



the **BLACK** *bitch*

Linlithgow's news by Linlithgow's people

LINLITHGOW COMMUNITY MAGAZINE ISSUE 70 NOV 2019

LINLITHGOW ADVENT FAYRE 30 NOVEMBER TO BRING THAT SPARKLE TO THE FESTIVE SEASON!

P13

LATE NIGHT SHOPPING

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Burgh Beautiful, ONE Linlithgow, Book Review, Linlithgow Academy, Lucy Purbrick, New Pilates Studio profile, Police Scotland Updates, Linlithgow Burgh Trust...

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MOVE BETTER WITH PILATES



We make so many physical demands on our bodies on a daily basis but do we always pay enough attention to how well we are actually moving in our daily tasks and challenges?

Wear and tear comes naturally over time but the more we use our bodies as they are designed to be used, the better they will continue to function.

Pilates is one of the most effective ways to achieve optimum movement in the body. The exercises build up strength and control of our deep core muscles, improving our day to day functional movement, balance and posture. By making a regular commitment to Pilates, you and your body will steadily feel the improvement.

You might have heard of Pilates being done on a mat like Yoga but the mat work is only a very small part of the whole Pilates Method. Joseph Pilates called his method of exercising 'Contrology' and it was only after his death in 1967 that it became known as 'Pilates'. He designed many pieces of apparatus to help you achieve and control a strong, healthy body.

I run a small Pilates studio in Linlithgow equipped with the traditional apparatus Joseph Pilates designed. A wide range of ages and abilities come along to work on improving their general strength and mobility, predominantly to strengthen their core and help with back stiffness and pain. Some are looking for sport specific improvements for golf, running, hill walking, horse riding and tennis for example. Others are looking to regain better functional movement following surgery or injury. Whatever level you are at in your fitness at the moment you can get better, progressing through from basic to advanced movements.

I offer private one to one sessions, utilising all of the traditional studio apparatus, providing a challenging workout tailored to meet individual needs and goals. Private sessions are suitable for everyone and are a great way to build confidence and learn the



fundamental principles of Pilates. For those who can't commit to the same time every week, these sessions can be booked on a day, evening or weekend to suit you and your schedule.

I also offer duo sessions for two people. These are ideal for those who would prefer to train alongside a friend or partner, with the same advantages of a 'one to one' session but with the additional benefit of reduced cost.

If you prefer the buzz of a mat class, I teach a class at Linlithgow Bowling Club in Philip Avenue on Thursday mornings. This is ideal for adults of all ages. During the class, participants move through a progressive set of exercises designed to strengthen core muscles and improve balance and flexibility. I am looking to start more classes if there is a demand.

As Joseph Pilates said in his book *'Return to Life through Contrology'*
"If your spine is inflexibly stiff at 30, you are old; if it is completely flexible at 60, you are young."

Please get in touch if you want to find out more or to book a session or class. If you want someone else in your life to move better, how about a gift voucher for Christmas or birthday?

**e: mariahybszerpilates@gmail.com
t: 07513 116490**

**www.mariahybszerpilates.weebly.com
Facebook: @MariaHybszerPilates**

Maria Hybszer



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WHAT'S ON - NOV / DEC

Nov

Till Jan Scotland from the Sky exhibition, Blackness Castle, Linlithgow, EH49 7NH*

Till Jan Native North America exhibition/ Contemporary innovations, Linlithgow Burgh Halls*

Thu 21 Mary Paulson-Ellis, author talk, Linlithgow Canal Centre

Fri 22 UKCC level 2: Coaching youth & adult rugby union, 6pm Linlithgow Rugby Club (and Dec 1, 5pm)*

Linlithgow Rose v's Falkirk, Scottish Cup 3rd Round Draw, 7pm, PrestonField

Quern, The Auld Alliance, 7pm, Queen Margaret Hall

Sat 23 Winter Warmer Walk, 1pm - 2.30pm, Blackness Castle

Let's Talk: The Tweenage Years, Book Week Scotland 2019, 1pm, Linlithgow Academy

Martin Carthy and daughter Eliza Carthy, St Peters. 7.30pm, Tickets £15

Lochside Playgroup's evening Winter Concert, 7.30pm, St Michael's, Kirkgate

Linlithgow Rose Vs Hill Of Beath Hawthorne. 2.30pm, PrestonField

Sun 24, Dec 1 Mindful Parenting, 3pm, The Old Pavilion (6 week course)*

Sat 30 Christmas Advent Fayre. Activities across High Street venues including Burgh Halls, St Michaels.

Snowy Night fledglings stories at Beecraigs (2-5yrs stay and explore), 10.30am - 12.00, Beecraigs Country Park

Linlithgow Arts Guild: Scottish Chamber Orchestra Winds/ Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. 7.30pm, St Michael's Parish Church, Kirkgate

Dec

Sun 1 Burgh Beautiful, Tree planting at Triangle Wood, 10am, Triangle by the Union Canal, near Xcite Linlithgow Leisure Centre

NYCOS West Lothian Choir (Senior and Chamber), 7pm, St Michael's Parish Church, Kirkgate

Tue 3 Tennis for Kids is a starter course (aged 4 to 7, six sessions), 3.45pm, Linlithgow Sports Club*

Linlithgow Athletic Clubs Paced Social Run, 7.15 pm, (every second and forth Tuesday) Low Port Centre*

Thu 5-24 Beecraigs Festive Forest, 3.30pm - 9pm, a magical Christmas attraction. A quality winter experience for all the family. Adults £15, Children 4-15 yrs £11*

Fri 6-8 Kingsfield Christmas Fair, 9 - 5pm, Kingsfield Golf And Lesiure*

RAMBLERS CALENDAR

Check out scheduled events: <https://linlithgowramblers.org.uk> for details on types of walk, duration and your meeting point.



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.



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

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

WANT TO WRITE / BLOG FOR THE BLACK BITCH MAGAZINE?

The magazine is **looking for young people to help establish a regular presence on its website, Facebook and Twitter accounts.** Contact me in via social media, tel or email **Alice Ferguson** MSYP
Twitter - @aliceMSYP
Instagram - @alicemsyyp
Facebook - @aliceSYP



Contact the Black Bitch

For editorial and to advertise: on.a.lead@gmail.com
Editor: David Tait, 07767 713024



Copy deadline for next issue is 15 JAN 2020.

Linlithgow Film Society

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FOR INFORMATION CONTACT

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www.linlithgowfilmsociety.org.uk

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27 JAN	BlacKkKlansman
03 FEB	Fisherman's Friends
17 FEB	Outlaw King
24 FEB	Up For Love
02 MAR	Widows
16 MAR	Stan & Ollie

2020

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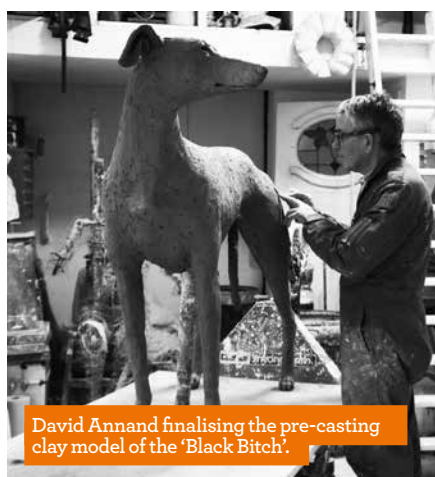
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PHOTOGRAPHY

CIVIC SCULPTURES PROJECT – PREPARATIONS NOW WELL ADVANCED



Photograph of the landscape works at the top of the Serpentine bed during the week 23-28 September.



David Annand finalising the pre-casting clay model of the 'Black Bitch'.

Back in June, we reported on the early stages of Linlithgow Burgh Trust's project to provide the town with three-dimensional depictions of Linlithgow's traditional civic insignia of the 'Black Bitch' and St Michael.

Planning permission has been granted for both sculptures, the 'Black Bitch' to be erected in a High Street location opposite St Peter's Episcopal Church, and St Michael to be positioned in the garden area at Low Port. Both will be cast in bronze, making them very durable, and will be accompanied by an interpretation board to explain their historical and cultural significance.

LISTENING TO THE RESULTS OF CONSULTATIONS

The second public consultation at the end of May gave the opportunity for all to respond, whether in person at the Low Port Centre, in writing or by email. Parents of pupils attending Low Port Primary were encouraged to send in their views, particularly about the St Michael sculpture.

The outcome of the consultation was near unanimous support for the 'Black Bitch' sculpture and a very clear majority in favour of St Michael. Our main funding partners made it clear that they very much favoured the selected sites. Another outcome of the consultation was a strong feeling that St Michael should be portrayed as a more faithful representation of his appearance on the coat of arms and burgh seal, less

'violent' than on the previously favoured figure, but more true to tradition than the suggested 'compromise' (shown in the June edition of this magazine) which attracted very little support.

As a result, the designs for both sculptures have been further amended through amicable liaison between the Burgh Trust's Public Art Committee and the with two eminent Scottish sculptors involved – David Annand in relation to the 'Black Bitch' sculpture and Alan Herriot for St Michael.



Most of the deserving winners of the children's competition run in connection with the Civic Sculpture project.

Also at the May consultation event, prizes were awarded to local primary school pupils judged to have submitted some of the best drawings and stories relating to the 'Black Bitch' and St Michael.

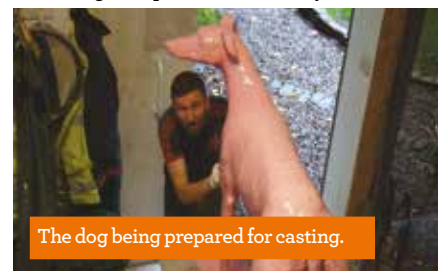
FUNDING PACKAGE

The project is now fully funded, thanks to very generous financial contributions from the Linlithgow & Linlithgow Bridge Town Management Group, Linlithgow Town Centre BID, the Scottish Government's Town Centre Fund, Linlithgow Burgh Trust, the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Edinburgh Airport Community Fund, the Rotary Club of Linlithgow & Bo'ness, the Deacons' Court of the Royal Burgh of Linlithgow and Customers of Platform Three, together with the 47 people who kindly donated to the local 'crowdfunding' campaign and one very substantial anonymous bequest. We are extremely grateful to all for their public-spirited support. This has enabled both sculptures to be formally commissioned from the artists and all associated plinths, landscape/foundation works and 'street furniture' to be ordered.

'BLACK BITCH' SCULPTURE

Already, the paving, seating, litter bins and interpretation board associated with the 'Black Bitch' sculpture have been completed, with the sculpture and plinth likely to follow in early December. The stonemasons for the sandstone plinth will be **W L Watson & Sons of St Andrews** and the landscape contractors were **Fernbrooke Scotland LLP of Broxburn**. David Annand completed the pre-casting clay model of the 'Black Bitch' last month and, at the time of writing, the various elements of the sculpture – dog, tree trunk and chain – are going through the casting/manufacturing process

at **Powderhall Bronze in Edinburgh**. Formal unveiling is expected in January.



The dog being prepared for casting.



Alan Herriot's visualisation of his sculpture on site.

ST MICHAEL SCULPTURE

Alan Herriot has produced a third-size wax maquette (model) of the St Michael sculpture which has so far been viewed by all full members of the Burgh Trust's Public Art Committee and representatives of the two main funders. He has taken to heart the various comments received during the public consultation process and made suitable revisions and refinements, producing a unique interpretation of the subjects. He has also produced elevations of the sculpture and plinth and a visualisation of the likely appearance in order to explain the scheme.

