



# *the* **BLACK** *bitch*

Linlithgow's news by Linlithgow's people

LINLITHGOW COMMUNITY MAGAZINE ISSUE 71 JAN 2020

## THE BEST LAID PLANS...

WHAT NEXT OPPOSITE THE CROSS? P6



## PLUS

ONE Linlithgow, Book Review, Linlithgow Academy, Linlithgow Peace Garden, Lucy Purbrick, Police Scotland Updates, Burgh Beautiful Mosaic Project....

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# Magazine Subscription

Looking to the future of local news in Linlithgow



The Black Bitch magazine team launched our Magazine Subscription at the Advent Fayre in the Burgh Halls on 30 November 2019 and was delighted with the excellent response over the course of the day. We met old friends and made new ones as we talked through our plans to develop the magazine in the years to come.

The magazine was set up in the early part of 2011 and first delivered in May of that year. Our tenth year of production begins in a few months time and it seems like an appropriate time to take the next step forward by asking for the support of our readers to help us achieve our aims.

It is no secret that newspapers as we knew them, both national and local, are not what they used to be and as long as the Internet attracts the lion's share of advertising revenues "traditional newspapers" are not likely to re-emerge.

Across the world the loss of well-funded professional journalism is being felt severely and an effective replacement is still not in sight. At local level it is the aim of the Black Bitch to begin to try at least to put back into our community some of what has been lost - to begin with, some carefully researched articles on issues of concern to the long-term health and vitality of Linlithgow's built heritage.

Our own much-loved Gazette (by those with long memories anyway) is no longer the go-to source for all that is happening in Linlithgow. Readership of printed news has been in steep decline for decades but that decline has sharply increased in the recent past when financial constraints at all titles have led to severe staff cuts across the board but, most damagingly, in terms of the loss of professional journalists.

*So what difference does the loss of a local paper make?*

What we have lost is the regular reporting by professional journalists on all aspects of community life but especially, and probably most damaging to Community: Local Government relationships, regular reporting from within the "Town Hall" as it used to be. The lack of communication and understanding between community and Council is staggering - but how could it be otherwise with the demise of local journalism?

Clearly, the magazine has no prospect, or aspiration, of plugging that gap entirely. However, its aim is to broaden community knowledge and connection with the place we all live in and enjoy with the ultimate aim of working with our Local Authority to preserve and enhance the heritage that is Linlithgow's prime and under developed asset.

We have enclosed with this issue an application form that you can use to subscribe an amount of your choosing to help us maintain an independent voice on issues that matter to the community. While we work to improve the delivery and scope of local news every contribution, big or small, helps us to bring forward issues of concern to the community in a sustainable, fair and objective way.

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# WHAT'S ON - FEBRUARY / MARCH

## Feb

**Sat 1** Linlithgow Rose Vs Musselburgh Athletic. Kick off is at 2:30pm.

**Tue 4\*** Quiz at The Lobster Pot, Blackness (every 2 weeks)

**Fri 7** Red Door Presents - Boteco Trio Accomplished Braziliance from bassist Mario Caribe's deeply rhythmical, beautifully melodic troupe

**Sat 8** Winter wildlife workshop, Historic Environment Scotland, Blackness Castle E: rangers@hes.scot

The Scottish Sinfonia (Orchestral Concert) Smetana, Schubert, Dvorak. St Michael's Parish Church, 7:30pm Linlithgow Arts Guild

**Sun 9** Scottish Indoor Archery championship (2 sessions: starts 10am), Linlithgow Academy

**Sat 15, 29** Sewing Workshop: Love Your Clothes - Mend And Repair class! Alterations, Sewing expert Shirley Gargan, 10am - 3:30pm, Donaldsons School

Linlithgow Rose Vs Jeanfield Swifts Athletic. Kick off is at 2:30pm.

Coffee Morning. Rotary Club - Linlithgow Grange. Kirk Hall, St Michael's, 10am.

**Sun 23** Quilting and Finishing for Beginners class! 10am - 3pm, Donaldsons School

Linlithgow Bowling Club, Annual General Meeting at 2:00 p.m.

**Sat 29** The Muckle Sing 2020, community singing groups, individual singers, workshops, from 10am, Queen Margaret Hall

**PROBUS** Linlithgow & Bo'ness Probus Club. This friendly club for retired and semi-retired men and women meets in Linlithgow Rose Social Club from 10.00am - 12.00pm every second Wednesday from September to May. A varied programme of talks, entertainment, team quizzes and visits to places of interest. Details on our web site at [bolinprobus.org](http://bolinprobus.org).

**\*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](http://www.mylinlithgow.com)

**Sat 29** Linlithgow RFC Ladies day. 7:30pm - 10pm, Linlithgow Rugby Club

## March

**Sun 1** The World Wide Wrestling League, 3pm - 5pm, Linlithgow Academy

"Men-Tal Health" talk. LifeHeal Linlithgow, 3:30pm - 4:30pm

**Tue 3-5** Sketch Up Scotland, 3 Day course for SketchUp CAD software. Paul Hensey, Linlithgow Canal Centre, 10am - 5pm

**Fri 13** UK's leading jazz singer, Tina May with Euan Stevenson, St Peter's Church Linlithgow, 7:45pm - 10:15pm

**Sat 14** Linlithgow Rose Vs Crossgates Primrose. Kick off is at 2:30pm

Kosmos Ensemble - World Music, accordion and two violins, Linlithgow Arts Guild, Linlithgow Academy 7:30pm

**Sun 15** Reiki ii & how to become a Reiki practitioner, LifeHeal Linlithgow, 10am

**Tue 17\*** Quiz at The Lobster Pot, Blackness (every 2 weeks)

**Sat 28** Linlithgow Gin Festival. Lovely gin party setting with retro deck chairs, soft cotton bunting and vintage decor. Linlithgow Burgh Halls, 1pm - 11pm.

## RAMBLERS CALENDAR

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



## LINLITHGOW MUSEUM



### SPRING TALKS

Linlithgow Museum's Spring Talks series kicks off on Thursday 27th February at 2pm in the Museum Community Room. The talk, by Alex Adamson, is on "Trial By Media" - looking at press reporting of crime during the 1800s. Tickets, including tea and coffee, are available at the museum for £5.00

## Contact the Black Bitch

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



Copy deadline for next issue is 26 FEB 2020.

## Linlithgow Film Society

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17 FEB	Outlaw King
24 FEB	Up For Love
02 MAR	Widows
16 MAR	Stan & Ollie

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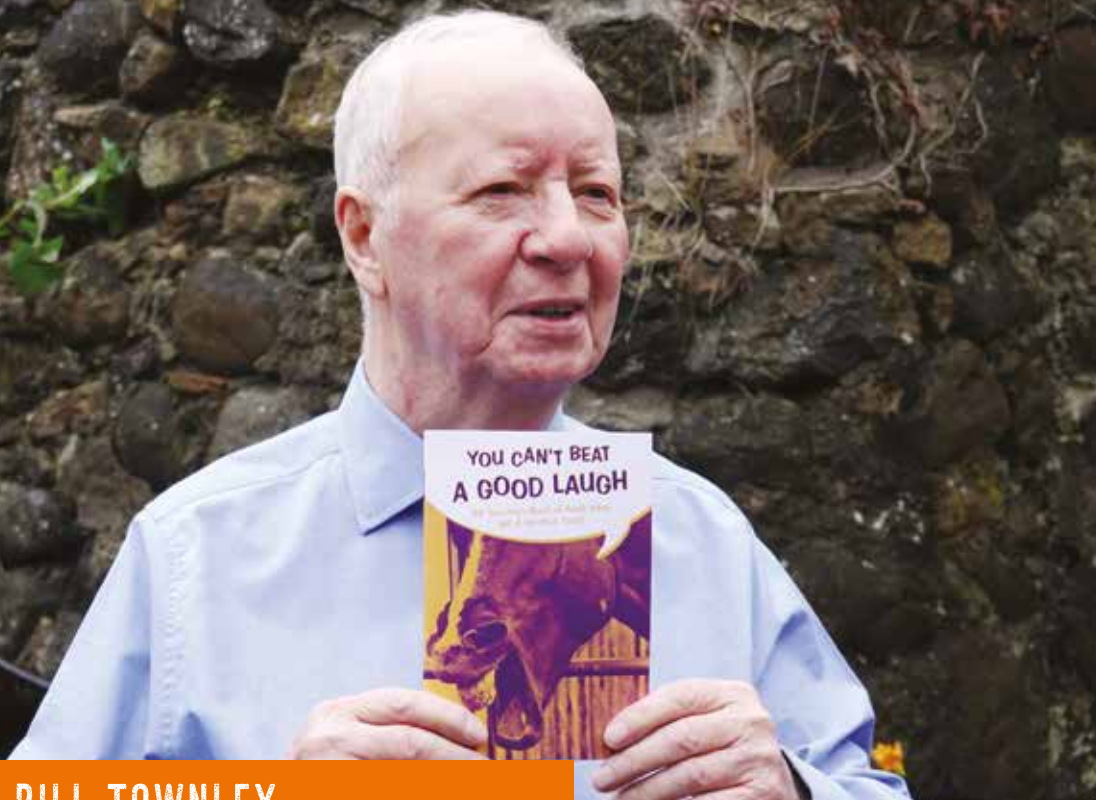
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## FOLK FAE LITHGAE: BILL TOWNLEY

**B**ill Townley believes that laughter is one of the most important things in the world. “It’s good to get a laugh”, he told me, and the 84-year-old resident of the Brae Court sheltered housing development on Linlithgow High Street regularly has his neighbours in stitches.

*“I have told jokes my whole life”, he said, “as I love to make people laugh. Most of my jokes have been collected over many years in pubs, clubs and from friends and strangers.”*

Last year, Bill set himself the task of producing a little booklet of his favourite traditional gags and 195 appeared in a compilation which he called **You can’t beat a good laugh**.

*“I had 250 booklets printed by JMK Printers at Linlithgow Bridge”, he told me. “The whole process was very therapeutic and kept me busy. When you retire, it’s nice to have something you really enjoy to fill your time”.* Bill used to volunteer at the local branch of Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland (CHSS) and he sold his booklets in aid of the charity.

*“It was good to raise money for CHSS and support the fantastic work they do.”*

Following the success of his first booklet, Bill has put together a second

collection of what he describes as *“adult jokes wi a Scottish twist”* and this will be hitting the streets in the coming weeks. Volume two will contain a further 170 rib-ticklers, which Bill has gleaned from several sources, and he reckons every one is a laugh.

Bill has lived in Linlithgow for 35 years and really loves the town. He served an apprenticeship as a clockmaker in Dundee and later worked for Comet Discount Stores for 25 years, first as manager of the Edinburgh store and later as regional manager for Scotland and the north of England. On leaving the company in 1986, he returned to his original trade and opened a clock repair workshop in Linlithgow, which kept him busy until he finally retired in 2013. Until recently, he kept his hand in by repairing clocks and installing watch batteries for the local Chest Heart and Stroke shop.

