPCA.

He's a friendly boy who likes to say hello to everyone he meets, dogs and owners.

Loves: Finn loves his walks and a tennis ball to chew on. His favourite walk involves a swim so probably down by the River Avon.

Hates: Absolutely hates the hoover, the ironing board and is terrified of Cleo the cat!

Naughty habit: Likes to 'sleep in' in the mornings.

Sally is a 10-year-old rescue lurcher from Edinburgh Cat and Dog Home at Seafield.

She is a real character who's got a bit of a mind of her own.

Loves: Loves food, whether she's supposed to eat it or not. Her favourite walk is Beecraigs, where she runs around like a maniac.

Hates: Hates motorbikes and barks whenever she sees one.

Naughty habit: Sneaking up onto the bed during the day when we're not looking.

Ruby is a two-year-old Lurcher. She is the latest addition to the household – somewhat by accident when she was found as a stray in Fife at four months old.

Loves: She loves her squeaky duck, especially charging up and down the stairs with it early in the morning. Her favourite walk is Blackness - woods, fields, beach what more could a young lurcher want!

Naughty habit: stealing the recycling out of the bag and taking it to her bed to chew.

Considering giving a home to a rescue animal?

Rehoming a pet can be a hugely rewarding experience, however, it is not a decision to be taken lightly. Here are some pointers to ensure it's a positive experience for all involved:

- >> Do you have enough time and space?
- >> Can you afford another pet?

» If you already have pets and/or children, will the changes affect them?

Many of these considerations are shared with those when buying from a breeder. When

thinking about rehoming a pet;

- >> Chose the shelter carefully and make sure the organisation can provide you with a suitable pet and as much medical history as possible.
- >> Be prepared for the shelter to ask lots of questions about your background too.
- >> Especially if rehoming a dog, try to spend as much time together prior to rehoming as possible.
- >> When introducing existing pets, dogs in particular, do so in neutral territory.
- >> Once at home create a safe zone for your pet and try not to over stimulate them.
- >> Everyone will want to meet the new member of your family but try to keep visitors low key.

Perhaps one of the biggest differences between choosing a pet from a shelter and a breeder is that there may be established habits and behaviours with a rescue pet. But rescue does not mean damaged, so do not assume that there will be problems. We suggest seeking out a trainer for dogs even if there are no apparent problems as it can only be a positive start for both owner

Finally, remember to register your new pet with a vet. Team Westport always love meeting new pets and will make sure they are given a check over and plenty of cuddles. 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





'THE QUESTION IS NOT AT WHAT AGE I WANT TO RETIRE, IT'S AT WHAT INCOME...' GEORGE FOREMAN

nce Christmas and New Year is over, I am always fascinated by New Year's resolutions. My own are always so predictable; lose weight, save more and try something new. Some people have really imaginative resolutions like sky diving, competing in an Ironman competition or travelling to faraway destinations.

As we get older, we want to tick more off our bucket lists and experience as much as we can in our life, so setting targets can help achieve these goals. We can change our lifestyle to complete our resolutions, but we cannot predict what can happen to prevent us achieving them. The future is unclear and this can influence our plans. The impact that Brexit and leaving the EU could have on us may have us all thinking about rearranging our finances, but what impact can it have on future generations and how could our country look when our grandchildren are grown up?

It is a well-known fact that pensions have changed over time. State pension ages are increasing. Our younger generations may have to work well past retirement age as we know it, before they claim their own pension. The question is, what can we do now to help our children and grandchildren in years to come? A pension will give you, as grandparents and parents alike, the opportunity to provide for the next generation. Contributing to a pension on behalf of your little ones won't leave behind extreme wealth, but due to inflation, it could boost their income and maybe even give them the freedom to retire earlier.

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Make your 2017 resolution the best yet and create a future for your grandchildren to enjoy.



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BOOK REVIEW

THE ALCHEMIST

PAULO COELHO

The Alchemist is a beautifully written novel depicting the journey of a young Andalusian shepherd boy called Santiago who travels the world in search of treasure and adventure. Coelho's descriptions of simplistic, sleepy Spanish villages contrast vividly with the exotic and bustling African markets that Santiago explores in the first stage of his journey. This then provides a striking comparison with the harsh, extensive beauty of the Egyptian desert.