Alan Herriot's third-size maquette of the St Michael statue.

Given the sculptor's two other active commissions, a start on the sculpture is scheduled for February 2020. Such a complex piece will need three months to sculpt and three months with the foundry, again Powderhall Bronze. Currently it is intended to clear the permanent planting from the site (some relocated and some to be put in pots) in March 2020 with a view to installation of the foundation during the Easter school holidays, followed up by summer planting which will last until the end of next September at which time the sculpture and plinth can be installed with the foundation already in place. We are proposing Friday, 9 October 2020 as the finishing deadline.

Ron Smith
Convenor, Public Art Committee,
Linlithgow Burgh Trust





FIVE STARS FOR THE LINLITHGOW MUSEUM

Linlithgow Museum has recently received a five star rating from Visit Scotland, marking it a visitor attraction with an exceptional customer experience. It is a huge accolade for the new museum, which is run largely by volunteers and opened its doors in April.

“We are absolutely thrilled,” said William Morrison, Chair of the Linlithgow Heritage Trust, the charity that runs the new museum. “It is the top rating for tourism businesses in Scotland, and is very difficult to achieve. I’d like to thank everyone involved – trustees, project management team and volunteers – for all their hard work and commitment.”

The award follows an incognito visit to the museum by a Quality Tourism Advisor from Visit Scotland’s Quality Assurance Scheme. The advisor looked at a number of aspects of the museum and was very complimentary, particularly about the museum’s layout, interpretation of history, the warmth of the welcome and general customer service.

It is a massive boost for the museum, up from the three star rating that it held in its previous incarnation at Annet House.

In addition to this, the museum has also been awarded accreditation from Museum Galleries Scotland. Unlike the Visit Scotland award, which looks at the visitor experience, the Museum

Galleries Scotland accreditation focuses on behind the scenes matters, such as the security of exhibits and the conditions in which they are kept.

Receiving the accreditation is a very important stamp of approval that will help the museum obtain funding in the future, as well as potentially acquire exhibits on loan from other museums and heritage organisations.

More generally, visitor numbers to the museum continue to climb. The first six months of operation saw around 7,000 visitors come through the door – a big increase on the Annet House total of around 3,500 per year.

But the museum is not resting on its laurels and has big plans going forward.

First up is a continuation of the Winter Talks programme. Three talks were originally planned, but were so successful that the museum is organising more. Details will be announced shortly.

The museum is also running another oral history project, looking at the brewing and distilling industries in Linlithgow, as well as the pubs in the town. Maybe you used to work in one? Or maybe you remember when the drinking laws were more stringent than they are now? If so, the project volunteers would love to hear from you. And if you’re willing, they’ll record your tale so museum visitors can hear it too.

Monthly art workshops are also on the go and are proving popular. They are an hour and a half long and are aimed at children over the age of five, who must be accompanied by

a parent. They are free, but you do need to book. The next session takes place on Saturday 16th November, and there is another one on Saturday 14th December, so get in touch if you are interested.

The monthly sing-a-long, which forms part of the museum’s ongoing reminiscence programme, is popular too. It lasts an hour and aims to spark memories and let people have fun singing in a group. Contact the museum if you’d like to come along, or if you would like to take part in our reminiscence tours or object handling sessions.

Finally, the museum is continuing its work with local primary schools. It is running WW2 workshops, to go along with the new WW2 exhibit in the community space. The feedback from these has been excellent, with the pupils learning about the home front rather than battles abroad, covering topics such as life at home, air raids and evacuation.

Clearly, there is a lot going on. Most of it is volunteer led, and is behind the scenes, helping with the collections, the paperwork, the fundraising...

So, if you have an hour or two to spare and would like to learn new skills – or dust off old ones – then please get in touch.

Call Julia Branch on 01506 670677 or email julia@linlithgowmuseum.org

Helen MacKenzie



Roy and Ewen - the team behind Beecraigs Festive Forest ...

A comment by son Jamie, led to a flurry of activity, meetings with WLC Officers, Planning Committees and Executives, as things progressed at a snail's pace. Public meetings with locals to highlight the potential to bring increased footfall and income to Linlithgow and the wider West Lothian economy gradually found traction. Nigh on 3 years of emotional highs and lows, they now stand on the brink of their dream.

Beecraigs Festive Forest.

Opening on 4th November this year and running through till Christmas Eve, Roy and Ewen are excited to see the dream become a reality.

PROBUS

A spectacular, atmospheric event in Beecraigs Country Park near Edinburgh, Central Scotland.

The event consists of..

THE ILLUMINATION TRAIL

Follow a stunning 1.5km trail through the forest where you will be dazzled with breathtaking festive illuminations, special effects and sounds brought to life by one of the country's most respected innovative lighting design specialists. Along the way, seated areas with warming stations and refreshments will be provided for your comfort.

SANTA'S GROTTO & STORYTELLING EXPERIENCE

Enjoy the magic of Christmas in Santa's Grotto in the setting of the transformed Visitors Centre. Set to become a seasonal

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without surprise! There are many more attractions to enjoy but we don't want to give everything away! Think live music, choirs, carol singers, kids fun rides, face painting, a festive silent disco and much, much more!

FOOD

A delicious festive food and drink menu will all be on offer, including mulled wine, cider, hot chocolate and roasted marshmallows.

TICKETS

Tickets are available in sessions per night lasting 90 minutes each. Tickets are only available to purchase online in advance at: www.beecraigsfestiveforest.com

If you are interested in group bookings, please contact us at;

info@rowenevents.com

Get in early as many dates and times already selling out fast

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Q. WHERE DO YOU SEND YOUR "SANTA" LETTERS?

email your answer to: on.a.lead@gmail.com





FIRST AND SECOND WORLD WARS LINLITHGOW ACADEMY

The 11th of November 2019 marks one hundred years since the first official armistice-day. A century of remembering those who fought and died in the first world war and a century of paying our respects to those whom we left behind. Throughout this coming week, in Linlithgow Academy, we will continue to look back one hundred and one years to the 11th hour of the 11th day in November 1918, and reflect, together, on the very moment when the bloodshed finally ceased, when fighting stopped and when the taking of innocent lives came to an end and we will honour the service and sacrifice of those men and women who fought for our freedom throughout the first and second world wars. In particular, paying our respects to the twenty seven former Linlithgow Academy pupils who gave their lives for our country between August 1914 and November 1918.

Every year in Linlithgow Academy at 11am on the 11th of November we participate in a two minutes silence, following the tradition set by King George V of the United Kingdom some 100 years ago on the very first armistice day. King George V requested this silence in 1919 so that "The thoughts

of everyone be concentrated on reverent remembrance of the glorious dead" and still in 2019, like many others, we feel a strong duty to honour the lives of these brave men and women, by taking a small time out of our daily routine to pay our respects. Each year during this two-minutes silence a poppy-wreath is also placed below the remembrance plaque which we have located opposite our assembly hall in the school to honour, in particular, the 27 former pupils who lost their lives whilst serving in the first world war. Whilst we plan to continue these heartfelt traditions in Linlithgow Academy, this year we have decided to go above and beyond our ordinary commemorations, to mark the significance of the 100th remembrance-day and to ensure that we continue to pay our respects to the fallen soldiers for years to come, beyond 2019.

This year, the S6 pupil leadership team will be hosting 3 remembrance assemblies to remind all of our pupils and teachers alike, about the significance of Armistice day and to teach them about Linlithgow Academy's pertinent war efforts, providing an opportunity to share some of the stories of our 27 war heroes. During these assemblies, Robert Szkudlarek, Head Boy, will be playing

a rendition of *The Last Post* and we will also have input from the Linlithgow Academy Amnesty Group. Alongside our memorial service held in the school hall, pupils will, for the fifth year, have the opportunity to pay their respects further at our poppy remembrance display situated in the school quad.

Remembering and educating pupils on the sacrifices those who preceeded us made in order for us to be where we are today is very important to us. Through our remembrance assemblies and our tributes throughout the school such as our garden of glass poppies engraved with the names of the aforementioned twenty seven, we strive to ensure that each pupil is aware of the magnitude of the war and those who fought in it.

If you wish to find out more about our school and its role in the war effort visit:
www.scotlandswar.co.uk/pdf/The_27_FPs.pdf.

If you would like to discover more on our memorial plaque and poppies this can be found at
www.scotlandswar.co.uk/linlithgow_acad.html



Alice Ferguson
Head Girl



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An Eco-conscious Christmas

LUCY PURBRICK

I love Christmas. It really is the

most wonderful time of the year, especially in Linlithgow. But we need to make the festive season greener if we want any future Christmases to be white.

To begin, decorating your tree... from that comes the great tree debate - fake or real? If you already own a fake tree, keep using it until the end of its life. Sites such as gumtree offer preloved fake trees too, if you really need one. As for a real tree, potted trees are available, which can be planted outside when New Year rolls around. Or, pick a beloved house plant to jazz up with baubles and LED fairy lights. To avoid plastic decorations, look for ones made of paper, wood, metal, fabric or glass. Make your own too - dried citrus slices done at a low heat in the oven look and smell amazing. And if you have wee ones, try paper chains made from old wrapping paper, paper snowflakes and orange and clove pomanders. And as hard as it may be, steer well clear of glitter, which contains micro plastics.

The Christmas dinner can also be made more eco-friendly. Consider (gasp!) not having turkey or any meat at all for that matter, to cut down your carbon footprint. Many delicious vegan and veggie options are available, from nut roasts to gooey baked cheeses. If the thought of no turkey is unbearable, why not source a free range turkey and try to find one that hasn't travelled too far - Linlithgow is lucky to have good local farms. Try to also get organic local vegetables to go with it. And come up with creative ways to use leftovers, such as soups like turkey broth, curries, stovies and sandwiches are some of my family's ways to use up odds and ends. Anything that is past this can go in the green bin or the compost. And don't forget to feed the birds on Christmas Day too!

As for gifts, I urge you all to go to shops in high streets like Linlithgow to see what you can find. Independent, charity and vintage shops especially can hold real little gems that make for extra special Christmas gifts. There are also loads of places offering ethical and eco-friendly gifts from adoptions to carbon neutral notebooks, with something for everyone out there. Alternatively, a handmade gift can also be lovely; sweet treats, body scrub, a candle in a jam jar or some knitted fingerless gloves. One of my friends simply offers his time and sets a budget then lets a family member choose a day out together.

When it comes to wrapping gifts, I have two preferred methods - brown paper and twine which can then be decorated with illustrations or old book cut outs, or gift bags which I encourage the recipient to re-use. Gift tags can be made from cutting out part of an old Christmas card, punching a hole in it and threading some ribbon through it.

Merry Christmas and a happy New Year!



LUCY PURBRICK BIO:

I am 17 years old and I'm in 6th year at Linlithgow Academy. I am passionate about wildlife, conservation and eco-living. I hope to study Zoology and to have a career in conservation so in the meantime, I do volunteer work with the RSPB, the Scottish Ornithologists' Club and storytime at 11am most Saturdays in Far From the Madding Crowd.

MORE STREET TREES

GOOD NEWS following on from last month's article on 'Autumn Tree Planting', we are delighted to report that the application via West Lothian Council to the Scottish Government's Town Centre Fund has been successful with an award of £73,000.

This was submitted by Burgh Beautiful with the approval of its parent body, Linlithgow Burgh Trust and support from Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council and Transition Linlithgow.