Always a very community-minded person, Bill has served in many voluntary organisations over the years. When West Lothian Council wanted tenants and residents to meet monthly to discuss council services, Bill put his name forward and served as the chairman of the Linlithgow group. He then became involved in the Council’s Housing Networks and chaired the group which met at Uphall. In more recent times, Bill also served on the committee of the local

charity, Linlithgow Link. He has now stepped back from all his voluntary commitments, although he is still involved with the social committee at Brae Court and serves as its treasurer.

*“We organise bingo nights and music afternoons and raise money through tombola stalls and things like that. It’s good fun”, he said.*

Brae Court recently celebrated its 40th anniversary and Bill is very happy living there. It has a guest suite, where residents’ family and friends can come and stay over while visiting. Residents can also take advantage of the network of 100 Bield developments all over Scotland and can use their guest rooms for a charge of £20 per night. Bill does this regularly as he travels all over the country and is particularly fond of the Bield in Broughty Ferry, where he stays while meeting up with family in Dundee, including his 93-year-old Uncle.

**Bill’s first joke booklet received coverage on Radio Forth and other local media outlets and he hopes that volume two will be equally well received. Copies will be available through various local outlets.**

**Murdoch Kennedy**



# TARTAN TEXTS

As a student with a passion for business enterprise and entrepreneurship, the opportunity to be a part of a Young Enterprise Company is one I grabbed with both hands. Young Enterprise itself is a charity organisation that helps students to set up and run their own private company and then compete against other companies from schools around Scotland throughout the year. Six other students and I, all in our final year at Linlithgow Academy, immediately gravitated towards Young Enterprise as the choice for our personal development subject this year.

Like any private company, we assigned roles to each member: Tom Lawrence, Finance Director; Ciara Benson, Operating Director; Calum Ireland & Oscar Milne, Marketing Directors; Holly Mayland, Company Secretary and Illustrator; Rhianwen Hopwood, Human Resources Director and Author; and myself as Managing Director.

We were given free rein to produce, market & sell whatever product we could come up with. At the beginning of this process, we brainstormed many different product ideas; from bamboo straws to customs made coasters, re-usable takeaway packaging to board-games. After much deliberation, we landed on an idea that we thought would engage the community and allow us to get creative – a children's story book.

Naming our company Tartan Texts we were quick to agree on setting the book locally, tying it in with Scottish culture. This led us to the creation of our book's protagonist; Harris the Haggis, who loses his two best friends, Neep & Tattie, in the streets of Edinburgh embarking on an adventure to reunite with them.

With a base storyline in place, we got busy writing the book and then illustrating it. A special mention is in order for a fellow student outwith the company, Liam Green, who lent us his outstanding graphic design capabilities to transpose Holly's illustrations onto a digital format. After months of hard work and exceptional commitment from the team, in November we finally had a finished book, titled 'Harris the Haggis: Adventures in Edinburgh'.

We promptly placed an order for 100 books from our local printer JMK Business Supplies. Our first selling event was an Academy parents' evening, after selling over 50 copies in these 3 hours, we realised 100 books wasn't going to suffice! Subsequently upping our order to 200 copies, we pushed to capitalise on as many selling opportunities as possible. In the space of two weeks we attended the Linlithgow Advent Fayre, two primary school Christmas fairs, the Young Enterprise Lothian Christmas Market, visited the Crosshouse Toddler group, and set up shop in the foyer of Sainsbury's.

Thanks to outstanding support from our community and continuous hard work from the team; we sold over 250 copies in our first month of sales, with revenue exceeding £1500 and net profit nearing £1000. These strong financial figures helped us towards winning 2nd best overall company at the Young Enterprise Lothian Christmas Market and put us in good stead for further success at the Awards Evening in March.

We hope to expand our sales into Edinburgh and work with Historic Scotland. Moreover, if we have as successful an evening in March as we are hoping for, we could make it to the Scottish Final of the Young Enterprise competition.

The Tartan Texts team and I would like to thank to our school, local community, Business Advisor Peter Nixon, business teacher Andrew McGlen, and our supplier JMK Business Supplies for the support they have given thus far.

Finally, I implore any student with a passion for business enterprise to get involved with Young Enterprise and set up their own company if they have the chance. It's an experience all of us at Tartan Texts are privileged to have had and know will prove valuable to us in the future.

**Aidan Murphy** Managing Director, Tartan Texts



# LINLITHGOW ACADEMY

- *S4/S5/S6 Prelims* ongoing as we speak! Very stressful, particularly for the new senior pupils undertaking the exam experience for the first time.

- *UCAS and college deadlines* - many S5/S6 pupils have started to hear back from universities, colleges and work opportunities.

- *S3 Ski trip* - some S3s are currently in Italy on a week long ski trip (looks incredible!)

- *Humanutopia event* - a wellbeing organisation 'humanutopia' ran extremely powerful workshops with the S4s/S5s/S6s, focusing on bullying, mental health and life after school. The group will be returning to the school in June to run similar workshops to the same years, with an aim of continuing this for younger years in the future.

**Alice Ferguson**  
Head Girl



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# LINLITHGOW'S OUTSTANDING CONSERVATION AREA

Linlithgow is a town much admired by tourists and residents alike. Its historic past has ensured a steady stream of visitors over the years and with a High Street retaining so many links to the past, the town is said to be the "Jewel in the crown of West Lothian".

Until recently.

The High Street now has two ugly gap sites which detract from the character of the town centre's Outstanding Conservation Area and are causing distress within the community. In a Scotsman article of 29 November 2004 the town's then MP, Tam Dalyell, was quoted as describing parts of the High Street as a "tragedy". What, you have to wonder, would he make of it now?

Let's look first at the seemingly abandoned eyesore in front of the McCarthy and Stone residential development, Templars Court. Sitting just over the road from The Cross - the focal point of the town for centuries past - we have an unfinished construction project not only ruining the enjoyment of Linlithgow's town centre for residents and visitors but also destabilising the adjacent listed buildings sitting to the east along the High Street.

Where previously stood the administrative office block of a bus company there is now a 30 metre section of ragged boarding which hides an area of unkempt weeds and undergrowth and the massive timber buttresses stabilising the adjacent listed buildings. The questions asked by so many residents for so long are, how did we get to this situation and when is it going to be resolved?

In 2013 planning permission was granted to McCarthy and Stone for the redevelopment of the site of the old bus depot in the High Street. The company had already successfully completed the construction of Kinloch View, a 66 bedroom retirement facility at the east end of town, and something along similar lines was proposed for the High Street site.

Planning permission for the redevelopment of the site was, however, granted on condition that the demolition of the Bus Depot administrative block should not begin until the developer had demonstrated that a contract had been placed for its replacement.

Given that condition, we asked West Lothian Council why McCarthy & Stone were allowed to demolish the buildings before they had any permission for the redevelopment of the front element of the building.

This permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

## Condition 1:

The removal of the front element of the building, highlighted yellow on the approved plan 2 of 16, is not authorised until the developer has demonstrated to the planning authority that contracts have been placed for the redevelopment of the site. For the avoidance of doubt, demolition shall not commence until written confirmation of receipt of the required information has been received from the planning authority. Until written confirmation is issued by the council, the building shall be maintained adequately in a structural condition that prevents further and unnecessary deterioration to the building fabric and that of adjoining properties.

**Reason:** to protect the visual character and amenity of the Linlithgow Palace and High Street conservation area and in order to protect the adjoining listed buildings.

The Council replied: "It is not the case that the building was demolished before planning permission was granted. The planning consent for the redevelopment of the whole site including the frontage was granted before demolition took place. A condition on that planning consent required contracts for the redevelopment of the site to be in place prior to demolition taking place." (see full Condition 1. below)

## In light of the above clearly something has gone wrong.

When the buildings at the front of the site facing the High Street were demolished the gable end of the adjoining building at 77 High Street began to move resulting in the installation of the massive wooden struts to hold up the building; the pavement edge of the site was boarded up to hide the gap behind. This time, we asked the Council why McCarthy & Stone - who demolished the building - did not have a legal responsibility to re-develop that part of the site which is currently blocked off from the High Street by boarding and is currently derelict.

They responded by confirming that it was unfortunate but the council did not have any planning powers which could be used to obligate a developer to complete a development.

Furthermore, when we spoke to McCarthy & Stone's representative in Scotland we were told: **"McCarthy and Stone will not be building on the land. As you may be aware underground conditions at that part of the site proved particularly difficult."**

**"At the start of the development the gable end of 77 High Street was affected by the demolition of the former bus depot and McCarthy and Stone instituted remedial action. They are of the view that construction on that piece of land may have further consequences for the adjoining tenement. I understand that these underground conditions are a feature of that part of the High Street."**

What is causing continued distress within the community is the fact that this eyesore has been with us now for some years. So, what is to happen to the site?

We asked McCarthy & Stone who said: **"We offered the site to the owners of Templars Court. The company have now had written confirmation (via a majority vote of the owners organised by their own residents committee) that the existing owners at Templars Court in Linlithgow do not wish to purchase the front site."**

They added: **"The company will offer the site to West Lothian Council once the structural repair works have been carried out at the adjacent property and shoring removed from the gable. Should West Lothian Council not wish to take ownership of the site it will then be put on the open market, with the benefit of the existing planning consent."**

We then asked the Council if they had anything under active consideration to bring the situation to a satisfactory closure.

Again, their response was that it was unfortunate that the Council did not have any powers to obligate completion of the site. They are however continuing to negotiate the removal of the hoarding and buttresses and are encouraging the

owner to bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion to improve the appearance of this key site in the High Street.

In a further response McCarthy & Stone have told The Black Bitch magazine that a schedule of repair works has been agreed with West Lothian Council Planning and repairs to the tenement will begin in early January with a target finish date of the end of February. The repair process would involve the installation of steel support channels across the western gable bolted through the existing masonry structure all as per plans approved by the Council.

So, by the end of February 2020 the appearance and structural stability of 77 High Street will have improved to some extent but this still leaves open the question as to who carries responsibility for the gap site at the heart of Linlithgow's Outstanding Conservation Area that will remain hidden behind the grubby hoarding – and what is to be done about it.

Colin McGill

### Editor's Note:

The wholly unsatisfactory situation now developing on Linlithgow High Street is the subject of much discussion and conjecture as to what has gone wrong -- and what is to happen now at these prime locations. In an effort to answer some of those questions, firstly in connection with the Templar's Court development, we have asked West Lothian Council and McCarthy & Stone some preliminary questions to see if some sense can be made of it.

In this article we've reproduced answers to some questions put to the principal parties, questions which appear to raise more questions than answers - was Condition 1 adhered to in the manner intended? What evidence of difficult ground conditions has been produced?

Could the existing building have been refurbished?.



Scheme for which planning permission was given.



As it may look if no action is taken.



Artists Impressions only.

- >> What do you think?
- >> Is McCarthy & Stone dodging its responsibilities?
- >> Should WLC be doing more for Linlithgow's tax payers?

We would welcome comments and opinions from concerned town groups and individuals at: [on.a.lead@gmail.com](mailto:on.a.lead@gmail.com)



## Wildfowl in Winter

### LUCY PURBRICK

Wildlife, conservation and eco-living.