While the physical journey that Santiago embarks upon is vivid and interesting it is the internal and spiritual journey that is most captivating.
Through listening to his heart
and reacting instinctively to the signs and omens that are scattered along the way Santiago comes to realise that by moving in harmony with the world and recognising himself as being part of the

larger universe then he can truly realise and find inner peace and happiness. This is described in a conversation between Santiago and the Alchemist himself:

"But my heart is agitated", the boy said. "It has dreams, it gets emotional...It asks things of me, and it keeps me from sleeping many nights."

"Well, that's good. Your heart is alive. Keep listening to what it has to say...you will never again be able to keep it quiet. Even if you pretend not to have heard what it tells you, it will always be there inside you, repeating to you what you're thinking about life and about the world."

There are many universal messages scattered throughout this novel. One of the most powerful is that even in the midst of our quest for treasure - whatever form that may be for our own personal lives - we must not reach a stage where

we could not abandon all that we have gained. Just as Santiago is driven towards his goal of finding his heart's desire he never loses sight of the fact that he is a shepherd. When the way forward for him becomes uncertain at times he reminds himself "I can always go back to being a shepherd... I learned how to take care of sheep, and I haven't forgotten how that's done." With every time he thinks this comes the realisation that essentially he is happy and content with his place in the world and the pressure on him to be something else for someone else dissipates. He moves forward in his journey not out of sense of self-gain and selfishness but rather through an inner drive and motivation that are in harmony with those around him. His good fortune passes on through those he meets and he learns a lot from listening to and observing those around him.

Another universal message delivered to us by The Alchemist is that we shape our own lives and destinies. It is an unarguable fact of life that we will encounter people and situations that are less than positive and may lead to feelings of disappointment and despair. Yet when this happens to Santiago he looks inwards and realises that, no matter how powerless he feels, he is still in control and he always has a choice. He realised that he had to choose between thinking of himself as the poor victim of a thief or as an adventurer in quest of his treasure. "I'm an adventurer, looking for treasure" he said to himself.

This novel essentially inspires action or, at the very least, leads us to examine the avenues available to us in our own lives. Life is so rich and full of adventure but we must be alert to the possibilities and not be disheartened if our journey takes an unexpected twist. This is simply part of life. Challenges are there to be faced (sometimes with the assistance of others) with as much good humour and good will as we can muster. The tribesmen of the desert that Santiago encounters on the final stage of his journey best summarise this message: "so the tribesman lived only for the present, because the present was full of surprises. Carpe diem!

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



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STARRING ROLE FOR THE BRIDGE INN



f all of the assignments that I've been sent on for this magazine, none have been more exciting than the night I went to watch a movie being filmed right here in Linlithgow. 'Calibre', described by its writer Matt Palmer as "a proper nerve shredding thriller", will be released in October 2017 at the London Film Festival and local viewers will be able to spot our very own Bridge Inn as one of the locations.

So how did a movie get to be filmed here? Owner Lee Johnston told me that Richard Brough, the production unit manager was involved in the filming of 'Trainspotting 2' which had used local country park, Beecraigs, as a location. He found West Lothian Council were very accommodating and thought the area was a good stand in for the Scottish Highlands. Richard took this to the team behind 'Calibre', which begins with its two main actors on a hunting trip in the Highlands. Once that was agreed, the search was on for a nearby location that could look like a country pub in the middle of nowhere. Production crew scouted around and found the Bridge Inn. Shooting took place over three nights from 9pm through to the small hours. The pub was completely made over to look like a run down Highland pub; every detail was thought about, right down to the pictures on the walls and the taps in the gents toilet. Lee was obviously really excited to be involved and had been allowed to watch a lot of the filming. It was with him that I was allowed to venture onto the set and watch some of it myself.

Lee and I sat, hopefully unobtrusively, in the corner and watched a scene being rehearsed and then shot. The same scene was shot several times from the



perspectives of everyone who was in the scene. And between each take everything had to be set back again to where it had been before for continuity purposes which sounds straightforward but in reality was not. The process was slow and very detailed. The male actors wore their mics on their legs and one actor ate Wotsits between takes as his mic was adjusted. And yes, I am pleased to report that there was a clapperboard when it was time

Writer Matt told us; "You don't want to get too fixed because the shooting takes on its own life and the most important thing is that the story feels real on its own terms. So some things you imagine in your head don't play out as well as you thought they would. Sometime images directly translate from page to screen. But I'm really happy about how it's going."