The first tranche of £33,000 will be used to enhance the town with replacing and planting new street trees and more shrubs. There is much in the news about climate change and the poor quality of air in Linlithgow High Street. Trees can help address this but it must be 'the right tree in the right place'. A number of locations have been identified including The Cross, outside the Partnership Building, along the High Street, the Vennel and the grassy area by the Health Centre. Nothing has yet been confirmed. There is much to be done working with the Economic Development and Regeneration Team at West Lothian Council, and consultations with organisations, residents and visitors. The timescale for this project is tight. Readers' ideas will be welcomed NOW in advance of more formal consultation.

Like many others, Lyn in McColl's, says *'I love trees especially those with flowers such as cherry trees and fruit trees.'*

Inspiration can be drawn from the Public Realm documentation of a few years ago, drawn up by EK:JN but for which there was no money for implementation.

People's ideas move on. 'Fastigate' trees are becoming popular. Their compact, columnar form means less space is taken up and less light is cut out from nearby buildings. For example, developers in Bo'ness have made good use of the fastigate hornbeam in the Drum estate (see photo) and along Grahamsdyke Road. Less happy specimens are to be seen in Linlithgow at the Regent Centre where in fact larger trees could be accommodated. (see photo)

Much of the second phase of £40,000 will probably be associated with the Vennel area west of the Vennel flowerbed. Removed and diseased trees need replacing with smaller specimens and shrubs. Walls and paving require attention. (see photo)

This central space should be inviting for residents and visitors to linger in and appreciate the view to the Loch. It is the perfect place for displaying the Mosaic



Panels currently being designed by primary school children but more has to be agreed, so: *'Watch this Space'.*

Averil Stewart
Burgh Beautiful

COMMUNITY ///



XMAS AT THE ROSE.

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>> SATURDAY 14 DECEMBER

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>> SATURDAY 21 DECEMBER

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MENUS ON REQUEST

>> SUNDAY 29 DECEMBER

LADIES DAY FUNDRAISER 1pm - 6pm
NICHOLAS McDONALD.
James Frew - Rod Stewart Tribute Act.
Tickets. £15pp includes afternoon tea.

>> TUESDAY 31 DECEMBER

TRADITIONAL SCOTTISH HOGMANAY 9pm
MUSIC FROM THE HOMELANDERS. Pipes leading up to the Bells & then Disco after the Bells till 2am.
Admission by Ticket only. £17pp

2020 TALENT CONTEST

COMMENCES

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Domino competitions on Wednesday afternoon



Crafted Merchant

It's that time of year again when we all get a bit busy and probably have less time in our lives to partake in cultural activities. So why not bring Art into your life at this time of year by buying arty gifts for Christmas instead of the same old same old. Your friends will think of you every time they see that piece of art.

It might surprise you how many local shops sell art that is affordable and would be ideal as a gift. I've been round town and have found some lovely items that I'd be more than happy to receive as a present. Here's a few of the shops you could consider.

Crafted Merchant

Crafted Merchant is one of my go to shops for gifts in the town, and at present they are stocking some lovely pieces that would be great as presents. In the picture you will see their range of wooden plaques with pictures such as botanical prints or Mary Queen of Scots – they have gold edges and are only £14. The cyanotype prints are fresh and modern, and the wooden bread boards, inset with interesting resin detailing, would be great for serving cheese and biscuits at your Christmas party.

One of my favourite shops for a browse/ nostalgia trip in the High Street is mid-C-mod. It's a great place for acquiring unusual gifts especially if you have friends who appreciate "vintage". They

stock a great range of interesting items and it's not all second-hand. I've noticed recently they have beautiful ceramic plaques by Hilke Macintyre which would make a perfect gift for an arty friend and there's always an interesting collection of jewellery too.

The Line Gallery

The Line Gallery currently has an exhibition of postcard sized art, which is so varied it would be impossible to not find something to your taste among over 300 pieces. Hurry though as I imagine they will be selling fast and the show finishes on 26 November.

M74

M74 sells wonderful but functional products for the home as well as stunning statement furniture.

Their current window display looks very tempting.

Linlithgow Pottery

Linlithgow Pottery is gearing up for the festive season with pottery, scarves, prints and cards for sale. See below re gift vouchers too.

If you'd rather give the gift of experiencing Art why not consider some of the artists in town who offer classes. Gift vouchers are available from all. **Linlithgow Art School** offers classes in various mediums including oils, acrylics and figure drawing. Blocks of classes or one-off workshops are available for both adults and children – see www.elainewoomacgregor.com. **the art room** has a new block of classes aimed at children from 9-13 starting in



January and running on Fridays and Saturdays in St John's Church. In each session they will explore a particular technique or material, sometimes drawing inspiration from other artists and cultures and sometimes working from imagination or life. Nurture your child's enthusiasm for art while they are young and uninhibited – www.victoriaaross.co.uk or email hello@victoriaaross.co.uk. **Linlithgow Pottery** runs regular classes and vouchers are available for taster classes or blocks of six classes. See Facebook or contact Zibah on 07557 784020. What a great choice!

My recommendation for some music at this time of year would be to go to

the **Linlithgow Jazz Christmas Party** on Saturday 7 December – high quality music, a great atmosphere and bring your own booze. Tickets from Far From the Madding Crowd or Eventbrite.

St Michael's Church has a host of Christmas events in November and December as follows – **Linlithgow String Orchestra** winter concert (23 Nov), **NYCoS** Christmas concert (1 Dec), the **Festival of Christmas Trees** (6-8 Dec), **Linlithgow Ladies Choir** (14 Dec) and **Linlithgow Reed Band Christmas concert** (15 Dec).

Red Door

The next Red Door event is on Thursday 28 November when the daring fiddle and harp duo of Chris Stout & Catriona McKay will take traditional music to its “creative and exciting outer limits”. Tickets from Far From the Madding Crowd or on 07849 509407.

Burgh Halls Gallery

Finally, if you need a moment of calm in the frenzy of Christmas why not go to the Burgh Halls Gallery and sit for a few minutes in the peaceful space admiring the new exhibition. It's a group show from Canada combining traditional art practice with contemporary minimalism, Pop art, and performance art photography. I haven't been yet but it sounds interesting.

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



ART OUTINGS LEONARDO DA VINCI : A LIFE IN DRAWING

NOT TO BE MISSED BETWEEN NOVEMBER AND MARCH 2020 IS “LEONARDO DA VINCI : A LIFE IN DRAWING”.

To mark the 500th anniversary of the death of Leonardo, The Queen's Gallery at the Palace of Holyroodhouse will display the largest exhibition of his work ever shown in Scotland. See into the workings of Leonardo's mind and be amazed at the full range of his interests, including painting, sculpture, architecture, anatomy, engineering, cartography, geology and botany.

Families can collect a mirror, magnifying glass and secret sketchbook and uncover mysterious messages from Leonardo da Vinci. Children will love to decode the message and sketch their way to success.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“artists give people something they didn't know they were missing”

The Linlithgow Players Snow White Pantomime

Looking to kick start 2020 and banish those January blues? Then book your seats for the Linlithgow pantomime, Snow White! Yes, the Linlithgow Players are back performing at the Academy, bringing the town its ever popular traditional family panto but with a modern twist.

“Snow White is a favourite and a classic” said director Sue Vizard. *“It's such a fun piece to work on. It has all the drama of characters like the magic mirror and the evil queen (hiss and boo all you like!) as well as the fun of the adorable 7 dwarfs.” And the modern twist? “Well that's the comedy pairing of our very own Lithgae rappers, Fred and Frankie, played by experienced panto actor Les Fulton and Erika Oulton, who stole our hearts as Cinderella last year. They'll be performing their own take on Strictly's Chris and Karen's “Let's get ready to rumble” street dance. Let's just say Fred and Frankie taught them all they know – it's not to be missed!”*

Panto is a great community event in so many ways. For starters, the show is packed full of local references which gives it a cracking community feel. The Players support as many local businesses as they can in their preparations, whether it's printing posters, tickets and programmes, buying material for costumes or sourcing DIY tools and materials for props. It's also their one annual event that involves local school children. *“We're delighted to see many new, as well as familiar faces, in our children's chorus this year. And who better to play our diminutive miners?” adds Sue. “We're also lucky enough to have the talent and creativity of the Central Scotland Ballet School who, as always, will bring their unique touch of dancing magic to our show.”*

So come along and join in the fun because your community panto needs you! It's a real treat to have family theatre on our doorstep here in Linlithgow and coming along to boo the baddie and have a good old laugh and sing song is great way to round off the Christmas and New Year festivities. **Tickets go on sale at the Advent Fayre at the Burgh Halls on Saturday 30th November – a great idea for a Christmas present for your kids or grandkids!**

TWO FREE TICKETS COMPETITION

And if you're feeling lucky, why not enter our competition for 2 free tickets to our opening night on Thursday 9th January. Just answer the following question:

Which Lithgae rappers will be performing their dance routine to Let's Get Ready to Rumble? A) Stormzy and Windy, B) Ant and Dec or C) Fred and Frankie. Use our contact page on the website www.linlithgowplayers.org.uk to email us your answer.

A winner will be randomly selected from the correct entries on 21 December and will be notified by email.

Performances are 9, 10, 11 January 2020 at 7 pm and 2.30 pm Saturday matinee at Linlithgow Academy. Following the Advent Fayre, tickets (£12 and £8 concession) will be available at Far from the Madding Crowd, our box office 07847 735077 or online at www.linlithgowplayers.org.uk.

**JAN
9-11
2020**





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This year's famous Advent Fayre takes place in Linlithgow's town centre on Saturday 30th November, 10am 'til late.

Businesses: remember to make your shop windows beautifully festive to be crowned winner of the Christmas Window Competition. Judging will take place Wednesday 27th November, with the winner announced at the Advent Fayre itself (during the lights switch-on ceremony).

Torch tickets for the spellbinding torchlight procession will be available from: Far from the Madding Crowd (20 High Street), Taste Deli (47 High Street), Linlithgow Stoves (228 High Street), Bright Star Toys (175 High Street), and Playbugs (24 Mill Road Industrial Estate).

Craft Market in Burgh Halls and Charity Market at the Cross from 10am – 3pm.

Coffee and cakes in St. Peter's. Coffee, cakes and lunches at St. Michael's.

Christmas Carols at the Cross.

Treasure hunt trail around the Christmas windows.

THURS 28th November
Your favourite shops open until 8pm

Linlithgow

FESTIVE SHOPPING NIGHT

THURSDAY 28 NOV

Radio Grapevine on tour, belting out the festive classics all evening and telling shoppers where the deals are.

£200 prize pot. Four lucky shoppers will win £50 each on the night, marking the return of the beloved Linlithgow Loyalty Lottery.

Deals, mince pies, mulled wine, prosecco and plenty more to get you in the festive spirit! Make a night of it! All your favourite pubs, bars and restaurants open as usual.

If you can't make it along on the night, Playbugs is hosting a second late-shopping evening at Mill Road on Thursday 5th December until 7pm. You can even bring the kids and let them play while you shop and enjoy a cuppa in peace. Books, gifts, kids' clothes, handbags, and activities like paint-your-own pottery. Full list of participating local, independent businesses on our One Linlithgow Facebook page.