This time of year is fantastic for bird watching. Garden birds are easy to spot as they flit between bare branches, birds of prey perched by busy roads await an unlucky rabbit - and all those lovely migrants too. Linlithgow is actually brilliant for a particular group of these birds - wildfowl, such as swans, ducks and geese. And that is mostly thanks to our loch.

But ducks, swans and geese are always at the loch, I hear you cry. This is true, however winter has some major benefits when it comes to birds on the loch. To begin with, those migrants (mostly ducks from Europe and the Arctic) often look really quite special. From wigeon with heads the colour of rust to goldeneye drakes displaying to the females, there's nothing better to break the greyness of a January day. Even year-round mallards and tufted ducks (large piebald birds which often float together on the water) can be great to watch.

Another positive is that chicks are now fully grown, meaning that the adults are less stressed. In my opinion, swans are deeply misunderstood. Yes, they can be aggressive

but only in the summer when they have cygnets or eggs. So that makes winter the perfect time to feed swans and other wildfowl. Regular bird seed or crumbed brown bread is best for them to digest, and throw it into the water to avoid encouraging them to seek out people for food.

If you want to see geese, you won't have much luck on the loch - only one white gander lives there year round, sometimes joined by a small flock of greylag or Canada geese. Instead head for the fields that surround Linlithgow. A lot of geese look fairly similar, but learning your birds can pay off.

My dad and I were looking at a gaggle of around fifty geese - mostly greylags, some pink footed - but two stood out. One was a greylag who had been ringed. A photo helped us to make out the letters on the ring so that we could put them into an online database, which revealed that this goose had come all the way from Greenland! But even more exciting was the other unusual goose - a taiga bean goose. This rare subspecies can't be found anywhere else in Scotland



apart from an area in Falkirk Council, making it an incredibly lucky find.

Fields can also hold wintering waders (such as curlew and lapwing) and roe deer, so it's well worth checking them out as you leave Linlithgow for the day. So don't be put off by those winter blues. Get out into nature to try and spot some wildfowl.

Goldeneye  
Drake



Wigeon



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# “NOW YOU’RE TALKING” ....

*The engineer who came to service my central heating said he could never be a Black Bitch even if he lived to be a hundred. This is because he was born in the tiny settlement of Dull in Perthshire, not Linlithgow.*

**Me:** Ah, Dull! I’ve driven through it several times. I suppose you know it was twinned a couple of years back with a town called Boring in the US?

**Eng:** Aye, and now a district in Australia called Bland wants to get in on the act.

**Me:** Dull, Bland and Boring, eh? You couldn’t make it up. All you’d need now is a link with a town called Humdrum to make an irresistible quartet.

**Eng:** Or better still, Dreich, if you wanted to keep the Scottish element to the fore.

Afterwards, I mused on the weird and wonderful names people in the past gave to areas of their towns and villages. There’s Backside in Banff and Assloss in Ayrshire. There’s Inchbare, Angus, and Tarty in Aberdeenshire. Once I met someone from Brawl which appropriately was not far from Cape Wrath in Sutherland.

Not to be outdone the Northern Isles give us a Twatt in Orkney and another Twatt in Shetland. You can probably blame the Viking invaders for those two, on the grounds that ‘twat’ must mean something quite different in Scandinavian dialects.

Not that Scotland stands alone when it comes to awarding capricious titles to places. Across the border lies a Splatt in Cornwall and a Splott in Cardiff. There’s Giggleswick in Yorkshire, Thong in Kent and Grope Lane in Shropshire. Perhaps a favourite with many people though, is Shitterton in Dorset. Totally unreliable sources tell me that Shitterton once had a sign for motorists which read “Welcome To Shitterton – Please Pass Slowly.” So far, I have been unable to confirm the veracity of this although there is a Piddle River in the same county.

Further afield, as seasoned travellers will testify, there’s an Innaloo in West Australia, Cheesequake, New Jersey, and a Hooker in Oklahoma, though the identity of the lady who gave her name to the place isn’t easy to establish...

*And I wouldn’t dare mention Anus or Condom (both in France), for fear of offending sensitive readers. But I’m happy to pass on my two personal favourites, these being Kissing in Bavaria and Sweet Lips, Tennessee. You’ve got to admit there’s nothing Dull and Boring about these.*

*I’m hearing in my ear-piece that an animal welfare organisation is thinking about holding their annual conference in the Linlithgow area later this year. Though the actual venue hasn’t been decided, it’s pretty safe to assume it won’t be anywhere near where the slaughter house sits. Too much animal blood has been spilt there already, although abattoir workers say a comprehensive first-aid kit has now been installed when they cut themselves on one of those horrible knives they have to use.*

If the activists do come to Linlithgow, I will be the first to welcome them. I love animals and show my appreciation for their existence by consuming hefty portions of them three or four times a week. They’re one of the principal reasons for me staying alive – a circumstance some nasty people view as a good reason for becoming vegetarians. I can only remind them of what’s embodied in the Covenanters grace:

*“Some hae meat and canna eat,  
And some wad eat that want it,  
But we hae meat and we can eat,  
So let the Lord be thankit.”*

What I can’t understand is why there isn’t a comparable group for vegetable welfare. Research shows that vegetables emit ultrasonic screams when they’re hurt. According to the University of Tel Aviv tomatoes give out 35 distress signals an hour as the pickers close in. Nonetheless, heartless people across the world continue to scythe down grain crops, uproot parsnips and mow down innocent grass on their lawns. It’s a disgrace!

Help is on the way, however. I am already taking steps to establish a vegetable welfare society. So far I’ve only got as far as framing some suitable slogans.

*“Stop Murdering Mushrooms”...  
“Protect the Pea”... “Save the Spud”*  
What do you think?

**Kirk Gates**



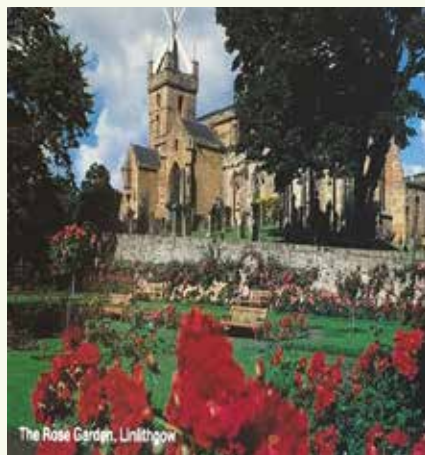
Illustration: Sandra Gibson. E: sandragibson2004@yahoo.co.uk

# LINLITHGOW'S PEACE GARDEN

## A NEW VISION FOR A DREAM OF THE PAST

SEE OUR ENCLOSED  
PEACE GARDEN  
LEAFET

Sitting at one of the benches in the summer sunshine in the Linlithgow rose garden, just behind the Burgh Halls, the words of Romain Bussine's poem, *Après un rêve* (after a dream, immortalized by the composition of Gabriel Faure) spring to mind. A dream of a past slowly ageing and being taken over by nature.



The Rose Garden has still a meditative effect on those who visit and enjoy the peace and quiet between what is left of the roses surrounded by trees. It is an oasis of calm but the reality is that few people come here now. Access is via the steps on the southside or through the Burgh Halls and as there are steps into the sunken garden itself it is very difficult for people of limited mobility.

Whilst the planting in the garden is maintained by the council on a regular but very low frequency basis it is inadequate for care of roses, and control of annual weeds so there is a distinct sense of neglect. The paths and walls also show distinct signs of age. A long way from the original image on postcards when it was at its best.

The area behind the Burgh Halls has a varied history. From 1876 the land housed the Grammar School. The school burnt down in 1902 and in 1903 a group of local businessmen purchased the ground and gifted it to the Council for the benefit of the town under the terms of a trust. In 1909 the curling club requested permission to build a 'curling pond' on an area of 'vacant ground' behind the Burgh Halls. The pond can be seen on OS maps up to the 1940s.

In 1946 the last surviving trustee requested that the land be transferred to the Ministry of Works. The Ministry then coordinated development of a 'New Park' for Linlithgow.

The current garden was opened to the public on 5th August, 1950 as part of this

project to transform what was, "formerly inaccessible waste ground between the cemetery and the Victoria Hall".

The new 'park' included a Rose Garden, Lily Pond, terraced embankment and bandstand and contained "various blooms". A place to dream, to contemplate and enjoy.



Wed  
4  
MAR

You are invited to join a discussion about this garden on the 4th March in the Burgh Halls at 7pm.

The current garden was a well-loved space but does not now serve the town as best as it might.

Attempts have been made by the Town Management Group to improve the performance of the roses by changing the soil and planting new roses. Sadly, no real improvement has been achieved. The planting around the edge borders has been simplified for easy maintenance but with no real interest or value.

**Potential improvements could include enhanced access for both ambulant and non-ambulant users. It could also include improved planting for biodiversity and encouraging pollinators. Introduction of year-round seasonal interest and colour in the choice of plants as well as planting that reflects the history and heritage of the site. Heritage roses, suited to the shady environment and perhaps as climbers on the north wall would be included as would other plants, taking ideas from the 'Lost Annet House garden.' It is envisaged that the latest ideas on sensory planting and designing for Mental Health would be included in the design process and plant selection.**

**It is proposed that the Garden should be leased from the council by the Peace Garden SCIO. All the original trustee's conditions and purposes will be maintained and the new Trust will be able to raise funds for the changes to provide the 'new' Garden!**

It is envisaged that the care and support of the garden will in future be the

responsibility of the Peace Garden Trust who will encourage a community team to manage this. Existing examples of such community effort are the old Annet House garden team and Burgh Beautiful. The trust aspiration is for the town's people to be involved in the design and then the Care and Maintenance.

The trust have engaged a Landscape Architect who will help facilitate the community consultation. The aim is to listen to all comments, questions, suggestions and concerns from members of Linlithgow Community for whom the

revamped garden is intended.

The Peace Garden Trust envisages a garden that is open to the public and is appreciated and used by residents and visitors of all faiths and no faith.

The garden will have no religious function and will not be a war memorial.

Over the last 12 months many concerns have been raised. The details of all questions have been passed to the Landscape Architects for inclusion in the design process.

One key concern was the lack of consultation and this invitation is the first step in addressing that particular concern.

Just as it was in the past, the trust believes the garden can be recreated into a garden for quiet reflection. Absorbing the stillness and calm and enjoying nature all year round.

**The trust is holding a consultation event on the 4th of March 2020, from 7.00-8.00pm in the Linlithgow Burgh Halls. You are invited to join us to discuss the vision for Linlithgow's garden.**

**The event will be followed by a two-week period where comments can be left in the Burgh Halls or made online via the Peace Garden Facebook page. We look forward to seeing you. faillte gu garradh gleann lucha**

To enable the Linlithgow Garden project Linlithgow Peace Garden SC048583 has been created as a SCIO.

# ROSE CLUB

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



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Bookings £35 per person  
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AND, FOR SADDER DAYS, FUNERAL TEAS.

>> DOMINO COMPETITIONS  
ON WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON.

