



the **BLACK** *bitch*

Linlithgow's news by Linlithgow's people

LINLITHGOW COMMUNITY MAGAZINE ISSUE 72 MARCH 2020



'PUBLIC ART' ON THE HIGH STREET

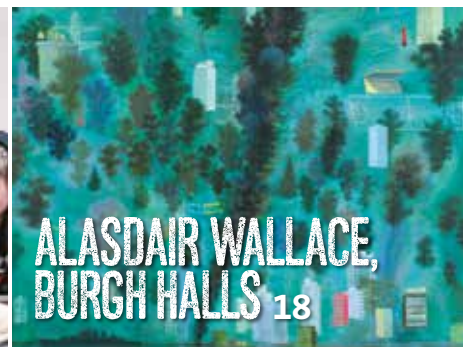
OF THE ANCIENT AND ROYAL BURGH OF LINLITHGOW P19
Ron Smith with the striking 'Black Bitch' sculpture unveiled in a beautiful setting



BB MAGAZINE
SUBSCRIPTION 2



THE DONALDSON
TRUST 11



ALASDAIR WALLACE,
BURGH HALLS 18

PLUS

ONE Linlithgow, Lucy Purbrick, Kirk Gates, Police Scotland Updates, Planning Updates, McCarthy & Stone, Ross Miller debut album launches in Linlithgow...

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A very big thank you to everyone who has subscribed to the Black Bitch community magazine.



The Linlithgow Advent Fayre on 30 November last year saw the successful launch of the magazine subscription in the Burgh Halls when we enjoyed hearing from many magazine readers and supporters. This was followed by the distribution of application forms with the magazine at the end of January and a very satisfactory response. So, to everyone who has subscribed and supported the magazine to date a very big "thank you" from all our volunteers who give so much of their time to make the magazine possible.

The Black Bitch has grown considerably since its start in 2011 with a consequent increase in workload. The aim of the subscription plan is to allow us to continue to grow and introduce some efficiencies in administration, production and delivery to deal with the increased workload. With so much already happening, and much more to follow, in and around Linlithgow in the coming months and years our aim is to keep the community informed and in a position to be able to make a considered contribution to all that is changing as the town develops and grows. Our aim is to spread the funding load as widely as possible so that we can keep the

community informed of all the various group activities, events and fundraising initiatives going on in the town while at the same time providing sustainable, independent and fair commentary on decisions being taken on behalf of the community.

We will continue to promote the Black Bitch itself so watch out for further news of the magazine subscription. Our aim is to have a large number of small subscribers so please consider donating what you can to help keep the community informed. And don't forget Gift Aid – that adds 25% to the value of your subscription courtesy of the Government, a valuable addition at no cost to the donor! Many thanks again to all our advertisers, subscribers, contributors and everyone else who helps make the magazine happen.

CONTACT THE EDITOR TO REQUEST A SUBSCRIPTION FORM AND GIFT AID APPLICATION TODAY.

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WHAT'S ON IN MARCH

March

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

Ashley Palmer Trophy, Aussie Rules Male And Female Tournament, Linlithgow RFC, 11:30am - 2pm

Kiran Millwood Hargrave, author the Mercies, Far From The Madding Crowd, 3pm - 5pm, St Peter's Church

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

Wetland Wildlife Wander, Historic Environment Scotland, 1pm - 3pm, Linlithgow Palace and Peel

Tue 17, 31* Quiz at The Lobster Pot, Blackness (every 2 weeks)

Joanna Trollope, author of Mum & Dad, 11am Burgh Halls, Far From The Madding Crowd

Fri 20 Scott McMaster - "The Outlaw King; how accurately did Hollywood portray Robert the Bruce?" 7pm - 8:30pm St Peter's Church

Sat 21 Antique, Vintage & Collector's Fair, 9am - 4pm, Linlithgow Academy

Poetlander, 1pm - 2:30pm Midhope Castle, organised by The Jacobite Bard

Rotary Club of Linlithgow Grange (RCLG)

Marches Music Concert at Linlithgow Academy, Friday 12th June starting at 7:30pm.
Bingo Night in the Rose Club, Wed 22nd April starting at 7:30pm. Tickets - The Line Gallery.

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.

***Note:** Events consecutive - over several days, weeks or have weekly sessions. Check website for further details.

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

Sun 22, 23 Blood Transfusion Service, 10:30am - 12:30pm, 2pm - 4pm, 5:30pm - 7:30pm, The Low Port Centre

Mother's Day Sparkling Afternoon Tea, 1pm - 4pm Linlithgow Burgh Halls

Tue 24 Linlithgow Butterfly Identification Workshop, 10am - 3pm, Linlithgow Burgh Halls

Wed 25 Author event: Liquid Gold Robert Morgan-Grenville, 7pm - 9pm Linlithgow Canal Centre

Sat 28 Launch concert for Ross Miller's debut album titled 'The Roke'. 8pm - 10pm, Queen Margaret Hall

Saturday art class for P6 -S6 pupils and summer art workshops. Drawing/ painting techniques. 12:30am - 3:30pm, Linlithgow Bowling Club

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

SWI West Lothian Annual Show of work and display of competition entries. 2pm - 5pm Linlithgow Academy

Sun 29 Rad Tour 2020, West Lothian Clarion Cycling Club, 8:30am - 3:30pm Linlithgow Sports Club.