Retailers:

A Wee Mindin': Prosecco and sweeties // **Beautique Beauty Salon:** Nibbles and prosecco, 10% off any treatments booked on the night, Christmas gift vouchers available. // **Bright Star Toys** // **Centre Stage Dancewear** // **Chakir Hairdressing** // **Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland:** Mulled cider. // **Crafted Merchant:** Home-made cloutie dumpling and entry in prize draw to win goodie bag with every purchase. // **Oxfam**

EEK! Escape Rooms: One-day-only flash sale: 20% off all Escape Room Experience vouchers purchased. Mince pies. // **Fair Tradewinds:** Mulled wine and chocolate tasting // **Far From The Madding Crowd** // **Jersey Bean** // **Jewellery By Design:** Mulled wine and mince pies. // **Lilypond Crafts & Gifts** mulled wine and shortbread //

Linlithgow Stoves & Gifts: Prosecco and hot mince pies, cooked in the shop's stove, discounts on purchases on the night. // **M74** // **Mackie & Brechin:** Non-boozy mulled wine, shortbread and discounted gifts for animal friends. // **Mac's of Linlithgow** //

Mason Belle's Kitchen: £5 off gift vouchers. Quote "late shopping" on the night when ordering from the Twilight menu at point of booking to receive a complementary glass of fizz for each diner. // **mid-C-mod** // **Purely Patchwork:** Treat yourself to a hand made Christmas at Purely Patchwork. Christmas stockings, placemat and coaster sets, fabric wreaths and runners, Christmas glow-in-the-dark bunting. Give a beautiful quilt as a gift. //

Specsavers: Party night: festive drinks and nibbles, £40 off single pair of designer specs on the night, free contact lens trials, brand new Orla Kiely designer range launch. // **Sweet Little Cheesecake Café:** Specially made cheesecake canapé giveaway. // **Thread Counter:** Drop in for a glass of wine. // **Tracey Victoria Interiors:** Mulled wine, prosecco and mince pies. // **Tranquil Room:** 10% off any treatments, gift vouchers or bought products on the night.

CHRISTMAS IN LINLITHGOW



Nothing beats a bit of jolly festive spirit to brighten up the dark evenings and warm the cockles when the mercury dips below zero. It's a good thing Linlithgow has plenty on offer to bring that sparkle to the festive season!

While many retailers are opening late throughout the whole busy festive season, proceedings are kicking off in earnest on Thursday 28th November with the official Linlithgow festive late-shopping evening. Scores of beloved town-centre businesses are keeping their doors open until 8pm and offering special one-night-only deals and discounts.



Most will be vying for the prestige of offering loyal shoppers the finest mince pies and the most warming, delicious mulled wine in town. One Linlithgow staff will be monitoring for quality and consistency throughout the event. See the advert in this magazine, posters across town, and the One Linlithgow Facebook page for details of participating businesses and what treats they have in store!

Radio Grapevine will provide a suitably cheesy Christmas soundtrack on the High Street, as well as announcing where to get your hands on the mulled wine!

The last Saturday (30th) of November is already etched indelibly in the collective Linlithgow conscience: the **Advent Fayre** is the definitive event of the town's festive calendar.

Mrs. Claus will be meeting the young'uns at the old library in the Vennel, craft and charity stalls at

the Cross and Burgh Halls, a festive treasure hunt up and down the High Street. Shops have dressed up their windows in a bid to be crowned champion of the **Christmas Window Competition** (judged on 27th November, winner announced at the Advent Fayre lights switch-on).

The real magic begins in the evening with the serene **torchlight procession**, followed by the switch-on ceremony for the Christmas lights.

Further details on the One Linlithgow Facebook, posters and accompanying advert in this magazine. This includes where to purchase your torch tickets for the procession, which must be purchased in advance.

On Thursday 5th December, an indoor late-shopping event will be taking place at PlayBugs in the Mill Road Industrial Estate, until 7pm.

The soft play centre will be open, and Linlithgow Pottery will be showing kids how to paint-your-own pottery, so you can keep the kids entertained while you enjoy a tea or coffee and explore the fantastic stalls. Kids' clothes from Trendy Threads, books and gifts from Far from the Madding Crowd, bespoke handbags and gifts from Wee Sew and Sews, Bodyshop treats, gift ideas from Eeek! Escape Rooms, toys and games from brand-new Linlithgow business Bright Star Toys (see article overleaf), gift memberships from Linlithgow's golf clubs, lovely things from Neal's Yard and much more.

The "Festive Forest" at Beecraigs Country Park (home to the award-winning Hideaway Café) promises to be a magical experience for all the family. It's running from 5th - 24th December and you can find out more at "beecraigsfestiveforest.buzz".

From Friday 6th - Sunday 8th December, St. Michael's Kirk hosts the "Festival of Christmas Trees", with more "around the world"-themed Christmas trees than you can shake a yule log at... not to mention the mulled wine and hot chocolate bar!

Santa's canal boat cruises in to Linlithgow Canal Centre on 14th, 15th, 21st and 22nd December at 2pm. A special memory for the kids and a boat trip thrown in! Non-alcoholic hot punch served from the Canal Centre Tearoom, alongside mince pies and cakes... not to mention a roaring real log fire! It doesn't get much more Christmassy than that!

This isn't an exhaustive list of all the fantastic activity across Linlithgow during the festive period. The best way to find out more about these events and others across town is to visit the "What's On?" page of "mylinlithgow.com" and of course follow One Linlithgow on Facebook.



**MERRY CHRISTMAS
FROM ALL AT
ONE LINLITHGOW.**



FURTHER FROM FESTIVAL 2020

Set your clocks to January 24th 2020 as the Further From Festival returns! West Lothian's only literary festival is entering its fifth year and we have got a cracking line-up, tempting enough to tickle anyone's tastebuds.

We start with an evening of poetry, spoken word and song including performances from spoken word artist Kevin P. Gilday, Alistair and Alison Peebles with a tribute to Jean Ure and Freeland Barbour who will be performing with Gerda Stevenson – the perfect way to begin a weekend of very Scottish celebrations.

Jim Crumley's natural history slot this year is shared by Andy Wightman, Green MSP, discussing land ownership in Scotland and what this means in terms of our living environment and conservation. Author and historian Trevor Royle will talk Scotland and the Cold War with Bruce Jamieson in what is bound to be a hugely popular event. Novelist Janice Hadlow brings the inspiration behind her novel, *The Other Bennet Sister*, to life and talks about why Jane Austen is so important to her. We set off on a culinary tour of Scotland's Islands with Sue Lawrence (there will be cake!) and Bruce Jamieson will be looking at Linlithgow Lives with his latest local history book.

For children and families and to round off Further From 2020, we are absolutely delighted to welcome Lari Don for an afternoon of traditional tales and a story creation session: expect flying horses, dragon's hoardes and, of course, the unexpected in a session aimed at 5-12 year olds.

All events are taking place in Linlithgow from Friday 24th January – Sunday 26th January in either Queen Margaret Hall, or the beautifully renovated St Peter's Church.

Weekend and day passes are available and further information can be found at www.maddingcrowdlinlithgow.com or by emailing: sally@maddingcrowdlinlithgow.com

>> An evening of poetry and song with Alistair and Alison Peebles, Kevin P. Gilday, Freeland Barbour with Gerda Stevenson Friday 24th January, 7.00pm (doors 6.30pm), Queen Margaret Hall, £15

>> Jim Crumley and Andy Wightman: *Who Owns Scotland?* Saturday 25th January, 10.00am, Queen Margaret Hall, £10

>> Trevor Royle: *Facing the Bear* Saturday 25th January, 11.30am, Queen Margaret Hall, £10

>> Janice Hadlow: *The Other Bennet Sister* Saturday 25th January, 2.00pm, St Peter's Church, £8

>> Sue Lawrence: *A Taste of Scotland's Islands* Saturday 25th January, 3.30pm, St Peter's Church, £10

>> Bruce Jamieson: *Linlithgow Lives* Saturday 25th January, 5.30pm, St Peter's Church, entry by donation

>> Lari Don: *the Magic of Scottish Stories* Sunday 26th January, 2.00pm, St Peter's Church, £4 or £10 family ticket (admits 4 people)



NEIL MCDONALD COMPOSER. SINGER. PERFORMER



£10
Wilsons
Newsagents

I have been performing for well over 50 years in Curragh Folk, The Black Bitch Band and more recently in the duo Cockleroy with accordionist Bob Proudfoot, but last year damaged nerves in the pinkie of my left hand falling against a wall. As the injury failed to respond to treatment my ability to play guitar was impaired as I could not fully depress that finger on the strings.

I have been composing songs all my life and many of these have been well received in performances in and around Linlithgow at Farmers Markets, Burns Suppers, Sheltered Housings, Pub sessions, and in 20 years of involvement in the full range of activities of Linlithgow Folk Festival Association.

I set a target of recording the best of the humorous songs I had written over the years while I could still play the guitar on the tracks, but as it transpired I did not need to as Bob and other friends contributed accompaniments on piano, organ, bouzouki, drums, bodhran, guitar and accordion. After approximately 10 months of selecting 20 tracks from the repertoire, amending and rewriting them, planning the arrangements and then recording them under Bob's control the CD was completed in early September 2019.

The title track "There's life in the old dog yet" shares a common theme throughout many of the CD tracks of dealing with the travails of getting on in years, and as we have found in our work with the Generation Arts Scheme going into old peoples' homes and clubs laughing at adversity is a very effective strategy.

If you want to raise a smile or two call into Wilsons Newsagents near the Cross where they are on sale at a cost of £10 (or special offer of two for £20).

Get there quickly as "Yer a lang time looking at the lid an old friend once told me, So live each day as if it was your last 'cos ... one day it will be, He shocked the town as he strolled around with a pretty young girl in tow, But when he died in bed the last words he said were... Boy what a way to go!"

Neil's Biography:

Emigrated from Falkirk to Linlithgow in 2001 and married his reason for moving, wife Grace, in Linlithgow Palace Undercroft in October 2007. He took early retirement from his post as Principal Teacher of PE at Falkirk High in order to expend more of his energy on music, but continued working as a supply teacher for 10 years including very happy times at Linlithgow Academy.

Having taught social dance all his career and compered dozens of Christmas school dances while also playing and singing in folk groups like Curragh he was keen to use all these skills within a ceilidh band, and this led to the formation of COCKLERoy ceilidh band and duo along with Bob Proudfoot and others.

THE WARM HEARTS COLLECTIVE

COMMUNITY ///



My name is John Graham, and I have been a resident of Linlithgow for 30 years.

Let me introduce the **WarmHearts Collective** to you, a local story itching to warm the cockles of everyone this Christmas.

The WarmHearts Collective have released a Christmas song “*Warm Hearts*” performed by them. Read on to find out not just about our beautiful song but how it came to be.

The Warm Hearts Collective: Who are we?

The “Spirit of Christmas” is perhaps more important in our current climate than at any other point in recent memory. It can and should be a time for everyone to come together and forget about the things that divide us.

This is precisely what the Warm Hearts Collective and the Warm Hearts Promotion Team are proud to have achieved; a collaboration coming together to create the “Spirit of Christmas”. We are an eclectic mix of talented family and friends who have coalesced around this wonderful new Christmas song which is already gaining momentum on social media.

Our song “*Warm Hearts*” can be likened to the great Christmas songs of the 80s with a modern twist.



The Warm Hearts Collective is the brainchild of retired engineer John Graham, budding Luthier, proud husband, father and grandfather. John's imagination was fuelled when he heard his son Colin's latest song.