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COMMENCES

>> **FRIDAY 31 JANUARY**  
for 10 consecutive Fridays.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**CONTACT: DAVID MCDOUGALL**  
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## Lochside PLAYGROUP



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MONDAY-THURSDAY (TERM-TIME)

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# SEWING WORKSHOPS

DONALDSON'S SCHOOL, LINLITHGOW

23  
FEB

## Quilting and Finishing for Beginners

with Esther Anderson, Purely Patchwork  
Sunday 10am - 3pm

29  
FEB

## Love Your Clothes: Alterations

with Shirley Gargan  
Saturday 10am - 3.30pm

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Stolen Chords

Public Art in Linlithgow will hopefully continue to enhance our town and be of interest to tourists too. You should have noticed the new Black Bitch statue located opposite St Peter's church by now, and Dudley was installed at the Canal Basin in 2018. A statue of St Michael is planned for the Low Port area, and the newest proposed project is a set of mosaic panels. Planning permission has been submitted for an installation west of the Vennel flowerbed. It's hoped there will be funding to help improve this area with shrub beds, possible seating and quality frames for each of the six mosaic panels, plus a seventh interpretative panel.

It all began early last year with a donation from Platform 3 and its customers. This carried the request to involve children with something that would contain environmental and floral elements and be clearly associated with Linlithgow. A set of mosaic panels which were linked together, yet with each having something different to say was considered and the subject of climate change was proposed.

The proposal was put to the six primary schools in Linlithgow and Bridgend and was received with enthusiasm. Each school was given a different topic and asked to incorporate an icon representing Linlithgow such as St Michael's spire or the River Avon. Designs were produced by the children and once all the ideas had been talked through a design for each school was agreed upon.

Tiles, tools, glue and grout were provided, and work has started on the mosaics which will be on cement fibre boards donated by Equitone. Having dabbled in mosaic myself I'm looking forward to this colourful addition to the High Street. It's anticipated there will be a display in the old Library window shortly, elaborating on what is intended, so the public can see what our creative primary school children are up to.

### Linlithgow Jazz

I probably shouldn't be writing about Linlithgow Jazz this month because the February gig is already Sold Out! I just wanted to highlight the success of this monthly music event in town and urge you to think well ahead if you wish to go, as it's been regularly selling out recently. Tickets from Eventbrite or Far From the Madding Crowd and it's generally on the first Saturday of the month. If you fail to obtain tickets you will catch Sue McHugh of Linlithgow Jazz fame, singing in Du Vin Bouchers with "Stolen Chords", from 3-5pm on the last Sunday of the month. Having attended in December I can recommend this as the perfect lazy Sunday

## Mario Caribé's Boteco Trio



Boteco Trio draw on the vast Brazilian repertoire, including samba, bossa nova, baião and choro. Led by Brazilian multi-instrumentalist, Mario Caribé (nylon strung guitar, cavaquinho, bass) and powered by Stu Brown, the 'one man samba school', on drums/percussion, with Brian Molloy on sax, clarinet and flute, they bring the buzz and excitement of Rio's streets to Linlithgow.

**8pm (Doors 7.30pm) Friday 7th February 2020**  
**St Peter's Church, 153 High Street, Linlithgow**  
 Tickets £12 (£8 for 16 and under) available from: 07849 509407 and 'Far From the Madding Crowd', 20 High Street, Linlithgow

Coming Soon: 13 March: Tina May with Euan Stevenson.

Sponsored by Velch Solicitors & Notaries

afternoon, with a glass of wine in hand.

### Red Door

The next Red Door event is on Friday 7th February. It's described as "accomplished Braziliance from bassist Mario Caribe's deeply rhythmical, beautifully melodic troupe". Apparently they are going to bring the buzz and excitement of Rio's streets to Linlithgow, so I plan to be there. The next two events are on 13th March and 23rd April. Tina May, a leading UK jazz singer with a big bright personality will be here in March, and The Scottish National Jazz Orchestra's star alto saxophonist, Martin Kershaw and the brilliantly accomplished pianist Paul Harrison mark the centenary of bebop pioneer Charlie Parker in April.

### Tina May





### The Line Gallery

Finally, The Line Gallery celebrates its 25th year in 2020, and opens after the January break with an exhibition by wildlife artist Lucy Newton. Celebrate both from 7 to 9pm on Friday 31st January.

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



### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*"just because it is not in a museum does not mean it is not art"*

## ART OUTINGS

### THE BP PORTRAIT AWARD SCOTTISH NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

The BP Portrait Award is on at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in Queen Street until March 22 and admission is free. I always try to catch this exhibition and it never fails to impress. It's the most prestigious portrait painting competition in the world with a total prize fund of £74,000.

A fixture at the National Portrait Gallery, London for 40 years, the BP Portrait Award is now in its tenth year in Edinburgh, and continues to be an unmissable highlight of the annual art calendar.

## "Hit Me Shake Me Blow Me"

Lorraine Robson



I recently heard that local artist Lorraine Robson had been selected to exhibit at the prestigious Collect 2020 at Somerset House. It's not an event I'm very familiar with, but the more I read about it the more I understood how big a deal this was.

It's an International Art Fair for Modern Craft and Design and it's the craft sector's premier showcase, bringing together galleries, artists and collectors from around the world. It offers visitors an unrivalled opportunity to see contemporary, museum-quality craft from makers represented by many of the world's best galleries and this is its 16th year.

However, in addition to the main fair, Collect Open presents new ambitious craft installations by individual artists and collectives. It's about development of practice, rather than just exhibiting similar pieces to those they may have showed before. Individuals must apply to exhibit at Collect Open and go through the selection process. Lorraine did that last year and was delighted and somewhat stunned to hear that she had been selected as 1 of 12 artists from around the world (and the only one from Scotland), to present an installation in a room of her own in Somerset House. What an amazing achievement! It's also a unique opportunity to present the unexpected to an influential and high-profile audience.

*Since the summer last year when she got the news, she has been spending a lot of time in her wonderful studio in Threemilietown. Lorraine is immensely grateful that the project is supported by the National Lottery through Creative Scotland and for the sponsorship by Potclays Ltd. This will allow her to travel to London and be at Collect 2020 throughout, as well as cover some of the costs involved in such a large project.*

I had the absolute pleasure of meeting her in her studio and having a very comprehensive and interesting chat through her process. She trained in sculpture and now works as a ceramicist, producing mostly one-off, labour intensive, hand-built, sculptural rather than functional, pieces.

I saw the work in progress for Collect 2020, along with much of her previous work. I'd happily have most of her studio contents on display in my own house - I found a lot of the work to be stunning in its simplicity, thought-provoking, calming and immensely tactile. You may have seen her beautiful ceramic vessels and jewellery in The Line Gallery in Linlithgow, or in many of the other galleries she has exhibited in for over 20 years.

*Her installation at Collect, which is called "Hit Me Shake Me Blow Me" was inspired by her experience of a family member with vascular dementia. It was moving to hear her talk about how she had brought many elements of the symptoms of that disease into designing the piece. It was also clear that the process of working with her hands and clay helps Lorraine deal with the effect of losing someone to dementia. She also aims to generally raise awareness of the benefits of creativity for mental health, in particular, the value of creative engagement for those with dementia diagnoses.*

Even without all the background knowledge that Lorraine shared with me, I am sure visitors to Collect will be impressed with the installation, comprising numerous maraca-like ceramic vessels, similar to those in the photos. It's promising to have the wow factor, while having a contemporary edge and serenity which hopefully will encourage visitors to spend time in her small room, away from the busyness of some of the other galleries. Lorraine also plans to have some of the ceramic sculptures available for visitors to touch which will I'm sure add to the experience. I'm so looking forward to seeing the photos, but if you are in London between 27th February and 1st March I'd encourage you to go and see it for yourself.

I wish Lorraine much fun and success at Collect 2020.

Pat Swan





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**Do you remember 1994? The National Lottery started and the Channel**

**tunnel opened; Torvill and Dean won the ice-skating championships; 'Four Weddings and a Funeral' was released and 'The Vicar of Dibley' first appeared on our TV screens. And almost 600,000 people in the UK had access to the internet in their homes !**

**1994 was a big year for Fairtrade, too, because that was the year the 'Fairtrade Mark' was launched in the UK. Yes, the Fairtrade Mark has just celebrated its 25th birthday.**

And what a lot has changed in that time. Back then, only a few chocolate bars, coffees and teas were Fairtrade certified and you had to buy them from specialist traders. Now, there are over 6,000 Fairtrade certified products, and it's not just tea, coffee and chocolate - there's gold, flowers, rice, oranges, beauty products, cotton, ice cream, wine, footballs,... almost anything is available as Fairtrade. Nor do you need to seek out a specialist supplier for most items, as Fairtrade foodstuffs are available in all our local supermarkets and most of our cafés, and many of the major clothes shops now have at least some items made with Fairtrade cotton. But if you want something a bit special, why not pop along to

# 'MARK'ED FOR 25 YEARS !

Linlithgow's own ethical and fairtrade shop on the High Street, Fair Tradewinds?

The Fairtrade Mark hasn't been the same throughout the 25 years, however. Originally, it was an interlocking 'F' design (does anyone remember that?) and it was only in 2002 that Britain adopted the black, blue and green design of a person waving which is so familiar today. Indeed, a recent survey found that nine in ten (91%) British shoppers are familiar with the Fairtrade Mark, and 84% of consumers put their trust in it.

So what does the Fairtrade Mark mean? Most of our cocoa (e.g., for making chocolate), coffee and tea, and much of our cotton, etc is produced by small-scale farmers in the developing world, who are at the mercy of fluctuating world market prices and unscrupulous multi-nationals and middle-men who want to drive down the price as far as possible. But the Fairtrade Mark means that farmers have been offered a guaranteed minimum price for their goods, set at a level which safeguards the sustainability of their business. So if the world price for their produce is high then they receive the full market rate, but if it drops then the price paid for Fairtrade items will not fall below an agreed minimum, which prevents them being forced out of business for no fault of their own. It allows them to plan for the future and invest in their business for improved productivity. Fairtrade standards also mean that basic health and safety procedures - the type of thing you and I take for granted - are introduced when growing and processing the goods.

And on top of that, there's the Fairtrade Premium. This is a percentage of the profits which is paid back to Fairtrade producers for the benefit of the local community. It could be to invest in new equipment to expand the business, or schooling, or improved water supplies or health care, but whatever it is, it is decided by the local community for the benefit of all, not by a committee in Britain.

The familiar black Fairtrade Mark shows that the product is fully Fairtrade certified, but sometimes only one of the ingredients in a food product might be Fairtrade. In order to encourage manufacturers to use

even one or two Fairtrade ingredients in their products, and so boost the market for Fairtrade goods further, the Fairtrade Foundation has introduced a white-backed Fairtrade Mark with the name of a specific product, such as 'cocoa' or 'sugar'. That means that, although the whole product might not be Fairtrade certified, it has been made with a named ingredient which has been produced to Fairtrade standards.