In between takes, the extras were reminded not to drink their prop drinks. The red wine was grape juice, which was all well and

good. However the whiskey was gravy in water and the beer was non-alcoholic beer topped with soda to get some froth on the top. Not quite as pleasant...

After watching some filming, I had a chat to Miren Maranon, the production designer. She explained that, in her role, she is first on the scene of any location. She will decide the colours, textiles, tone and atmosphere of the locations. For this film alone there were 12 interior locations and many more exterior locations. Many of the props came from BBC Scotland in Glasgow.

I left Lee and the team settling in for a whole night of filming and passed a local Linlithgow chap arriving, hoping to get taken on as an extra! As with 'Outlander' and 'Trainspotting', a spot of filming in our local area has got to be good for tourism in our town. Keep an eye out for the Bridge Inn when 'Calibre' opens later this vear.

Alison Train

BRIDES OF ST MICHAEL'S



n the 11 and 12 March, St Michael's Parish Church will be hosting their 'Brides of St Michael's' exhibition.

The two-day event will display more than 100 wedding dresses from brides who were married in the church. They will go as far back as 1965, and right up to 2016.

Made We have had a huge response from brides in recent years and we are very grateful that we are being allowed to borrow them for the weekend.

But we are still looking for some older dresses dating from before 1970. Older dresses are certainly harder to get hold of, but we would also love photographs of those dresses as we are planning a photograph exhibition as well.

We are also looking for photographs of brides who were married here so were you

or a relative married in St Michael's?

Or perhaps have a photo of a St Michael's Bride? If so and if you wouldn't mind us displaying it for the weekend, please contact Margaret Johnston on 07944 517 715 or email maggij@btconnect.co.uk. All dresses and photographs will be returned.

But even if you don't have a dress or a photo, we would love to see you at our event. Tickets will be on sale soon and this includes entry to the church to view the dresses and entry to the kirk hall for afternoon tea.

Funds raised will go towards the Cross House improvement fund. Margaret Johnston

(Margaret's parents are pictured after their wedding in St Michael's)

MAINS ROAD DRIVERS SPEEDING THROUGH RED LIGHTS



hildren's lives are at risk on Mains Road in Linlithgow, according to astonishing statistics which showed dozens of drivers ignoring red lights as children wait to cross on their way to

Over a five-week period there were 63 red light violations. That works out to be 2.5 red light violations each day during school crossing hours. Of the 63 recorded violations, 51 cars failed to stop at red lights while children waited to cross and were accompanied by the lollipop man dressed in his full high-visibility clothing. The other 12 involved cars going through red lights after having stopped but not waiting for the lights to return to amber and green.

However, **West Lothian Council** have told campaigners they are able to do very little to reduce the risks to local children despite Police Scotland acknowledging that the red-light violation rates have raised serious concerns for pedestrian safety.

But those behind the move to improve safety say they will not give up and are demanding the council comes forward with positive actions and proposals for improvement to protect the public.

Senior Officers at Police

Scotland told the campaigners that the statistics have led to serious concern among officers over public safety and are urging the Council to investigate and take preventative action to reduce risk to the public.

Following a letter from campaigners, Police Scotland

co-ordinated a site visit with Councillors and Road Engineers from West Lothian Council. The letter from campaigners and points put forward by campaigners at the site visit included the following ideas:

- > Add new signage to make it clearer that Mains Road is a 30-mph zone
- > Add a flashing-reactive sign to alert drivers to the upcoming crossing and their speed
- > Install speed bumps
- > Install narrow "gates" to slow traffic speed
- > Make the road a 20 mph zone as are all other roads in the
- > West Port 20 mph
- > Moray Drive 20 mph
- > Kettilstoun Mains 20 mph

Added public safety concerns were raised by the number of children crossing the road to attend classes and activities including:

Linlithgow Excite

Linlithgow Primary School, St Joseph's Primary School and Linlithgow Academy

Linlithgow Rugby Club (200 to 300 children per week in attendance at weekends)

Children's play park – Douglas Park

Main crossing area for pedestrians using cut-through to Sainsbury's, Stockbridge Retail Park, Linlithgow Bridge Primary and Happy Days Nursery

Despite the concerns being

raised, one campaigner said: "During the site visit organised by Police Scotland and attended by West Lothian's Road Engineer and two Councillors it was evident that the council took a very defeatist and negative stance to the many suggestions offered by the Police and campaigners."