Together with his wife Grace, a retired trainer in IT, they are managing the project alongside the wonderful Claire, our Social Media, Promotions and Marketing creator. The song itself was conceived by the aforementioned Colin who is, by day, a high school teacher of English but by night an inventive and passionate lyricist and songwriter.

Our singer Charlotte is Colin's partner; she is currently studying with the Open University to also become a schoolteacher. Our pianist Elaine is similarly a teacher of music and is proud mum to our guitarist Rob. Rob, an ex-pupil of Colin's, currently studies music at Napier University in Edinburgh whilst spending his spare time playing in bands. The final member of the “collective” is Dom, our great friend, who is the drummer, sound engineer and producer of the track. Our extra special mention goes to 8 year old Sam, Colin and Charlotte's son, and my grandson, who provides the beautiful angelic finale to *Warm Hearts*.

It truly is a heart-warming story and to emphasize our belief and commitment, this project is totally self-funded.

The Warm Hearts Collective would love Christmas 2019 to be the one where we all not only join together but collectively, who knows, we can reach Christmas No.1.

We do however realise that there are significant challenges ahead to make *Warm Hearts* a Christmas Hit, or a Christmas No.1 particularly as an unsigned act. We also freely admit, to being somewhat daunted at times. However together we are a very small but motivated team of creative people working as one who have dared to dream big. Most importantly we are family, we are friends, we are colleagues and we all share the same vision.



“Your Voice” Campaign – Feature on our song..

Not only do we have a and engaging Christmas song but we are uniquely offering the opportunity for the public to send “YOUR VOICE(s)” which could then feature on a special remix edition of “*Warm Hearts*”.

For more information please see our website where you will not only get links to all major streaming platforms but much more information on our campaign: www.warmheartschristmas.com

In addition you can find us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

Christmas is a time for everyone to come together and forget about the things that divide us.

Now's the time for togetherness, now's the time to be part of the

Merry Christmas from the WarmHearts Collective

Oh in addition watch out for our Music Video which is being released on the 28th of November.

In addition I can be contacted on 07572876854.

**John Graham
A WarmHeart**

UNDERSTANDING RISK AND POTENTIAL RETURN

Virtue Money



Virtue Money

You may already have money invested or have some money spare at the end of each month which you would like to invest. Types of investment vehicles include Individual Savings Plans (ISA), Personal Pension, or bonds to name but a few.

If you do invest in stocks or shares how do you determine the level of risk and ultimately level of return that you could receive?

To calculate your personal risk level, we would have you complete an "Attitude to Risk" questionnaire, your answers are then run through an online system which uses algorithms (way too complex for me to even try to understand let alone explain) to determine your personal attitude to risk.

To give us the full picture, we would also look at the level of risk you are happy to take to try to meet your investment objectives along with how much you can afford to lose and the time period you are looking to investment over.

So, once you know your personal attitude to risk, which outside factor can then affect any money that is invested?

High risk could mean higher returns, but it could also mean higher losses, low risk could mean low returns that do not even keep up with inflation.

There are many factors that affect the risk level of the funds which sit behind your investment –

Market risk – this is determined by things that have the ability to affect the stock market as a whole. Things like the threat of, or actual, recession, political uncertainty (Brexit and Donald Trump) or a natural disaster like the typhoon in Japan.

Sector Risk – this is determined by things that can affect an entire industry.



This focuses on the risk that an event or indeed a series of events which could affect the price of stock of more than one Company in one specific sector. A good example would be the oil industry, when the price of oil rises it can mean a boost for the oil sector and commodity-related stocks. Although the knock-on effect can be that travel companies are impacted as a result of the higher costs.

Company-specific Risk – this applies to a risk which affects the share price of a specific company or group of companies. Poor management, fraudulent and criminal activity, levels of debt are some examples of this.

Inflation Risk – if the return that your money is achieving is less than the rate of inflation then inflation can erode the future purchasing power of the money that you have invested.

Currency Risk – exchange rates will affect shares in companies outwith the UK and funds that invest overseas. If the pound is weak against the foreign currency in question, then this will increase your sterling gain from the foreign investment. Conversely the opposite is true - a strong pound will have the effect of reducing the amount of return.

The best way to help combat as many of these risks as possible is to ensure that your investment portfolio has a wide range of investment across a range of companies, countries and industries.

If your portfolio is well diversified if one specific risk comes into play it will only affect one part of the portfolio with the remaining investments hopefully helping to bolster this loss and allow your portfolio to remain relatively stable.

Of course, it is not possible to avoid all or any of the risks affecting the money that you invest but the key is to manage the risks. It should be noted however that even the most careful management of risk does not mean that a loss could still be avoided, just look at the financial crash in 2008.

No-one can predict the future and any decisions made about how money is invested cannot be made on past performance alone. Just because a fund or stock has been performing well is no indication that it will continue to do so. The problems with the Woodford funds, which are in the press at the moment, highlight this!

Diversification is key to trying to ensure a return on your long-term investments. If you would like to speak to one of our advisers about how they can help you with this, then please call us on 0345 034 3424 or email me at susan@virtuemoney.com.



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

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BOOK REVIEW

THE CHRISTMASAURUS – MUSICAL EDITION

TOM FLETCHER

*It's cold outside,
And up your nose,
Your bogies freeze like icicles -
I'm beginning to think it
must be Christmas-time!*

This book for children is bursting with wholesome fun and light-hearted humour as it tells the adventure of young William Trundle during the month of December. William's dad adores Christmas and his home is bedecked with Christmas decorations all year round. He has the unarguable mantra "every second away from last Christmas is one second closer to the next". William also enjoys Christmas albeit in a more pragmatic, muted way – much more fitting for a young boy on the brink of his teenage years!

William Trundle is a shy, lonely boy whose main enthusiasm is dinosaurs and, in fact, that is all his heart desires; to have his very own real dinosaur for Christmas.

Impossible? Well, not when the magic of Christmas is weaving its way across the world! It is inevitable that the beautifully described Christmasaurus and lonely William Trundle will meet amid much humour, misadventure and mayhem.

Author **Tom Fletcher** clearly enjoys Christmas himself; the story is brimming with unique descriptions of the North Pole, Santa, his elves and the myriad of mysteries surrounding Christmas. I enjoyed them all but I think my favourite has to be the very first Christmas tree that listens to Santa as he reads each child's Christmas letter and the important part it then plays in the all-important production of toys.

I was intrigued by the promise of a soundtrack to accompany this version of Tom Fletcher's *The Christmasaurus* and was not disappointed when

I popped the CD into my computer and pressed play. Within the pages of the story, there are helpful signals to play the track that will enhance each section of the tale. It becomes immediately obvious from the very first note that Tom Fletcher is playing to his pop star strengths – and rightly so. He has succeeded in bringing this tale even more to life in the imaginations of his readers – the tracks are toe-tapping and perfectly geared to build excitement and amusement.

This book is well written for young readers and, whether they are reading on their own or with an adult, there is much for everyone to enjoy about this Christmas-themed adventure. The 'goodies' and 'baddies' in the story are excellent in their characterisations and very obvious to identify! 'The Christmasaurus' is a lovely winter read for children, with a few good plot twists and turns and is jam packed with humour, action and excitement.

"The sleigh is loaded and ready to go; You must leave now with a ho, ho, ho!"



Lisa Nettleton

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



NOTES ON OUR FAVOURITE HOUSEPLANTS

Now that autumn has crashed into winter our efforts to ensure gardening is good for you are focussing on indoor plants. The team at New Hopetoun Gardens have been comparing notes on our favourite houseplants and we thought we would share some of these with you.

Tim is very proud of his succulent that we have grown from the tiniest offshoot he picked up in a Chinese takeaway. It's called the Partridge-breasted Aloe (Aloe variegata) and he has it on his cool interior landing where it can get as cool as 8oC but generally isn't much cooler than 12oC. It enjoys plenty of light and very little watering.



Morag loves her Lipstick Plant for its delightfully unusual flowers and it keeps on producing them with very little help from her! It has an unpronounceable name, Aeschynanthus Mona Lisa, but has a lovely tumbling shape with healthy green leaves that contrast well with the red flowers. She mists the leaves regularly

and waters quite a lot in the summer. Good light and minimum warmth of 12oC are best for it.

Lesley and her Mum Marian can't look beyond the Moth Orchids (Phalaenopsis). The keep on producing flowering stems all year almost without any help from us! So long as we give them good light and high humidity which mimics the conditions they enjoy in their native environment, they will be very happy. They are so exotic but much easier to look after than we used to think.



Claire had her husband Kevan take this picture (top right) of her and her Swiss Cheese plant relaxing at home... the plant looks as if it is going to take over the sofa. This is Monstera deliciosa and many of you will have lived with this chap getting bigger and bigger, this one belongs to daughter Lucy who is studying abroad this year so Mum is plant sitting, they both look very happy with the arrangement.



Claire and the Swiss Cheese plant Monstera deliciosa relaxing at home.

Amy is in her final year at University studying Psychology and has more than 80 plants in her student flat.

Her Monkey Mask plant (Monstera Adansonii) is probably her favourite plant this week. This is a smaller version of the Swiss Cheese plant than Claire's Monstera. She likes how low maintenance it is, just needing regular watering and dusting its leaves. Claire is also looking after one of these plants for her son Jed and finds that it doesn't enjoy very dry air or cold draughts as its origins are in the tropical rainforests of Mexico and South America.



Its common name comes from the look of its leaves perhaps appearing like a monkey's face, which is appropriate as Amy also studies monkeys.

Dougal Philip and Lesley Watson,
New Hopetoun Gardens

so much more than just a garden centre

www.newhopetoungardens.co.uk

NEW
HOPETOUN
GARDENS

**CHRISTMAS STARTS AT
NEW HOPETOUN GARDENS**
ENJOY EASY FREE PARKING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE
WHEN YOU COME TO EXPLORE OUR AMAZING
COLLECTIONS OF GIFTS AND DECORATIONS
A GREAT PLACE TO MEET UP WITH FRIENDS!

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

We are keen to get involved in local community issues and want to hear your views and opinions. We will be publishing an article in the magazine every issue, covering on-going matters of concern to the community. There is also a public assistance desk at the station, which is open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. **YOUR VIEWS AND OPINIONS MATTER.** To get in touch you can use the various contact points listed in the panel below. If we don't know then we can't fix it!!!

KEEP SAFE ON A CHRISTMAS NIGHT OUT

- > Plan your night out including how to get home.
 - > Take your mobile phone with you and make sure it's charged.
 - > Stay with friends and avoid leaving parties or nights out with strangers.
 - > Be sensible about how much alcohol you drink and pace yourself - a drunk person is much more vulnerable and a far easier target for criminals.
 - > Watch your drinks - don't give anyone the opportunity to alter them with other substances. If you leave a drink unattended then don't go back to it.
 - > Think about what you've had to drink - If you feel very drunk or unwell after just a small amount then ask a trusted friend or a member of the club / pub management for help.
 - > Don't take drugs or New Psychoactive Substances (sometimes misleadingly called 'legal highs'). For more information on Drugs, New Psychoactive Substance and Solvent misuse, see our Keep Safe from Substance Misuse advice.
 - > Don't have sexual intercourse with anyone who is unable to give their consent because they are too drunk or under the influence of drugs. In Scots Law this is rape.
 - > Look after bags and valuables. Attracting attention to a phone, especially when leaving a club under the influence of alcohol, makes you more vulnerable to criminals.
 - > Get more information by looking at our Keep your Valuables secure advice.
 - > Make sure you have enough money left at the end of the night to pay for your journey home.
 - > Stay alert at cash machines. Hide your PIN, be aware of who's behind you and keep money out of view. Avoid using them if you've had too much to drink as you'll be more vulnerable to being the target of a robbery.
- For more information about getting to or returning home from your night out safely, see our Keep Safe on the Move advice**

CALLING ALL LINLITHGOW PARENTS

Over the past couple of months we have continually asked parents to have an open discussion with their teenagers, as to where they are going and what they are doing when out with friends in the evenings and check the contents of their bags/ rucksacks.