So is that 'job done'? Since almost everyone recognises and trusts the Fairtrade Mark, and Fairtrade products are readily available on shelves and hangers, does that mean it's 'problem solved' and we can now move on to another worthy cause? Well, regrettably not, because the need to choose Fairtrade is even more important than ever. Clothing manufacturers are under even greater pressure to produce clothes cheaply, and small-scale farmers in developing countries are battling with the uncertainties of climate change. Choosing Fairtrade means that clothing manufacturers are supported to maintain health and safety standards, and farmers can get support and expertise to combat the impact of climate change or diversify their businesses. So please keep on looking out for, and choosing, the Fairtrade Mark.

**Each Spring we celebrate Fairtrade Fortnight, and in 2020 it runs from 24 February to 8 March. This year, in Linlithgow, one of our activities is to encourage local cafés to produce cakes using at least one Fairtrade ingredient. Why not drop in to one (or two!) of the Linlithgow cafés during that fortnight and look out for one of the cakes with a special 'Fairtrade' topper? And keep an eye on our Facebook page - we'll be inviting a number of local 'celebrities' to have their picture taken eating a Fairtrade cake. Just look at [f linlithgowfairtradepartnership](#) during Fairtrade Fortnight and see who you can spot!**

**Ian Fowell  
Linlithgow Fairtrade  
Partnership**

**from  
24  
FEB**

## ALL HAIL THE TRAIL

Since it was started and continued with BID support, the Linlithgow Ale Trail - now the Linlithgow Trail - has been a resounding success.

This can be measured by the fact that Linlithgow Pub Watch has seen this (now self-financing) addition to the town's attractions give out almost 20,000 T-shirts to those who complete the Trail.

This has not simply translated into custom for the eight participating pubs, with stag and hen parties, birthdays, or groups of friends out for a good time: Ian Gibson, mine host at Platform 3, and Secretary of Linlithgow Pub Watch, reckons it now generates around quarter of a million annually for the local economy at large.

*"People taking part may eat or buy gifts in the town, and many like the town so much they return with family or friends."*

Ian said that since the Trail started in 2014, Linlithgow Town Centre BID (now One Linlithgow) had injected some £13,000 into the venture and the pubs involved had made a substantial contribution, mainly towards the T-shirts.

*"We have now provided further improvements to the High Street, with large tiered planters near Platform 3 at the start of the Trail, and close to the West Port Hotel at the finish. We also put up 12 attractive Christmas decorations - four at The Cross, and one each outside the West Port, Black Bitch, Kelpies, The Crown, 1807, Four Marys, and Platform 3. They've been much admired."*



**ONE**  
**LINLITHGOW**  
BUSINESS. COMMUNITY. ENTERPRISE

## UP TO PLENTY IN 2020

The festive motifs aren't the only artwork to be admired in recent weeks. The Black Bitch sculpture at the "serpentine bed" (opposite the Golden Chip takeaway) has been turning heads for all the right reasons. She's an integral part of Linlithgow's heritage and has rightly taken pride of place in the heart of the town.



The tireless work of Linlithgow Burgh Trust's Ron Smith was the primary driving force behind the project. It was funded, again in part by the BID, but also the Town Management Group,

community groups (see previous issue of this magazine) and a very successful local crowdfunding campaign.

After a busy and successful festive season, businesses reported that December's late-shopping evening was by far the most successful to date. Many participants had customers queueing out the door, stocks of mince pies and mulled wine were decimated with extreme prejudice, and the Christmas soundtrack kept spirits bright. Thankfully, the weather was kind this year! It always helps, but the event is really gathering some excellent traction in any case.

Our video of the Advent Fayre reached 11,000 viewers and quite right, too! The event was as magical as ever, with the community turning out in force all day long. One Linlithgow is discussing with community partners (chiefly Linlithgow Community Development Trust) how best to make it even bigger and better in 2020.

Town centre CCTV is finally seeing some physical progress after being beset by delays and setbacks throughout its development. A cabinet has been installed next to the CCTV pole at The Vennel, with underground works, ducting and cable splicing now complete.

The connection will be activated in the coming weeks, after which installer FPG (based at Mill Road) will be able to calibrate the cameras from West Port to The Cross, making that half of the town centre system fully operational. Immediately after that, the second phase (The Cross to Low Port and Regent Centre) will begin. After one round of civil works at The Cross, the full system should be working, since that half of the system is wireless.

Further updates will be shown in this regular submission.



## SWEET LITTLE CHEESECAKE CAFÉ

Carol Paton proved the truth of the old saying “every cloud has a silver lining” after she suffered a setback in her attempt to move her successful cheesecake business from Armadale to Linlithgow.

She was unable to secure the High Street premises she wanted - and ended up with a much larger place nearby that allowed her to combine this with her long-held dream of opening a café.

In the short time since it opened, the Sweet Little Cheesecake Café in the former Linlithgow Papercraft shop has proved a big hit with locals and visitors alike.

It offers a bewildering array of cheesecake - naturally! - but also a wide selection of imaginative breakfast and light lunch offerings. The emphasis is on healthy eating and on catering for children.

Carol said she and her partner James, with a five-year-old son, Ryan, knew how tricky it could be to eat out with young ones.

*“At the café I’ve ensured that there is a good range of options for kids, and that they don’t just appear as an after-thought on the menu, as is so often the case.”*

Carol said that her own background was in events management after graduating from Napier University with a degree in Business Management.

*“I really loved the jobs I had, but after I had Ryan the hours were proving too unsociable.”*

With the inspiration to bake from her mum and gran, she took several courses to develop her skills.

## BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

*“I opened up the cheesecake production in Armadale about 18 months ago, and it was a huge success, largely through word-of-mouth. Aside from locals, we had a range of corporate clients. We required more space due to the high demand for made-to-order occasion cheesecakes, plus keeping the shop stocked with freshly made ones.”*

Many customers had commented, Carol continued, that it would be fantastic to be able to sit in and enjoy their cheesecake and a coffee:

*“When the opportunity eventually arose to have much larger premises in Linlithgow it seemed very much like a win-win situation.”*

Carol added that her intention was that the Sweet Little Cheesecake Café would be very active in the local community.

*“We want to sponsor local events and support charities in the area. We will also be running frequent competitions for our customers on our Facebook page.”*

## BRIGHT STAR TOYS

Linlithgow youngsters have been persuaded to lay aside their smartphones and tablets, at least for a time, by a new toy shop in town that is exciting their imagination.

Bright Star Toys can fairly lay claim to the description “traditional” and it’s what it has to offer that is resonating with many young people - and not a few of their parents.

Owner **Ian Melville** has been pleasantly surprised at the change of emphasis he has encountered after more than 20 years in retail in the West of Scotland, mainly in toys and arts-and-crafts supplies.

*“The kids here appear to want more stuff that is educational and creative, and I see that on a daily basis, being encouraged by their parents.”*

Ian said that he was not attempting to take on the Amazons of this world with expensive “must-have” toys.

*“Kids can come in here with their pocket money and purchase something that is fun and affordable, and that they can look at and handle before they buy, which they can’t do online.”*

Encouraged by his wife Kristine and 16-year-old son Ethan, Ian decided to branch out on his own and open what is a fairly small outlet in the former Linlithgow Pet Shop.

But it belies its size with its wide range of toys, collectibles, games, jigsaws, and arts-and-crafts materials. Unless you know what you are looking for, browsing can be a lengthy - and enjoyable - experience.

*“I had a Pokémon card swap session recently,” said Ian, “and it was a huge success. OK I stock cards, but it was fun to see so many kids swap their own cards with other collectors.”*

Ian said perhaps the most popular craft line was Hama beads, with designs being ironed on by parents. He intended to have design sessions in the shop, and he would iron on designs for youngsters.

The most popular range in his shop, he continued, was “Squish Mallows”, which originated in the US.



*“There’s another consignment of 12 characters coming in January, and they’re selling fast. They’re being spotted everywhere, and one was even seen recently on Coronation Street!”*

Ian is also stocking a wide range of quality models of endangered species, underwater creatures, and dinosaurs.

*“We’ve also a large collection of jigsaws from 12 to 1000 pieces, including Harry Potter, Toy Story, Pokémon, Spider Man, and a range of Disney characters.”*

*And just to prove the “traditional” description is justified, Bright Star Toys have snakes and ladders, ludo, tiddlywinks... and little bags of beautifully coloured marbles!”*



# MOSAICS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Most P6 & P7 pupils in Linlithgow and Bridgend Primary schools could tell you about the Mosaic Project currently being worked on. But the whole story will be bigger than the sum of the parts!

## The Beginning

It all began early last year with a donation from Platform 3 and its customers. This carried the request to involve children with something that would contain environmental and floral elements and be clearly associated with Linlithgow. There was much deliberation. The Great Tapestry of Scotland gave inspiration. Could we create mosaic panels which were linked together yet with each having something different to say? Given the clamour of children's voices led by the young Swedish environmental activist, Greta Thunberg, could climate change be the common theme?



Linlithgow Primary has led the way in mosaics with its 8 panels outside the main entrance. This has withstood the elements for 10 years and more. The school's experienced staff, Mrs Connor and Mrs Bennie were very encouraging. It was possible. The proposal was put to the six schools and received with enthusiasm plus a call for plenty of time.

## The Process

Each school was given a different topic and asked to incorporate an image associated with Linlithgow as shown in the table below.

Primary School	Theme	Linlithgow associated image
Springfield	Climate Change Matters	St Michael's Spire
Linlithgow	Trees Capture Carbon	Rosemount Park and Union Canal
Low Port	Plants for Diversity	Learmonth Gardens and the Ross Doocot
St Joseph's	Insects and Pollinators	Water Yett and down to the Loch
Linlithgow Bridge	Water for Life	River Avon and Viaduct
Bridgend	Protect our Planet	Linlithgow Bus an important link

The children embraced the Climate Change issue with enthusiasm, learning new skills from teamwork to actual tiling. The theme fitted into school curricula, producing many individual designs. Class discussions and collaboration then led to amalgamation of designs producing one that was agreed upon.

Children at Linlithgow Primary School wrote "Trees are beautiful, they provide shade and also homes for wildlife. More importantly trees capture carbon dioxide and release oxygen into the environment helping to keep the air clean."

Children at Bridgend Primary School said "We thought about our allotments and how we need to grow more of our own food and eat less meat that comes from abroad."

In October, a workshop was held for volunteers and mentors who would work with the children; templates were produced by experts at Linlithgow Primary School; tiles, tools, glues and grout were provided. Cement fibre boards were donated by Equitone.



## Progress

Schools are working at different rates depending on size of classes plus staff and volunteers' availability. One has an after-school club, another is giving staff dedicated time for the project while others are allowing a few children at a time to do tiling with a mentor. It is a big project requiring guidance, time and care. There is some delicate work in assembling pieces of tiles in assembling the flowers which lead down to the Loch from the Water Yett. Capturing trees has used larger chipped tiles while small square tiles make up the Burgh Beautiful logo. These photos show work in progress.



## Future - completion anticipated by next term

This project not only encourages creativity but conversations about the impact of climate change on all our lives. Once on public display, later in the summer, it is hoped they will inspire us all to act with hope for the future and our children's lives.

Teacher, Mrs Kerr from Springfield Primary School, said "I want pupils in 20 years' time to be saying 'I did that.'"