"The road engineer told us that preventative measures can only be taken if there is 'evidence of repeated incidents or serious injury'. We were dumbfounded by the paradoxical nature of this nonsensical stance; preventative measures can only be taken after an event or series of events have caused damage or injury to people or persons. Surely that is reactive, not preventative?"

Bizarrely, the feedback from West Lothian Council while at the site-visit included a claim that "flashing road signs that react to alert drivers have proved to be ineffective and do not work. National statistics tell us that these work for seven to ten days then drivers ignore them." The campaigner added: "This raised some serious questions. Why, if this is true, have councils throughout the country wasted money on signs which prove to be ineffective? Furthermore, if this is true, why would the council's only suggestion from this site-visit be to install a standard, non-flashing, triangle sign; why should that be effective if a flashing, reactive sign is ineffective? Where's the logic and the sense of money-well spent?"

At the meeting, campaigners said they became increasingly frustrated with the responses from the Road Engineer. One added: "One Councillor posed the obvious question: 'ok, we keep being told what cannot be done and what does not work, tell us with your experience what does work and what we can do?' A positive question with the potential for a creative solution fell on deaf ears and nothing was forthcoming other than to erect a standard triangular sign which warns of

the crossing ahead.

Campaigners have also suggested that money could be raised by local residents to help cover the cost of any positive action but the Council again dismissed this by stating it would be unfair for the Linlithgow community to raise funds to benefit itself as other communities may not be in a position to raise funds to help themselves.

A campaign member said: "In summary, a known area of public endangerment has been brought to the attention of Police Scotland and the Council. Police Scotland share serious concerns about the numerous red light violations and persistent speeding on Mains Road and would like to see changes made. The council agree that there is a problem and that a risk to the public exists. But little is being done."

"The proposed action from the council at this point is to re-mark the existing road markings and potentially install one standard triangular sign. Yet, according to their own statistics, a flashing re-active sign is apparently ineffective but the council believes a standard sign will be effective. The council have confirmed no further action could possibly be taken until someone is killed, maimed or a serious accident occurs...at which point they will consider 'preventative' measures.

"Campaigners truly hope that no-one will be injured or killed while the campaign to improve public safety continues. Campaigners also suspect that this would not be great news for any potential vote-seeking Councillors during the run up to elections in May and urge the council to consider taking action as a matter of priority."

If you want to join the campaign keep an eye on the Linlithgow Facebook page for more information.

A Morrison



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SUNSHINE SING-ALONG FOR MEMORY

'when you're smiling, when you're smiling the whole world smiles with you'

The Sunshine Sing-along is an initiative started in September 2016 by the Rev Cheryl McKellar-Young from St Michael's Parish Church, as a service to the growing number of people with memory loss in the community. Research has proven that the singing of favourite songs from the past can stimulate memory and even improve speech in those who are finding it harder to communicate. In addition, there is a feel-good factor when singing with others.

The Sing-along takes place on the second Thursday of every month from 12 noon until 13.30 in St Michael's Kirk Hall and is run by church volunteers. People with memory loss come along with their carers at 12 noon for a light finger lunch with tea and coffee. Greggs very kindly provides an 'end of day' donation each month. The colour scheme on the tables is red and yellow, helping to create a bright, welcoming scene in the hall as people arrive; also these colours provide an important contrast to help identify plates and napkins. Lunch lasts around 40 minutes and is a perfect way for everyone to get to know one another. We don't charge for lunch but we are grateful for any donations.

Lunch is followed by approximately an hour of singing which I normally lead. A wide variety of songs is on the repertoire -Scottish songs, songs from musicals,

old-time music hall songs, wartime songs, even Beatles songs. The enthusiastic Sunshine Singers, who sing at St Michael's hospital once a month, support the singing and Angus Robertson accompanies on the piano. The words are projected on to the wall leaving everyone hands-free and able to follow the actions to songs, such as 'The Hokey Cokey' and 'One finger, one thumb keep moving'!