We have received several reports of large groups of young persons frequenting the "lagoon" area in the old quarry to the west of Avontoun Park, West Port and Rosemount Park areas of Linlithgow.

Pro- active policing has resulted in positive stop searches for alcohol, drugs and weapons.

HOUSEBREAKINGS IN LINLITHGOW

Linlithgow residents are urged to be vigilant following a series of break-ins in the Linlithgow area.

- > Don't leave keys or valuables anywhere an intruder may easily see or find them.
- > Don't label your keys.
- > Don't keep house keys and car keys on the same key ring.
- > Avoid keeping large amounts of cash in the house. If you must, then put it in different locations.
- > Don't have your wall calendar near a window where appointments can potentially be seen.
- > If you are going away for a few days, use timer switches to turn lights on when it gets dark.
- > Record details of your valuables on the National Mobile Property Register at www.immobilise.com
- > If your home is accessed via a communal stairwell, make sure your door entry system is well maintained.
- > Don't let anyone you don't know through the controlled entry door.
- > Get into a routine at night for locking up your house.

PROTECT OUTSIDE YOUR HOME

- > External lighting can help deter intruders
- > Secure shed / garage windows with grills & wire mesh, opaque film or curtains.
- > Lock away tools and ladders as they could be used to access your home
- > Keep hedges, walls or fences at the front of your property no higher than four feet - prevents an intruder being seen.
- > Cover and lock away valuable items in the shed
- > Keep bins in an area where they can't be used as a step to climb fences, walls or access windows
- > If you have an intruder alarm, consider extending its coverage to include outbuilding and ensure it is visible.
- > Ensure your alarm and security lights are well maintained



POLICE SCOTLAND
Keeping people safe
POILEAS ALBA



TO CONTACT THE POLICE...

101 101 is the new number to contact the police when it's less urgent than 999.

Alternatively you can email westlothiancommunityeast@scotland.pnn.police.uk or pop into the police station at the library (Partnership Centre) and ask to speak to our Community officers, **PC's Murray and Hunter.**

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



Julie MacDonald NOT JUST TRAVEL

Life changed for me in March this year. I had gone through changes before – my biggest ever one was when I drove away from London in December 2006, leaving my job, my marriage, my home and my friends to move back to Scotland to start a new life with my then 3-year old son.

I have lived in Linlithgow ever since and despite several bumps along the road, I have never looked back. This time around, the change was in my professional life. Following a career spanning over 25 years in corporate pensions/investment management, I found myself surplus to requirements following a restructure at the firm where I had been for the past 10 years and where I was a partner. I took the opportunity to re-evaluate my life – I'm turning 50 next year so it seemed like an appropriate time to do so – and decided it was time to take the plunge and start my own business doing something that I am passionate about.

My passion for travel goes right back to my early teens and it has continued to grow ever since! Anyone that knows me well knows that I always spent hours, days and weeks researching, planning and getting excited about my own holidays.

Fast forward to now and I have been running my own business as a travel consultant (through the franchise “Not Just Travel”) for the past five months. I have never been happier. I am delighted to report that I get almost as excited about booking holidays for my clients as I do

booking my own! I decided to go down the franchise route to ensure that I have a substantial company backing my business with the framework and infrastructure that this brings. And in situations like the unfortunate demise of Thomas Cook, Not Just Travel come into their own and offer unrivalled support to their travel consultants and clients.

I have access to over 450 suppliers, many of them trade-only, which ensures that I can offer pretty much any type of activity or holiday, anywhere in the world. I offer everything from off-the-shelf packages with the likes of Tui and Jet2, to truly bespoke and often unusual itineraries.

It is the latter type of booking that really “floats my boat”. **There is nothing I enjoy more than bringing travel inspiration to my clients and organising their dream trip. Bespoke dreams do not have to come with a huge price tag and I will work within a price range agreed with each client.**

I pride myself on taking care of every detail to save you the time and effort, and to ensure that all you have to do is go on holiday and make wonderful memories. Great service is at the heart of everything I do and doesn't end once the holiday is booked. I will keep in touch once the booking is confirmed until the date of travel, adding in any extras, providing you with a very detailed itinerary and checking you in for your flight.

While away, you will have my personal mobile number to call if you have any questions or if there are any issues. And upon your return, I am keen to hear all about your holiday. I don't charge for the services I provide as I receive commission on the holidays I book.

Through Not Just Travel, I can partner up with local charities and organisations. Should a partner refer a new client that goes on to book with me, the partner will receive a cut of the commission. It is a really good way for schools, clubs, groups etc to raise funds and I love having the opportunity to give something back to the community. If anyone is interested, please get in touch.



Starting my own business has been really exciting. It is very different from being employed by a big company and there has been, and is, so much to learn! If anyone is considering taking the plunge, I would be happy to chat to you about my experiences.

And I would love to organise your next holiday for you! I want you to love your holidays as much as I love mine...



**NOT JUST
TRAVEL**
JULIE MACDONALD



ONE OF WEST LOTHIAN'S BEST KEPT SECRETS

LEE PURDIE

The Scottish Bonsai Collection is kept at Binny Plants, just fifteen minutes from Linlithgow – as Michael Caine would say – ‘not a lot of people know that.’

The Collection is based around the “Graham trees” as they are known. Bill Graham, from Ayrshire, was a butcher and when he retired concentrated on creating and collecting bonsai. Over nearly thirty years, he developed his knowledge and his collection of 300 trees. When Bill died in 1983, his widow donated the trees to the Local Parks Department. After several years, the trees ended up in the care of the Scottish Bonsai Association (SBA).

By 1986 it was agreed that the trees would pass from the SBA to a Trust set up which became the National Collection. A group of members set up the first ever National Collection of Bonsai in Britain. Not all of the trees could be saved, as some were in a poor state.

The Collection's first home was at Malleny Gardens near Edinburgh. This arrangement was a collaboration between the National Trust and the National Collection. A display cage was built and the Collection was homed there from 1988 until 2000, when it moved to Suntrap Gardens.

In 2011, due to the National Trust and Oatridge College deciding to close Suntrap, it had to find a new home. The Trustees were delighted to accept the offer from Billy Carruthers of Binny Plants to home the Collection. It was re-housed in a new display pavilion, and is available for viewing free at any time during Binnys' opening hours.

It was formally re-opened at the annual Open Day in 2011 by the Japanese Consul General. The Collection has a good relationship with the Consul Generals, and they take an interest in Scottish bonsai, normally attending several events over the course of the year.

The Trustees have also enjoyed a close relationship with Japanese culture. In 2007, the late Alistair Simpson, (our longest serving chairman), was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays, by the Emperor and Government of Japan, the highest honour available to a non-national in the field of art and culture. Only 6 Scots had been awarded this prestigious honour since 1875 before Alistair.

Having changed its status over the years, in 2013 the organisation became a charity again, registered with OSCR as 'The National Bonsai Collection of Scotland Charitable Trust'. In 2016, it was simplified to become 'The Scottish Bonsai Collection Trust.'

The Collection is overseen and maintained by 9 unpaid voluntary trustees who travel from as far afield as Kilmarnock at one end of the country to Perth at the other, and from all directions in between, including a strong West Lothian presence. We also have other volunteers on a rota.

The purpose of the Collection is to promote interest and involvement in the Art & Craft of Bonsai. It features pines, beeches,

larches, oaks and other species indigenous to Scotland. These are complemented by some more exotic varieties including 3 very old trees - a large white pine and 2 hinoki cypresses.

The number of trees in the collection is limited to the number we can realistically maintain well. There is a turnaround involved by trees being sold, then replaced by trees being donated or purchased.

Collection trees are displayed at the annual Gardening Scotland show. We were awarded a gold medal this year, and prize money from this event helps cover some of the substantial costs involved in maintaining the collection.

Over the past 2 years, we have had some limited financial support from West Lothian councillors. We also benefit via the Amazon Smile scheme having registered as The Scottish Bonsai Collection Trust, as well as accepting donations via the SBA website.

On the last Sunday of each month (March up until October), most of the Trustees attend Binny's to work on the trees from approx 10.30 am until about 1 pm. The West Lothian Bonsai Club also has its meetings here from 12 until about 2pm, so if you want to know more about the Collection, or West Lothian bonsai in general, this would be an ideal time to attend.

sbct.info@scottishbonsai.org

<https://www.binnyplants.com/>

https://www.scottishbonsai.org/page.cfm?kicker=Bonsai_National_Collection&page=12





REED BAND MUSICIANS TOAST ANOTHER GREAT YEAR

from
15th
DEC

COMMUNITY ///

Linlithgow Reed Band members have had another very successful year and are now gearing up for a busy time over the Festive season.

At the recent annual general meeting, President **Jonathan Molloy** reported that the band had undertaken 22 marching and concert engagements since last year's gathering, with 10 of those taking place in June. They had very strong playing numbers at the Christmas and Spring concerts, with 68 and 66 players respectively in the main band alone, not including the Training Band and the beginners' section.

Jonathan told the audience:-

"Since the last AGM, you will be astonished to know that 103 different players have performed with the Reed Band at playing engagements. This reflects some turnover in players over the course of the year, the on-going promotion of players from the Training Band, returning students helping us out with Christmas carols and during the summer season and a few of our regular guest players. Nonetheless, we cannot be complacent and it's amazing how quickly such playing strength can reduce to a band of 30 for some key marching engagements.

We need players to commit to playing year-round and to

respond quickly to the secretary's enquiries regarding availability for upcoming jobs."

The band started the year with a very healthy bank balance and used that to replenish the uniform stock with an order of new jackets and trousers. They also purchased more

static pads with some different music each year to play alongside our standards."

The Training Band and beginners' section continue to grow and their Sunday rehearsals at the Longcroft Hall are now so popular that extra space at the adjacent Code nightclub has also been pressed into service. Jonathan thanked



Images: Martin Brown

waistcoats and march pad bags, as well as a variety of new instruments.

Jonathan thanked all the band members for their efforts over the past year and paid particular tribute to the bandmaster, **Lex McDowell**, who, he said, "has continued to find new and interesting pieces for the band to play in concerts and has terrific commitment to both conducting and playing with the band at marching engagements."

Showing his appreciation to the librarian, **Alistair Stenhouse**, Jonathan praised "his on-going efforts to revive marches from our library, converting them to Sibelius and giving them a new lease of life. Thanks to Lex and Alistair, we can continue to refresh the march and

Seonaid Scott and **Lex McDowell** for co-ordinating the Sunday sessions and **Sarah Storrar**, who continues to do a tremendous job with the beginners.

Local people will have a number of opportunities to hear the band in the coming weeks, starting on Saturday November 30th, when they will lead the annual torchlight procession which climaxes the Advent Fayre. The traditional Christmas concert will take place on Sunday December 15th at 7pm, with the irrepressible **Bruce Jamieson** as the compere. Seasonal music will also be provided at the Tesco supermarket on Saturday December 21st and at Sainsbury's on Tuesday December 24th (Christmas Eve).