Many believe in the concept behind the project and that the children's input will deserve public recognition in a central location. As mentioned in November's Black Bitch magazine, the sadly neglected Vennel area west of the Vennel flowerbed has been highlighted as a perfect place and is the preferred option. Funding has been identified to help improve this area with shrub beds, possible seating and quality frames for each of the six mosaic panels plus a seventh interpretative panel. An application for Planning Permission was submitted to West Lothian Council before Christmas and the outcome is due very soon.

We want to involve the public in this evolving project. Hence, there will be a display in the old Library window at the Vennel from Monday 27 January until 29 February showing some more of the children's work in progress and the plans for the future display at the Vennel.

from  
**27**  
**JAN**

"I'm proud to be part of this mosaic, it's going to be here for a long time" says Isabelle Cairns LPS

Written by Burgh Beautiful  
Youth Working Group:

**Margaret Gunstone, Kirsty Leonard  
and Averil Stewart**

Sat  
7  
MAR



# LINLITHGOW HONOURS SCOTLAND'S "KING OF FOLK"



LINLITHGOW  
FOLK FESTIVAL  
ASSOCIATION

**F**olk music fans will pay tribute to the memory of the late great Matt McGinn at an evening of songs and music in the Linlithgow Academy Theatre on Saturday March 7th at 7.30pm.

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

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

Since 2002, Linlithgow Folk Festival Association has played a pivotal role in reviving Matt McGinn's songs, stories and poems and presenting them in an innovative and entertaining way.

Previous tribute nights in the town have played to packed houses. This year's event promises to be maintain the high standard, with singers and musicians of all ages from throughout central Scotland interpreting their favourite Matt McGinn material.

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

For many years, the late Nora Devine ran the famous Linlithgow Folk Club and brought Matt McGinn to the town on several occasions. Like much of the Folk Festival, the Nora Devine Stage is a free event, where people can come along and enjoy first class entertainment at no expense.

Tickets for the Matt McGinn Night, priced £12, can be obtained from Far from The Madding Crowd at 20 High Street (Cash sales only) and from Linlithgow Folk Festival Association Tel. 07910 729 736

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



**Murdoch Kennedy**



# NEW YEAR, NEW FINANCIAL VIEW

Virtue Money



Virtue Money

It's that time of year again, Christmas and New Year celebrations have past and it's the time we start to think what we'd like for the new year both for ourselves and our finances.

It's a good time to take stock of what we have, think about where we would like to be financially and actually make changes with a view to making positive differences.

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

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

**Savings** – have you taken advantage of the ISA allowance (currently £20,000 in the 2019/20 tax year)?

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

However, if you are between 18 and 39 you can apply for a Lifetime ISA, you can use this to either buy your first home or save for your retirement.

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

What to do with the money you saved well, as regular readers will know we at Virtue Money specialise in pre-retirement. We are firm believers in alleviating the "Cost of Delay"



regarding pensions. In effect this means that we advocate utilising as much of your available pension input as you can afford, as soon as you can, to maximise growth.

In a previous article, we talked about you helping your children or grandchildren and the fact that you could aid them in their retirement, by starting to contribute to a pension for them now. Anyone can contribute £2,880 (£3,600 after tax relief), in the 2019/20 tax year, or have contributed on their behalf, annually whether they have "earnings" or not.

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

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

*Sir Francis Bacon is attributed*

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

If you would like to make an appointment to speak to one of our advisers, please contact me, [Susan Ralston, directly on 0345 034 3424 or email me at Susan@virtuemoney.com](mailto:Susan.Ralston@virtuemoney.com). Your first meeting with an adviser at Virtue Money is completely free of charge so you have nothing to lose. *Ilit venet moloreprae et utendebit, ut harit aut fugita volupid*

## Make the Rest of Your Life the Best of Your Life



*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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# FREE CONSULTATION

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LINLITHGOW  
DISTILLERY

We have something for everyone's taste on Valentine's day, why not try our Four Marys Forever Fresh garnished with passion fruit!

And it changes from blue to pink!



LinGin and the Four Marys are available locally from; Taste Deli, Hopetoun Farm Shop, Mannerstons Café & Farm Shop and Champany Cellars.

## BOOK REVIEW

# Let's Go to the Moon

PATRICIA M STEWART, LOCAL AUTHOR



*"The moon was shining brightly... smiling down at the two friends."*

In this charming story for young children we join Robbie, a little brown rabbit filled with courage and determination and his friend Scott, a very enthusiastic squirrel who is a willing partner in adventure, as they refuse to believe that it is impossible for rabbits and squirrels to travel to the moon.

Robbie and Scott are very busy indeed as they scurry around making preparations for their ambitious journey. Author Patricia has been thorough about the resources that the two friends will need on this important mission. Young children will enjoy being involved in the story as they too could imagine the preparations needed for such an adventure.

This is the second book for children written by local author Patricia M Stewart and she does not disappoint. Drawing inspiration from the wildlife surrounding Linlithgow she has penned another delightful tale of friends learning to work together to solve problems and overcome adversity; important themes for any child's development.

With a nice mixture of dialogue and action for the characters, the story culminates in a daring feat for Robbie and Scott mixed with some wholesome, good-natured humour.



'Let's Go to the Moon' is a truly lovely adventure for children and one which my little boy enjoys snuggling up to before bedtime.

**Lisa Nettleton**

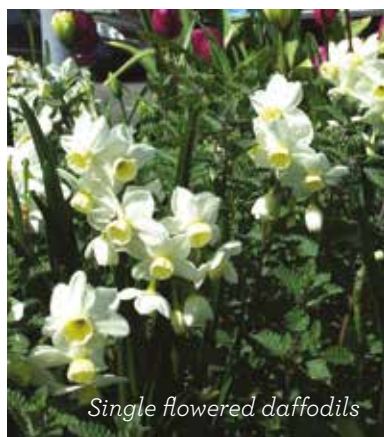
Lisa Nettleton is a teacher and enjoys reading on her daily rail commute into Edinburgh.



# A WEED IS ONLY A PLANT IN THE WRONG PLACE!

**S**ome things we can change, others we can't and in this situation we just need to make the best of, or even try to enjoy the thing we wanted to change but couldn't!

This is as true in gardening as it is in all life and we have had this dilemma with the flowerbed in St John's Avenue that we look after. When we took it over in March 2011 it was full of Lesser Celandine. This is one of the earliest flowers to appear in late winter and carpets of the little yellow flowers against the rich green leaves do make a splendid sight. But in our gardens it spreads rapidly and can swamp other small plants so we tend to think of it as a weed – certainly in our flower beds it is a 'plant in the wrong place'!



*Single flowered daffodils*

It has little white bulbils under the ground that break up very easily when you dig them up and any little pieces left grow again. Initially we tried to dig it out and then sprayed any bits that appeared with glyphosate weedkiller. Then we were able to put in all the shrubs and perennials that we had chosen to provide nectar and

pollen to visiting wildlife from late winter to late autumn. Over the following years we reapplied weedkiller where we could avoid hitting other plants and hand weeded small plants like Heather, hardy Geraniums and Tumbling Ted which were a little threatened by the 'weed'.

Last spring the whole bed looked superb in late winter covered with the yellow Celandines as they had won the battle with us! We thought that we might need to remove all the smaller plants and leave the larger shrubs that weren't threatened by the carpeting celandines and leave the ground bare so we could get rid of the celandines again. Of course this would mean we were not going to be providing much needed food for visiting wildlife pollinators.



*Spring performers*

But as the Lesser Celandine is such a good provider of food for the early pollinators, and it dies down and disappears completely during the Spring we have decided to stop thinking



of it as a weed and to enjoy its early display and provision of food. We will need to continue to protect the smaller plants with hand weeding but this is only a small chore. We sell a form of Lesser Celandine with rich burgundy coloured leaves called Brazen Hussy but it is not invasive like the species we are now enjoying at St John's Avenue!

**Keep an eye out for the display of yellow flowers this spring amongst the heathers, and single flowered daffodils!**

**Dougal Philip and Lesley Watson,**

New Hopetoun Gardens



Top: Jacqueline and Liz putting in new plants in 2011 with celandine leaves dying down in the foreground.

**so much more  
than just a  
garden centre**

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

**NEW  
HOPETOUN  
GARDENS**

**ARE YOU 35 THIS YEAR?**

**OR DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS?**

**35 IS THE 'GARDENER'S BIRTHDAY'**

Send us their name, date of birth and address and we will send them a **£35 Voucher** to spend here at New Hopetoun Gardens!

# POLICE LINLITHGOW POLICE NEWS

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!!!

## PARK AND STRIDE

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

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

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

*Road safety is the responsibility of everyone, so if your children are heading off to school have a think about how they are going to get there, unless there are mobility issues the majority of children are capable of walking or if driving consider a safe drop off.*

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

You would be surprised that your younger children may be all for this!!! Studies have shown that children who walk to and from school arrive more alert and ready to start the day.

Share this with school children and help keep them safe.

## CALLING ALL LINLITHGOW PARENTS

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

Unfortunately some of these groups have been involved in the consumption of alcohol, drugs, setting fires, shouting, swearing and littering the local areas. Police and other partners are aware of these issues and will be conducting patrols in the area. This behaviour is having a negative impact on the local communities and there are also concerns regarding the personal safety of those involved in this conduct. The police would encourage parents in Linlithgow to have an open discussion with their children, as to where they are going and what they are doing when out with friends in the evenings and check the contents of their rucksacks.

Active parenting skills are required, to challenge and check on their children's whereabouts and encourage young people to make good decisions, focusing on keeping young people and communities safe.

## WINTER ROAD SAFETY

- > Ensure your car is winter ready – are your tyres, brakes, windscreen wiper blades and windows free from defects and clean?
- > Make sure all your lights are in working order
- > Be aware of changing road conditions. In severe weather increase your stopping distances
- > Drive too fast and you'll put yourself and others at risk.
- > Prepare for longer journeys
- > Before setting off check local weather forecasts and heed warnings regarding bad weather
- > Don't use a mobile phone or any device which could distract you whilst driving.
- > Drink driving – don't risk it.



## 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](mailto: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](http://www.scotland.police.uk)  
Twitter: @policescotland  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/policescotland](http://www.facebook.com/policescotland)

## NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCOTLAND

Increasing public awareness of the existence of Neighbourhood Watch Scotland and their Alert system.

This system allows users to receive alerts from Neighbourhood Watch and Police Scotland. The idea being that if there has been a recent crime trend, then officers from Police Scotland can send an alert to all users who may be effected or who may have an interest in the crime.

The alert would normally be received by means of an email, however in urgent situations it can be sent by text message and / or voice message. The scheme has numerous uses but from a police point of view it can be used to alert the public about:

> **Crime Trends** – recent crimes that have occurred in their area, housebreakings etc.

> **Missing Persons** – Details of High Risk missing persons can be broadcast to specific areas.

Members of the public can register online and the registration process is very simple. You can register as an individual or an association such as a residents association or community council / community group.... Or both!!!!

The key to the Neighbourhood Watch Alert system being a success is YOU, we require the public to register online; the more people who register the better. You can register at [www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk](http://www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk)

Latest available house price data from Registers of Scotland is for November 2019 and whilst it shows a small increase in the average price of a property in Scotland as a whole at £182,232 an increase of .002%, in West Lothian the average property price has risen from £168,302 to £181,475, a substantial increase of 7.8%.