There is a lot of smiling and fun at the Sing-along. We learn a little about each song, which allows the group to catch their breath between one song and the next. Audience participation is encouraged at all times and for the more rousing songs, there is a variety of percussion instruments.

This initiative is open to everyone and those attending have really enjoyed it. As well as general members of the community, the Thursday group from Linlithgow Day Care is brought by minibus. Access is via the Vennel car park where there is disabled parking.

A warm welcome awaits anyone who feels they would benefit from attending the Sing-along on the second Thursday of every month. Also, if you know of anyone you think might benefit, please pass on the details or bring them along. Although run by St Michael's, you don't need a church connection to come along. A red and yellow banner advertising the Sing-along hangs from the windows of Cross House during the week when the Sing-along takes place.

Living with memory loss is a frightening and isolating experience for both the people affected and their carers. The aim of the Sing-along is to provide a safe place once a month where people living with memory loss and their carers can socialise with others sharing similar challenges. Those attending have the opportunity to engage in an activity which brings both stimulation and pleasure.

Along with Cheryl and our church volunteers I look forward to welcoming you. Just come along on the day. Please contact the church office on 842188 if you need any further details.

Norma Costley



If you know of anyone you think might benefit, please pass on the details or bring them along.

Tel: Church Office 01506 842188







For sharing proceeds of her charitable fundraiser at QWorth with the Black Bitch Magazine.
A very generous donation, greatly appreciated.



HAIR CARE THE ORGANIC WAY: LOCAL SALON ALTERS PRODUCT RANGE FOR SUSTAINABILITY Lisa Nettleton

assie Fowler has been the owner of Salon Ava on Linlithgow High Street for a decade. To customers, the salon exudes a warm, relaxed and friendly family approach to the hairdressing business, not least reflected in its name: Ava is the name of Cassie's eldest daughter.

Following the birth of her youngest daughter earlier this year, Cassie suffered some mild allergic reactions to a few of the more commonly used hair colouring products. Always enthusiastic and ready to approach new ideas, Cassie viewed this as the perfect opportunity for a positive change which she had been considering for some time. After extensive research, she made the momentous decision to switch to an entirely organic hair care range which would not only be kinder to her own (and her clients') skin but would promote a more respectful, sustainable approach to hair care products which worked in harmony with our planet's existing natural resources.

This range of hair care products is aptly named the Organic Way. The majority of ingredients and raw materials are cultivated on a biodynamic farm in Italy – one which ensures that the farming process works to "ensure the decontamination of the Earth" by setting farmers free from chemical products in fertilisation and plant protection. This agricultural movement was founded by Rudolph Steiner in 1924 and has since spread worldwide.

The Organic Way product range promotes the use of healthier, more natural materials, rich in active ingredients and without chemical treatments that "work in harmony with our bodies and increase the quality and wellbeing of our lives". There are a few staple ingredients – such as lavender, lemon-balm, peppermint and rosemary – which are cultivated via

this ecosystem. Those which are not grown on the biodynamic farm itself are obtained through Fairtrade networks which support communities across the globe.

From this range of natural and ethical ingredients the Organic Way has built an extensive range of hair care products which rejuvenate and revitalise all hair types. Amazingly the hair colouring treatments are all ammonia free relying instead on biodynamic and organic oils activated with a fluid developer based on illipe butter.

Making the change to organic, natural materials has not only brought about change to the products used by Salon Ava, it has fundamentally altered the daily workings of the salon. Since the Organic Way brand promotes sustainability, the salon has made a number of important changes in order to work in harmony with the planet including now using energy efficient lighting and ensuring all bottles are made from organic materials with no superfluous packaging. Regular customers will also be aware of some cosmetic alterations too in keeping with the natural, ethical theme.

Salon Ava are officially launching the new line of Organic Way products in January although Cassie has been successfully using the hair care range for a number of months, to positive acclaim from her clients. To find out more information about the information in this article, the Organic Way website is available to view at www.oway.it/en/. Salon Ava's facebook page has details of the launch and by clicking like or share readers will gain access to offers and updates. Alternatively, by calling Salon Ava on 01506 671916, Cassie and her stylists will be happy to provide additional information.







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