Murdoch Kennedy





LINLITHGOW WHAT A 'SOUP'ER COMMUNITY...



Congratulations to Bert Lawson, Linlithgow Link who had the winning pitch.

Linlithgow Community Development Trust (LCDT) held the first-ever Linlithgow Soup in October. It was a great success with 42 people coming along and we enjoyed delicious soup courtesy of Mustard Seeds from 1st Step Café. Thank you to all of those who attended and supported the event.

We were inspired to organise the Soup after reading **Kathryn Welch's** story about Stirling Soup, in a previous edition of the Black Bitch. Thank you so much to Kathryn for all her support and advice. Kathryn said "It was such a pleasure to see Soup come to Linlithgow. It was a fantastic evening, with inspiring pitchers and a great community atmosphere. I met brilliant people and learned about some fantastic projects here in Linlithgow. Huge congratulations to all involved!"

In case you don't know, a Soup is a community-run crowdfunding event, which celebrates and supports local projects in the area. It's basically micro-funding for great

local causes. The concept is simple. Pay a small donation (£5) for delicious food, good company and a chance to learn more about what's happening in, and support, the local community.

Thank you to the five local groups who pitched their heartfelt cause to the community. After the pitches, everyone voted for their favourite group and the winner received £195 raised from entry donations. We had pitches from the following groups, who would be very grateful of any further support from the community.

Lochside Playgroup explained they were the only remaining playgroup in the town, who need funds for covering the increased cost of weekly venue hire

1st Step Café were looking to purchase a fridge, as they were limited in what they could provide without one and were ending up with food waste. They didn't win but afterwards, there were two offers to buy them a new fridge!

West Lothian Food Train supports older people to live independently at home. They provide a weekly grocery shop service for people that aren't able to get out easily. They were looking for funds to purchase new boxes to put shopping into.

Linlithgow Young People's Project was looking for funds to support its counselling service for young people with mental health problems. Although they didn't win, they received a new volunteer to support the service!

Congratulations to Linlithgow Link who had the winning pitch. They provide volunteer drivers to take people to the hospital and medical appointments, and they also run the Caring Cafe for people

with dementia. Bert Lawson from Linlithgow Link explained that they had had their Council funding cut and are at risk of closure next year if they can't raise enough funds. Afterwards, Bert said "I really enjoyed taking part in the pitch. The others were worthy contenders for winning the pot, all five could have won."

Pamela Barnes, Development Worker for LCDT said, "it was wonderful to see so many people at the first-ever Linlithgow Soup. All five pitches were fantastic and truly heartfelt. It was really hard for folk to vote for their favourite! I'm delighted Linlithgow Link won, and also hope every group felt it was worthwhile taking part. It was such a great, supportive atmosphere, a real community event. Thank you to everyone who attended, for their generosity, and helping the evening be a great success. I'm looking forward to the next one already!"

A raffle on the night raised £90 to cover venue hire and soup costs. Thank you very much to **Bright Star Toys, Granary Café, Rebecca Holmes Photography, Transition Linlithgow** and some of our **LCDT volunteers**, who all very generously donated raffle prizes.

We will be holding another Linlithgow Soup in 2020. We look forward to seeing you there!

In the meantime, Phase 2 of our Linlith-Go-Solar project is in preparation, providing another opportunity to invest in the community. We will be offering community bonds to finance the installation of solar panels on various locations throughout the town. Longer term, the surplus revenue created will be reinvested to help community initiatives.

Kathryn Welch

Linlithgow and District Allotment Society (LADAS)



There is not much to do on your fruit and vegetable plot over the winter months.

>> If you have not already done so, plant Garlic cloves 6 inches by 12 inches apart. Before planting, dig in some well-rotted manure or compost and add some general-purpose fertiliser such as fish, blood and bone or Growmore if you are not organic.

>> Continue to dig in or mulch your vegetable plot with compost or manure in preparation for next year's crops.

>> As the weather gets colder, protect tender plants with cloches or fleece.

Outdoor grape vines

One of our plot holders, **Adam Jaworski**, is growing a somewhat unusual crop on his plot – grape vines. I asked Adam to tell me more about growing vines outdoors.

1. What got you interested in growing vines?

A bottle of Pinot Noir, opened after ten years of resting underneath a vineyard shed and sampled with good company, while watching the sunset over mountains.

2. Have you grown vines before?

I have a few months' experience of working in the vineyards of Germany, Switzerland and Denmark.

3. Will they do well in the Scottish climate?

Time will tell, although I know there is a hobby vineyard in Norway. I have also seen grape vines prosper in Denmark. With a bit of luck and some determination I believe we stand a good chance of success.

4. Did you have to do any special ground preparation?

One would normally dig in some compost in autumn before planting – no more than 4 to 6 inches deep. In my case, after clearing the land from debris, I went systematically through the plot with a digging fork.



5. What are the green poles for?

The green poles are there to give support for grow tubes. Later, they will become part of a T-shaped trellis system. The vine trunks will grow about 5 feet tall, dividing then sideways to form a falling 'curtain' of grape bearing branches. This is known as a Geneva Double Curtain (GDC) trellis system. It requires more work, but it is better suited for training hybrid vine varieties.

6. What variety of grapes will you be growing?

I grow three red wine grape varieties. These are: Rondo, Cabernet Cortis and Marshall Joffre. They are hybrid vine varieties, which are intended for challenging climates.

7. How long will it take the vines to produce grapes?

They will be ready for the first harvest in three years' time from now.

8. What will you use the grapes for?

They should blend nicely together to form good and story-telling red wine.

If you are interested in having a plot please contact us via our website on <https://linlithgowallotments.org.uk> and ask to be added to the waiting list.



Paul Taylor

Chair, Linlithgow and District Allotment Society (LADAS)

Linlithgow
FESTIVE
SHOPPING
NIGHT

THURSDAY 28 NOV

**THURSDAY 28TH
NOVEMBER**

Deals, mince pies, mulled wine, prosecco and plenty more to get you in the festive spirit!. Make a night of it! All your favourite shops, pubs, bars and restaurants open as usual.



DU VIN BOUCHERS 62 - 64 HIGH STREET

Bruce
Jamieson

Every building along Linlithgow's High Street stands on historic ground, redolent with memories. By looking at property documents it is possible to trace this history back several centuries and discover the fascinating story of that site over the years. Take, for example, the property at 62-64 High Street. On an 1820 map the owner is shown as a Mrs Montgomery.



John Wood's 1820 Map. 62-64 High Street is shown two below Mr McKenzie's Golden Lion Inn – now Bar Leo.

Mrs Montgomery had inherited the building on the death of her husband, Thomas, who had rebuilt the tenement from its original 16th century construction. The Montgomerys were coopers (barrel makers) and a former owner of the property, also Thomas, had been Deacon of his fraternity, upholding the standards and honour of the trade.

The earliest written reference to the site appears in the late 15th century when it was recorded as "bounded by the Peel and Lambert's Yard, the property of William Crawford." His son married Janet Empselie and they moved into the property in 1500, raising a family and living there for over 50 years.

In 1552, the High Street building was bought by Peter Newlands who had married Agnes Cunningham and the house remained in Newlands possession for some years. (Later a branch of that family operated an Engineering and Plough Works at St. Magdalenes.)

The tenement passed through the hands of Town Clerk, Nicol Thownis and then his daughter, Helen, and

her husband, Henry Keir. In the 17th century, several owners are recorded including William Smith who appears in a 1678 Town Council minute: "William Smith is obliged to upkeep the Cross Well Burn which runs down the east side of his tenement." Smith became a bailie of the burgh from 1686 - 88. His son, also William, (a local merchant and Collector of Customs) inherited the property and married Mary Nimmo - daughter of Patrick Nimmo of Balvornie (now part of Beecraigs Country Park.)

The building remained in Smith hands until 1752 when it was inherited by John Carlaw who is recorded as a "tenant in Ochiltree". He handed over ownership to James Watson, a local brewer, and it was his daughter, Janet, who married Thomas Montgomery, the Deacon of the Coopers.

Their son, John – another Collector of Customs, acquired the property in 1821 and it remained in Montgomery hands until 1859 when it was bought by Andrew Gillon of Wallhouse who also purchased a portion of Lambert's Yard, behind the building. This strip of land was quickly sold to Adam Dawson of Bonnytown who had been Provost of Linlithgow.

In 1880 a butcher called John Meikle acquired the property and promptly demolished it, building instead a new, three-storey tenement in Scottish Baronial style with a butcher's shop at street level; the new building proudly bearing the date 1881 on its top pediment. Flanking the central, crow-stepped gable was a tall chimneystack and a corner tower complete with a mock arrow loop, flight holes and a spiked finial. At this time, there were many butcher shops in the town and obviously Mr Meikle felt that he had to make his premises stand out and reflect the prestige of his establishment.

Top right: The distinctive roofline with the central ball finial on the gable apex.



Adjoining the building was a carriage pend leading to a small stable to house the horse that pulled the butcher's cart.



The pend beside the property and the converted entrance to the old stables.

In 1917 the shop was taken over by butcher Henry Shields and he served the town with its meat supplies for many years, and throughout two world wars. The shop was later taken over by the Laurie family and they continued in business until the march of time - and the growth of supermarket shopping - saw them close up shop.



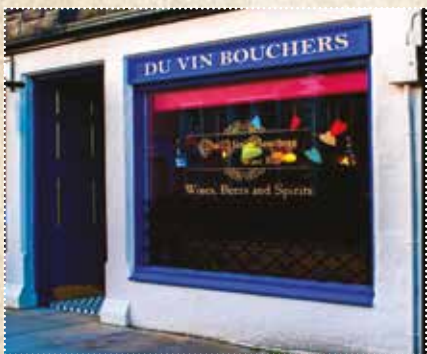
Laurie's shop partly hidden by the lorry - and a close up.



For a while, the building was used as an insurance agency run by James McAra. When he left, builders removed his street frontage sign - revealing beneath the name "Henry Shields and Son". At that time I heard two elderly ladies standing outside, looking at the unveiled sign and discussing how during the period of rationing in the Second World War, Mr Shields would reserve his bespoke sausages for his special customers!



The sign reading Henry Shields - and the present incarnation.



So many memories in one building - now the home of a wine bar, "Du Vin Bouchers" - a reference to its earlier butcher shop days. Inside, in pride of place, are the old butcher hooks on which once hung the town's meat supplies. One small memory - of many!

SPECSAVERS SETTING THE PACE!



COMMUNITY ///



Specsavers may be a nationally recognised name, but in its short time in Linlithgow it has more than lived up to its pledge to become involved with the local community.

In the most recent example it has kitted out the Linlithgow Rose under-13 girls team with warm, waterproof outdoor training gear and kit bags. It has also provided Low Port Primary School with 175 hi-viz vests for children and adults for Road Safety Month.

In tandem with these and other community initiatives, the store in the Regent Centre has also introduced several innovations that broaden its service beyond that offered by most mainstream opticians.

Diana Kelly, the store director, said that the most recent example was staff undertaking a 13-week Sign Language course at Glasgow Clyde College.

They were learning about the impact of living with a hearing defect, while improving communication skills in serving customers with hearing difficulties or complete deafness.

Diana said her staff were thoroughly enjoying their three-hour sessions, and were "in awe" of their instructor, who was completely deaf, and communicated entirely via sign language.

"It's great to see them putting so many hours into learning this invaluable skill that will enable them to use their British Sign Language proficiency in everyday situations."