It is widely acknowledged amongst property professionals that recent political uncertainty and Brexit has had a slight drag on buyers' and sellers' confidence, which is borne out by the fact that the total volume of transactions in Scotland in November 2019 was 8,942, a drop of 3.6% on the total volume of transactions in November 2018 of 9,284.

That said, there are important regional variations and at Paul Rolfe, we actually saw our number of house sales rise by just over 10% in calendar 2019, compared to 2018.

Whatever your political views, we believe the December election result should provide more confidence going forward, and even if the Brexit timetable is met, we are still almost a year away from any material changes to our trading relationship with Europe and the wider world. The fundamentals also remain unchanged. That is, the low cost of mortgage borrowing, population growth and lack of supply.

Figures published the NHBC, the leading warranty scheme for new builds, show that volume of new builds being registered remains broadly static, with 3,291 new builds registered in Scotland in the period September 2019 to November 2019, compared with 3,375 for the same period in 2018.

### Preparing to sell your Property

Whilst we at Paul Rolfe are always happy to conduct viewings for seller clients, you may decide that this is something you want to do yourself, and so we have produced this guide for you on how to prepare for and conduct a viewing with potential home buyers.

>> Making your home as attractive and inviting as possible is key, and is a large topic, and we can provide all the advice and help you would need, but let's assume you have got your home looking the way you want it to for viewings. Remember, it is said that very often



people make up their minds about a property within 90 seconds of seeing it, first impressions really count.

>> Get the heating and lights on in all the rooms a good 10 to 15 minutes before your potential buyers arrive. Your home needs to be warm and bright, you don't want to walk into a room and wait for 30 seconds to a minute for the energy saving bulbs to heat up!

>> As far as possible use softer table lamps and other mood lighting rather than ceiling mounted lights, kitchens and bathrooms excepted of course, this creates a softer and more intimate atmosphere. If you have an open fire or wood burning stove, light it and get a good flame going.

>> TVs' are distracting so switch them off, but some soft music at a low volume can add to atmosphere. Scented candles not overdone, fresh coffee smells in the Kitchen. This may sound all a bit clichéd and twee, but trust us, it works.

>> Plan how you are going to conduct the viewings, the order in which you are going to show buyers around the different rooms in your home.

>> Start and finish the viewing in the most impressive room in your home, such as your living room or open plan kitchen/family room if you have them.

>> Allow your viewers to walk into each room in front of you, so you offer the least distraction to them of their first impressions.

>> Stand adjacent to a wall, not in the

centre of the room, this makes each room look as spacious as possible. This is especially important in the smallest rooms in your home, usually the bathroom, consider standing just outside the bathroom by the door.

>> Talk enthusiastically about what you liked about your home when you bought it and what improvements you may have made to it over the years.

>> Listen out for positive signals from your prospective buyers and gently reinforce these during your conversation....yes it really is quite a large living room isn't it... etc.

>> Having completed an initial tour of your home, if your prospective buyers seem to be positive about your home and assuming you are comfortable with it, invite them to have a look around by themselves, make sure they feel they are not under any time pressure. Listen out for any further buying signals.

>> Find an opportunity to gently probe your prospective buyers about their position, do they need to sell? have they sold? are they on the market? how quickly would they like to move? It is not always easy to get this information, but it can help you form an opinion about how serious they are about moving.

>> Ask them what they like and what they don't like about your home, you might not always get a straight response as a lot of people don't want to seem rude or offensive, but it is really useful to get this feedback.




# POTATO DAY

Paul Taylor, Chair  
Linlithgow and District Allotment Society (LADAS)

Sat  
22nd  
FEB

Linlithgow and District Allotments' annual seed potato sale will be held on Saturday 22 February 2020 between 10am and 12:30pm in the Masonic Hall, Linlithgow (by the Cross). In conjunction with Transition Linlithgow and Burgh Beautiful, we will be selling over 25 varieties of seed potato including unusual and heritage varieties as well as tried and tested favourites. All seed potato tubers are competitively priced and are available in small quantities. Onion and shallot sets and vegetable seeds area also for sale. All potatoes are 20p each or six for £1.00.

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

## First Earlies

Variety	Type	Organic	Heritage	RHS AGM	Comment
Epicure	F		yes		Original 'Ayrshire' potato
Maris Bard	W	yes		yes	Fast growing, high yielding
International Kidney	W				Known as "Jersey Royal" when grown in Jersey. Classic new potato
Red Duke of York	GP		yes	yes	Good flavour, large tubers, red skin
Sharpe's Express	F		yes	yes	Good for container growing, fine flavour
Pentland Javelin	F				Disease resistant, smooth skin, creamy

## Second Earlies

Variety	Type	Organic	Heritage	RHS AGM	Comment
Bonnie	GP				Attractive, pink splashed skin
Charlotte	W	yes		yes	Popular & reliable. Smooth skin
Kestrel	GP				Smooth skin, violet eyes
Linda	W				Old European variety. Yellow flesh, good flavour
Nadine	W			yes	Very high yield, mild flavour
Edzell Blue	F		yes		Blue skin, white flesh, good flavour
Sarpo Una	GP				Red skin, white flesh
Shetland Black	F		yes		Good flavour. Blue markings in flesh.
Maris Peer	W				Salad potatoes, good for boiling
Yukon Gold	W				Yellow flesh, sweet flavour

## Maincrop

Variety	Type	Organic	Heritage	RHS AGM	Comment
Arran Victory	F	yes	yes		Purple skin
Desiree	GP	yes			High yield, high resistance to drought
Red King Edward	GP		yes		Late maincrop, classic Christmas roasting variety
Linda	W	yes			Great taste, stores well, popular in Europe
Mayan Twilight	GP		yes		Attractive red/white skin, cooks quickly (approx. 1/3 less time)
Pink Fir Apple	W		yes	yes	Knobbly, so don't try to peel them. 'Nutty' flavour
Pink Gypsy	F	yes			Attractive pink & white skins, good disease resistance, early maincrop
Rooster	F			yes	Reliable, smooth skinned, delicious flavour, Albert Bartlett branded
Sarpo Kifli	W				Early maincrop salad potato, good in containers, stores well, blight resistant
Sarpo Mira	F	yes		yes	Very high yields, stores well, blight resistant, late maincrop
Yetholm Gypsy	F		yes		Unique red, white and blue skin, good flavour



*The Four Marys now occupies the low building on the left.*

**T**he land on which now stands “The Four Marys” was once owned by the powerful Hamilton family - their tenement one of several great mansions built close to the Palace, so that the residents were readily available to attend the monarch’s court.

In 1531, the site was acquired by Sir James Hamilton of Finnart who used the building as his Linlithgow base while engaged as the architect of several building projects for King James V - including the construction of the great archway at the top of the Kirkgate.



*The Orders of Chivalry held by King James V, carved on the Kirkgate Archway.*

Later convicted of treason, Sir James forfeited all his land and possessions, including his Linlithgow mansion, and was eventually beheaded in Edinburgh on 16th August, 1540. Thereafter, the original building underwent considerable architectural alterations. The frontage was moved forward and a basement storeroom was constructed. An entrance to this arched area was uncovered during renovation work in 1981. The style of construction and pottery fragments found there reveal it to have been built around the year 1570, by which time Mary Queen of Scots was in captivity in England and her half brother, James Stewart, was ruling Scotland in her place - until his assassination in Linlithgow High Street.

The hall to the rear of the building had a connection to the Knights Templar who give their name to the development next door - “Templars Court”. Their property was confiscated at the Reformation and, with the drop in Linlithgow’s fortunes, the once great High Street

## THE FOUR MARYS 67 HIGH STREET

Bruce  
Jamieson

mansions suffered a decline in their status. Some were demolished, others were split into several houses. The “Hamilton property” passed into different ownerships - at various times belonging to a flesher (a butcher), a carpenter, a dyer and a hammerman (a metal worker.) There are records of the Fraternity of Hammermen meeting in the property and forming up outside the building on Marches Day.



*The 16th century entrance to a storage area at its discovery in 1981.*



*The crest of the Hammermen’s Guild - now inset above the fireplace in the bar.*

In the mid 17th century, one of the residents was Agnes Dallop - a young girl accused of witchcraft who was burned at the stake at Linlithgow Cross in 1648. It is reported that her ghost is still heard and occasionally seen in the upper rooms of the premises.

By 1795, the Rev. Dobie recorded in the Old Statistical Account that “once a grand property, it now has a mean aspect and exhibits striking symptoms of decay.” Wood’s map of 1820 shows the owner was a Mr Smith who rented the building out to the Waldie family who eventually purchased it from him.

The Old Parish Register of St Michael’s records eight children born in the Waldie household between 1813 and 1831. The most famous member

was the first born, David. He received his early education at Linlithgow Grammar School and then attended Edinburgh University, gaining the Diploma of the Royal College of Surgeons. Initially, he worked in the family’s apothecary business where he would experiment with various chemical substances. One local story is that he tested some materials for its anaesthetic properties and left a jar containing the results lying about. The family dog was later found next to it - in a deep sleep!

In 1839, David Waldie left Linlithgow to take up a post as a chemist in the Liverpool Apothecaries Hall where he managed to perfect the anaesthetic properties of chloroform. On a return visit to Scotland, he met with Dr James Young Simpson and discussed with him the result of his findings. On his return to Liverpool, Waldie discovered that his laboratory had burned down and he was unable to furnish Simpson with a sample of his newly discovered anaesthetic.

Simpson, using Waldie’s advice, had an Edinburgh chemist make up the chloroform and duly claimed all the credit for the discovery. Waldie never denied that Simpson had played his part but he was always upset that he received very scant recognition. He ended his days in India running a chemical factory near Calcutta.

On the death of David Waldie’s father, Alexander, his mother, Agnes, operated the Linlithgow shop and then their son, George, who had already taken charge of the printing business housed in the old “Templars’ Hall” at the rear of the premises. The firm did good business, printing material for the Town Council and for Glen and Henderson - the legal business next door.



*An 1845 receipt from Alexander Waldie to the “Good Town of Linlithgow”.*

The printing house also produced booklets such as George Waldie’s own “History of Linlithgow” first published in 1856. George was very vocal about his brother’s lack of recognition in the discovery of chloroform and began a crusade to have his name more widely known. After his death in 1885, his sister, Jane, took over the business and then, in 1900 the West Lothian Courier carried this notice: “Waldie’s, the

Linlithgow Bookseller, and Druggist has changed hands and is now owned by Mrs Christina Spence, assisted by her daughter, Annie. Mrs Spence first began her own druggist company in Linlithgow in 1860. It is remarkable that one old established Linlithgow firm has fallen into the hands of another."

The Spence family expanded the newsagent side of the business and installed the most up-to-date electric telegraph equipment. It was on this machine, in 1900, that the dramatic news came through from London that the town of Mafeking, that had been besieged for months by the Boers, had been recaptured by British forces. The family claimed that Linlithgow had been the first place in Scotland to hear of the Relief of Mafeking.



### *C.M. Spence's shop around 1900.*

The Spence firm produced their own local guidebooks and postcards - many of which are now collected by enthusiasts. Mrs Spence's son, Alexander, was particularly keen on history and was for many years the Baron Bailie of Blackness. He was responsible for continuing George Waldie's work and having a plaque engraved and affixed to the front of the shop proclaiming David Waldie's role in "making practicable the use of chloroform in the alleviation of human suffering."

The shop continued to thrive, with the top floor leased out as a telephone exchange where three switchboard operators were employed until 1967 when the system became fully automatic. In 1953, 67 High Street changed hands again and became "The Charlotte Rooms", a café owned by Miss Coupar who had previously run "The Golden Cross". It was a somewhat 'twee' establishment, specializing in afternoon tea, where many a bus party visiting the town enjoying the freshly made cakes and scones.

In 1978, the building was taken over by Bill and Anne Macmillan who transformed the old tearoom into "The Four Marys". Bill sadly died in 2017 but I used to chat to him often. One story I shall always remember is when he was in the throes of renovating the building and an elderly lady walked in and accosted Bill saying she wasn't

keen on what he was doing.

### *The Waldie plaque outside the Four Marys.*

On being asked what she was doing inside the place, she replied that she had once worked there and, pointing to marks on the floor by the bar, explained that they had been caused by generations of customers waiting for their prescriptions to be made up. Bill turned to look and when he turned back there was no sign of the woman. It was a while before he realized what he had witnessed. The shop had not been used as a chemists for 60 years. Later, on being shown family photographs of the Spence family, he easily pointed out the woman he had "seen". She was Annie Spence!



### *The old Four Marys Pub sign.*

Bill commissioned a sign to be hung outside the new pub - the illustrations of the Four Marys being taken from paintings in Mary Queen of Scots House in Jedburgh. However, they were purely imaginary as no known image exists of Mary's four ladies in waiting: Mary Beaton, Mary Seton, Mary Hamilton and, Mary Livingston. (The song "The Four Marys" with its reference to "Mary Carmichael and me" has nothing to do with Mary Queen of Scots!)

The Macmillans eventually sold out to the Scott family who introduced real ales and hosted many a Civic Trust theme dinner.



### *A Jacobite themed dinner.*

In 1997, Belhaven Breweries took over and employed managers Eve and Ian Forrest. Today, it is in the hands of Greene King, the UK's biggest brewer and pub retailer. I wonder how many of its customers know of the fascinating history of the place in which they are drinking?

## PLANNING MATTERS IN LINLITHGOW

This article follows on from a couple of contributions last year which described the role of the planning system and the main planning issues facing the town. The series for 2020 aims to keep readers on top of key planning applications and other developments that will have a significant impact on the town.

If you want more detailed information on planning applications, go onto the Council's website and search under "Planning Portal". It's not the easiest website to navigate but perseverance pays. If you are looking for more information on planning policies and land allocations, you can also view the West Lothian Local Development Plan (adopted 2018) online.

*By far, the biggest planning issues facing the town are current and future housing applications and the town's historic High Street.*

Whilst the need for more housing (particularly for younger people/first time buyers/people on lower incomes) is widely recognised, there are serious concerns about the effect that this will have on existing infrastructure such as schools, health and community services, parking, and increasing congestion on the High Street and the local road network. If these issues are not addressed, existing services and amenities will become overloaded and the road network increasingly difficult to negotiate.

Our historic High Street, classed as an 'Outstanding Conservation Area' has two gaping 'gap sites' (former Victoria Hall and area in front of Templar's Court). The temporary shoring adds to the unsightly and neglected appearance of both sites which presently seem to have 'stalled' in terms of developer interest. (see more detail in the article on p6). This is entirely unacceptable for a High Street with the world famous heritage of Linlithgow, and where maintaining a high quality public realm is important for residents, tourists and businesses.

*In terms of keeping up to date with important planning applications and other matters, the following may be of interest, based on our understanding of the issues and timescales involved:*

**Wilcoxholm Farm** (Planning permission in principle application for approximately 200 houses) (Application reference 0340/P/19). The period for making a decision has been extended until the end of January to allow time for the applicant to address some of the issues which have been raised. These include road access and flood prevention.

**Preston Farm, off Preston Road** (pre application consultation reference 1097/PAC/19). (Approximately 60 houses) A pre-application community consultation event took place in December 2019, affording the opportunity for members of the public to comment on the likely form that any future planning application might take. A planning application is currently expected in February.

**New Advertisement Guidance** - the Council approved in December 2019, updated guidance covering changes to shopfronts and advertisements in a number of Conservation Areas including Linlithgow (Palace and High Street). The guidance is intended to help retailers, commercial operators and their agents improve the quality of design when altering or replacing shopfronts and associated advertising. In following the advice set out in the Planning Guidance, applicants should be able to achieve shopfront solutions appropriate to the property's historic context. Linlithgow Civic Trust, in association with the Council and others, hopes to produce an 'easy read' version of the Guidance in the near future.

**Joyce Hartley**

# NEW YEAR, NEW OPPORTUNITIES!



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

*So if you're looking to try something new this year, and get fit and make friends in the process, then netball could be for you! Our recreational netball sessions are open to all abilities and fitness levels, you just need to be over 18.*

If you've thought about coming along but haven't been sure, we answer some of your potential queries below.

**"I haven't played since primary school."**

Lots of our members hadn't played since primary school when they started. Our sessions are designed for women getting back into netball.

**"I have never played before and I don't know the rules."**

We are all about fun and so it doesn't matter if you haven't played before. We cover the basic rules when you start and build up your skills and knowledge gradually.

**"I thought you were all very serious and only played in league games."**

We do have a development squad who play in the Central Netball Association league. However, that is only one part of our club! Our recreational sessions are for people who are getting back into netball, haven't played before, or just want to play for fun.

**"When and where do you play?"**

We play every Wednesday 7.30 - 9pm at Xcite Linlithgow. Your first session is free, so you have nothing to lose!

**"Do I have to commit to coming every week?"**

No not at all, we appreciate that everyone has busy lives with work and family commitments. You pay as you play, so you only pay when you come along. We do have a loyalty card though, so after ten sessions you get one free!

**OUR PLAYERS SHARE WITH YOU WHAT THEY LOVE ABOUT NETBALL.**

*Gillian Young joined the club this time last year and has developed a love of netball.*

*"This time last year I saw an advert for Linlithgow Flyers Bounce Back to Netball. Having not played netball since school (a lot of years ago!) but looking for fun exercise I plucked up the courage and went along. I am SO glad I did as in the last year I've learned loads of netball skills and rules, met a brilliant bunch of amazing people (who are all SO friendly), got fitter and even won a gold medal to impress my kids.*

*If playing netball appeals to you even just a little then be brave and come and give it a try, I guarantee you won't regret it."*

**Gillian Young**



*Eirwen Hopwood is a regular at our recreational sessions.*

*"I've been playing BBN netball with Linlithgow Flyers for over a year now, and I've loved every moment. I was looking for a way to get fitter and thought I'd give netball a go even though it hadn't really been my sport at school either!*

*It was daunting at first, but everyone was so friendly, supportive and welcoming, after a few sessions I had a better idea of what I was supposed to be doing and haven't looked back!*

*Not only have I got fitter, I've made so many great friends, gained new skills and improved my confidence, I'll never be a great netball player but love taking part as part of the team.*

*The icing on the cake was winning our first tournament at the end of 2019."*

**Eirwen Hopwood**



**FURTHER INFORMATION ON LINLITHGOW FLYERS NETBALL CLUB**

We have three sections of the club, so as well as recreational netball, we have competitive netball and junior netball.

Our development squad have two teams, Thunder and Lightning, who play in the Central Netball Association League. There are annual trials, recruiting internal members from the club, if you are interested in playing competitively.

We started the Junior Club in September, after holding taster sessions over the summer holidays. Our Under 10s train on Monday nights and our Under 13s train on Tuesdays. The girls have made great progress already after only one block! We have a waiting list, but please contact us if interested at [linlithgownetballjuniors@gmail.com](mailto:linlithgownetballjuniors@gmail.com).

So hopefully we have inspired you to come along and try netball! Our recreational sessions are every Wednesday 7.30-9pm at Xcite Linlithgow, the first one is free!

Follow us on Facebook at:  
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**Helen Hassall**





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**This month's Pet of the Month is Max, the 17 and a half year old cat!**

## Hello I'm Max

His owners describe Max as their little lion! Max was always getting into mischief and hiding in cupboards when he was younger. As he matured, he grew fiercely protective of his siblings and his garden which resulted in a couple of serious fights and vet visits. Some health issues began to slow him down and now at 17 and a half, he is the most docile, sweet natured kitty ever.

The other cats in the house love him and constantly vie for his attention, Max, however, just wants to be left alone to sleep. If he's not sleeping, he's eating and can often be found purring away on his owners' pillow or begging for human food!

Max loved to climb and jump, the indoor cat tree, the kitchen door and cupboards, trees in the garden. Now with his arthritis he loves nothing more than a cuddle on his owner's lap. His current happy place is tucked up in his new ultra-fluffy bed next to the kitchen radiator.

Older cats often benefit from small changes to your home. These little things can make a big difference to your cat's quality of life and help them cope with any aches and pains they are experiencing.

Older cats will appreciate having a variety of cosy, well-padded beds in safe, warm places that are easy to reach. If your cat likes sleeping somewhere high, help them climb up by providing a ramp or a stool. Hammock-style radiator beds are especially warm, which older cats may appreciate. Cushions under window sills, radiators and ramps make perfect crash mats for uncoordinated or wobbly cats.

Senior cats may find it more difficult to look after their coat. Gentle grooming will help keep their skin healthy and provides valuable bonding time. Stroking a cat is a great de-stressor and may also help lower your blood pressure!

Always provide several litter trays in the house, even if your cat has toileted outside all their life. There will be times when an older cat needs an indoor litter tray, such as when it's raining, or if the usual toileting site is frozen, or if they feel intimidated by neighbouring cats. Place the litter trays in quiet areas of your home so your cat feels safe.

Large litter trays give your cat plenty of space to move and low sides make it easy for them to get in and out. Some litters may be too rough for an elderly cat. Don't make any sudden changes, but provide additional trays with 3cm of soft, fine litter

that will feel more comfortable under their paws.

Older cats are less able to defend themselves and their territory, so they can become more anxious and more dependent on their owners.

Keep them company in the garden and think about providing a newly dug over border close to the house if your cat still wants to toilet outside.

**Microchipping your cat will greatly improve your chances of being reunited with your pet if they wander off or get confused and become lost.**

**If you see any changes in your cat's behaviour, have any concerns or would like to get more information, the Westport Team can help on 01506 844165.**



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## Black Bitch Cards for Sale

To celebrate the unveiling of the first of Linlithgow's Civic Insignia, there has been a reprint of the Black Bitch card designed by Silvana Donaldson now an S2 pupil at Linlithgow Academy.

Packs of 4 are on sale at the Post Office for £3.50 with 100% of sales being donated to Burgh Beautiful.

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