Both Diana and her manager, husband Damian, lay great store on the calibre of their locally recruited staff, and there's no disguising their pride in being awarded a Platinum Employer accolade.

Diana said that the award recognised outstanding people management skills, and identified businesses that provided a great overall employee experience, focussing on areas that included performance management and reward, and employee communications and enjoyment.

John Perkins, Specsavers joint chief executive, paid tribute to the Linlithgow store, and said that the company hoped all of its stores might eventually emulate its example.

He added that the scheme was externally validated, and aimed to "raise the bar" in people management standards.

Diana said that in an important development on the staff front at Linlithgow, they would be taking on a newly qualified optometrist for their pre-registration year.

"There is a shortage of optometrists in Scotland, and after they graduate most take up posts in Glasgow or another of the cities in their pre-registration year. We are looking forward to making the appointment, which will further enhance our service here."

Another service being provided at Linlithgow that is not routinely available is helping relieve pressure on the local GP service.

Specsavers Linlithgow offers **Enhanced Optical Services (EOS)**, which provides faster and more accessible primary care for customers with minor eye conditions.

With a post-graduate qualification in therapeutics, Diana can dispense and write prescriptions for such conditions.

The Linlithgow store also has a groundbreaking **OCT (Optical Coherence Tomography)** machine usually only found in hospitals. This enables the health of a patient's eyes to be viewed in much greater detail.

Away from all the professional aspects of their service, however, there's no disguising the pride Diana, Damian and their team take in their developing involvement with the community.

The satisfaction can best be summed up in the evident pride the **Linlithgow Rose Under-13s** take in wearing their Specsavers gear, encapsulated by their coach **Kerry Taylor**.

"I can't thank Diana enough. It means so much to the girls. The kit is great for cold or wet nights. One girl told me it made her feel she was walking taller wearing her new anorak and carrying her kit bag."



John Smith

According to Rightmove, nationally, we are seeing a tightening of supply and a slow down in the rate of house price growth.

Across the UK in October 2019 the average price annual increase was 0.6%, which compares to an average annual increase in October 2018 of 1.6%. Rightmove also stated that the number of properties coming to market was down by 13.5% compared to the same period last year. However, the number of house sales agreed remained virtually unchanged, suggesting more of a reduction in seller's confidence in the housing market, rather than house buyers. This sentiment is also expressed in the latest RICS, Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, market survey.

Of course, there are important regional variations. An indication that the Scottish housing market continues to be more buoyant can be seen in that the average time to agree a sale in Scotland is 43 days, compared to 62 days nationally.

Latest available housing statistics from Scottish Registers are for August 2019. They show that the average house price in Scotland in August was £181,542, a rise of 1.35% on August 2018. In West Lothian the average price in August this year was £182,430, a rise of 4.8% on the August 2018 figure of £173,909.

There was a slight drop in Scotland in the volume of house transactions. In August 2019 the total was 9,620, compared to 9,838 in August 2018.

We wrote in the last issue of the magazine about the focus that Airbnb and other short term tourist lets was receiving from the Scottish Government and that there was a consultation process under way. Invitations to submit responses have now closed and the BBC report that a majority of respondents were in favour of reforms, although they were split on what these should be. They revealed a pretty staggering statistic that illustrates the continued growth of short term tourist lets. That is, that this summer in the Old Town in Edinburgh there were 812 active Airbnb lets per square kilometre.

This seems to be borne out by the fact that the latest market survey produced by RICS, included comments from several Scottish based surveyors that they were seeing a trend of residential landlords moving away from long term lets and into Airbnb style tourist lets.



Home staging, is it worth the effort?

According to Rightmove, staging your property could add up to 8% to the value of your home.

According to Rightmove, staging your property could add up to 8% to the value of your home. Based on the average house price in West Lothian that could be worth over £14,500. Staging a home before selling it is a fairly common practice in North America, but much less so here in the UK. At Paul Rolfe we firmly believe it is worth the effort, and need not cost hundreds or thousands of pounds to do. We frequently work with clients weeks and months before bringing a property to market, advising them how to stage their home to maximise its appeal to buyers. In a weak housing market, staging is still worth doing, it can make the difference between your property selling quickly and for the Home Report valuation, or sticking on the market for months.

There are plenty of resources available online, just google home staging.

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ROTARY TREE OF LIGHT

THE CHRISTMAS TREE OF CELEBRATION



THERE'S AN AFRICAN PROVERB THAT STATES, "AS LONG AS YOU SPEAK MY NAME, I SHALL LIVE FOREVER". THIS IS THE MOTIVATION BEHIND LINLITHGOW'S ROTARY TREE OF LIGHT NOW IN ITS FOURTH YEAR. THE TREE USED TO BE SITUATED OUTSIDE THE OLD LIBRARY, BUT WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL HAS GIVEN PERMISSION FOR THE TOWN'S CHRISTMAS TREE AT LINLITHGOW CROSS TO BE USED AS THE ROTARY TREE OF LIGHT – BRINGING IT RIGHT INTO THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY.

The tree is a Tree of Celebration — yes, of a life fondly remembered but also, perhaps, to celebrate a milestone event such as a significant anniversary or a new life begun, even a new generation for a family. There will be many personal reasons to make dedications. The names of the people who are to be acknowledged and the tributes written will be displayed on panels encircling the base of the tree as well as on the dedicated Tree of Light website, so that it can be shared with family and friends wherever they are.

First and foremost, however, it is a tree of remembrance and a beacon of light and hope in the bleakest of circumstances for some who look on Christmas with trepidation and even despair. The numerous people who have made a Tree of Light dedication in the past have found the "speaking of the loved one's name" consoling, even cathartic.

Linlithgow Grange Rotary hopes to raise a significant amount for organisations working locally with those who are living with chronic age-related conditions, the carers who support them and those who struggle with loneliness or bereavement. For 2019, the chosen charities are Linlithgow and District Day Care Centre, Linlithgow Link, Carers of West Lothian, the Cyrenians OPAL Project (a befriending service working in Linlithgow and surrounding area), Sands Lothians, the Stillbirth and Neo-Natal Death Society, and Positive Pathways Bereavement Support. The Benevolent Fund of Linlithgow Grange Rotary will be able to disburse any Gift Aid received from these donations to other local good causes.

This year Linlithgow's Rotary Tree of Light will shine more brightly than ever before thanks to new lighting adorning the tree which has been augmented by additional illumination sponsored by the Rotary Club of Linlithgow Grange. This has been

made possible thanks to the generosity of Alan Steel Asset Management, RGM Solicitors, Stewart Electrical, Cala Homes and other community-minded businesses and individuals. Their financial support ensures that every pound of public donations goes to the designated charities.

Alzheimer's is now recognised as the UK's biggest killer. People living with this debilitating and progressive illness, and indeed their caregivers, need to be sustained with empathy and practical help. Bereavement is something that is inescapable. Helping those travelling their difficult journey requires patience and compassion (but not pity). And no-one could possibly understand how bereft new parents must feel who experience stillbirth or the early death of a newborn unless, that is, someone who has had a similar experience themselves and is there to help.

Rotary is all about helping communities wherever they are in the world but, most especially, locally. Linlithgow Grange Rotary Club is proud to be able to promote and support these worthy causes but could not do so without the big-hearted folks of Linlithgow, a strong community which has proven time and again to put their hands into their collective pocket when the need arises.

For more details please go to www.linlithgowtreeoflight.org.uk or Facebook. [com/LinlithgowTreeofLight](https://www.facebook.com/LinlithgowTreeofLight).

Gordon Young



SAT 30TH NOVEMBER

This year's famous Advent Fayre takes place in Linlithgow's town centre on Saturday 30th November, 10am 'til late.



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Friday 22 November 2019,
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Diesel's owners describe him as being like two different dogs. As a youngster he was hyperactive, very over excitable and would get up to mischief such as walking along the top of the sofa and leaping onto visitors! Now as an adult, he's laid back, calm and very affectionate.

Diesel makes his humans laugh every morning when he makes a noise which sounds just like "Hello". After concentrating on lead work, especially passing dogs with a treat as a reward, Diesel now looks for his treat with a big smile when another dog is on the other side of the road or even the canal!

Diesel's favourite place is in woodland or any long grass he can poke his nose into. His favourite walk is Beecraigs Country Park and his favourite toys are soft toys which he just loves to rip to pieces.

His cheeky habit is asking his mum for breakfast when he's already been fed by his dad! His quirky habit is that when he needs to go out, instead of going to the door or barking, he plonks his head on the coffee table!

Diesel is a very soulful dog who's recently been through surgery to remove his left eye. Even following such life altering surgery, he is still the same laid-back lad who loves seeking (and receiving) affection from the Westport team on visits to the practice.

Diesel's owners first discovered that there was an issue with his eye when they noticed his pupil suddenly went unusually big and that his eye looked all black. They took him straight to the emergency out of hours vet, then he came to Westport for investigation where he was given a referral to an eye specialist.

After investigation at the specialists, Diesel was treated

for 'primary closed-angle glaucoma' (PACG) which is the most common type of glaucoma found in dogs. The least common type of glaucoma in dogs is primary open-angle glaucoma (POAG) although this is the most common type that affects humans.

Diesel's treatment was to help reduce the pressure that was building up inside the eye. However, the pressure wasn't reduced enough and as the condition was causing him a lot of pain and a permanent lack of vision, his eye was removed by left eye education surgery so he could be pain free.

Eye surgeries require specific post-operative care and recovery relies on owner compliance - for care to be carried out in full as required. Diesel's owners ensured he had the treatment he needed at home, a change of routine and restrictions to aid and assist in him making a full recovery. They monitored him closely and took necessary precautions to avoid any risk of infection to his wound.

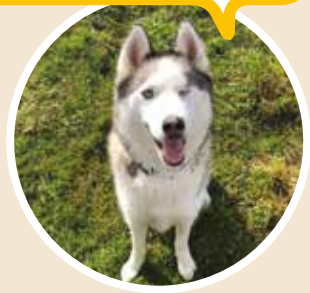
Diesel has made a full recovery from his surgery and is adapting to life with restricted vision wonderfully. He is still calm, confident and affectionate and is back to living his normal routine and lifestyle. Diesel's owners made the right decision taking him straight to a vet when they noticed that something was not normal. Eyes are a vital organ and eye issues can be both painful and distressing, and in some cases, time may also be a contributing factor to saving their sight or sight quality.

As pet owners we are responsible for ensuring our pets' eye care is maintained and any issues are addressed immediately by having them checked by a vet. When cleaning eyes only use water and ensure a different

cleaning item (tissue/cloth etc) is used for each eye. This is to ensure nothing is passed on from one eye to the other. Eye drops and treatments are specific for different conditions so owners must never put anything in pets' eyes that is not prescribed at that exact time by their vet. Using incorrect treatments can cause damage and be detrimental to their sight and health if not used appropriately.

Monitor any discharge from the eyes, from normal 'sleep' type to any changes. Any changes in colour, smell or volume as well as monitoring your pet's behaviour, or if they seem bothered by their eyes in anyway, they must be checked by the vet asap. Sometimes animals can do more damage by causing self-trauma by trying to rub or scratch eyes. A buster collar (Elizabeth collar) can be an ideal tool to prevent risk of them doing damage until they are seen. Care should also be taken in case animals are in pain or perhaps their vision has been altered they may be more sensitive to being touched.

If you are worried about your pet or would like to get them a check-up or require any advice, please contact the Westport Team on 01506 844165.



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