Cookie Monster cake workshop, 10am - 4pm, cake decorating skills, Truly Scrumptious Designer Cakes

LifeHeal Anxiety Workshop led by Sam & Erica. Become calmer, more peaceful, with increased confidence and self esteem. 11am - 3pm, LifeHeal Linlithgow

LINLITHGOW MUSEUM



SPRING TALKS

Antique, Vintage & Collector's Fair returns to Linlithgow Academy Saturday 21st March

Talk by Scott McMaster, Historical Advisor to the movie 'The Outlaw King', entitled "The Outlaw King; how accurately did Hollywood portray Robert the Bruce?" Friday 20th March

Contact the Black Bitch

For editorial and to advertise: on.a.lead@gmail.com

Editor: David Tait, 07767 713024



Copy deadline for next issue is 8 April 2020.

Linlithgow Film Society

CINEMA IN THE COMMUNITY

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FOR INFORMATION CONTACT

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www.linlithgowfilmsociety.org.uk

16 MAR

Stan & Ollie

RAMBLERS CALENDAR

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



The Linlithgow Community Magazine (aka The Black Bitch) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO): SCO42542
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The paper we are using is FSC approved.
Images: A big thank you to all our photographers who support the magazine throughout the year.

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PHOTOGRAPHY



Since the last edition of The Black Bitch in which we published the saga of the gap site left by McCarthy & Stone in the High Street, we have received an amazing response from our readers, the people of Linlithgow.

As you will recall, we contacted both the developer, McCarthy & Stone and West Lothian Council to ascertain why the site was still vacant and what could be done about it. The developer said that a schedule of repair work had been agreed with WLC to restore the property at 77 High Street by installing steel support channels across the wester gable, bolted through the existing masonry as per plans approved by WLC.

The work, they said, would be started in early January and be completed by the end of February. As we go to print the work has not been completed and there is little, if any, sign of activity on site.

Another issue which was raised by the developer about the site of the original building at the edge of the High Street was: *"Underground conditions at that part of the site proved particularly difficult."*

Further investigation by us has shown that in actual fact WLC had issued a

building warrant – LIV/13/0968/BW – to allow the frontage to be developed as per the original plans.

We also unearthed information from public records which showed that there was an amendment to the foundation design under the Building Warrant in 2016 to provide piling and ground beams. This, we believe, may have required a site investigation report to support that design.

So, reading between the lines and not taking a particularly large leap of faith, it would appear that the work was probably going to be too expensive for the developer to complete. That is just our view - a guess - based on what we discovered.

And here is where the problem really requires some expert advice. We have to ask if the cost of supporting the foundation of the new building added to the cost of making good the repair to the gable end of the property at 77 High Street would be such that the project would not be financially viable.

That is the practical side of the problem. We also have to look at the legal implications and, where appropriate, seek

When we began our investigation into the gap site on the High Street in front of Templars Court we at the Black Bitch magazine had a single aim – to facilitate a closure to the problem.

*Ideally that would mean moving on the scheme for which planning permission was originally given which would comprise a couple of ground floor retail units with two storeys of habitable flats above. **How would this be possible? And what sustainable reasons are there for not progressing this action?***

The Editor

some way to encourage the organisations – McCarthy & Stone and WLC – who have been involved in this sorry mess from the start, to take responsibility for their actions. Or inactions.

It would appear from the fact that McCarthy & Stone have virtually cleared out their senior staff from Scotland that they are not really interested in the site. They have paused the repair to the gable at No.77 and have offered the vacant plot to the residents of Templars Court who, as we reported last time, have turned down the offer.

Where do we go from here?

Let's look at a selection of your letters which provide suggestions, but to be fair, raised even more questions than we have asked about the way forward.

Organisations like the Community Council, Civic Trust, Historic Environment Scotland, Scottish Civic Trust etc as well as our representatives at Holyrood and Westminster should be made aware of this problem and how strongly the local community feels about the lack of action to devise a solution.

Colin McGill

"As a resident of the town for over 30 years, like many other people, I am appalled at the eyesore which has been left at the site in the middle of the old town opposite the Cross..."

Secondly if it is irrefutably confirmed that MandS have fulfilled their obligations and therefore have no responsibility for the mess, the focus has to turn on the council...

Finally, what are our elected representatives doing about this, our three councillors and, as planning is a devolved matter, our MSP Fiona Hyslop."

Linda Hardie

"I think the area would lend itself to a plantation of small ornamental trees, with paving to cut down on maintenance and a seat positioned a little way back from the road."

Kirsty Leonard

"I do believe that McCarthy and Stone are dodging its responsibilities, however West Lothian Council should now step up and do something about the situation as it is to them we are paying Council Tax."

Mary McCann

"I have lived all my life in Linlithgow and was born on the High Street..."

The Cross has become an eyesore for both locals and tourists...

McCarthy and Stone needs to take responsibility...

We need answers TODAY AND NOT TOMORROW."

Les Neary

"In my opinion the planning department should take full responsibility... the residents and the town (left) in total despair. Criminal really."

Valerie Dillon

"How un-astonished I am to hear that WLC find themselves unable to resolve the issue of the gap site created..."

With centuries of legislation behind us, WLC have been stitched up like a bunch of amateurs."

Alan D Hannan

"The claim that the underground conditions prevent them from completing the development is clearly spurious..."

It raises the question of why they demolished the building rather than renovate it."

David Atkinson

I wonder if West Lothian Council has learned any lessons from the situation?...

It is just yet another example of WLC not doing enough for Linlithgow's taxpayers."

Jim Hannan

"The town centre looks "shabby" for residents and visitors..."

"Yes, WLC could... do more for Linlithgow residents."

Paul Topping

"I am a retired lawyer...specialty criminal law... (not a planning lawyer Ed)... hard to believe... wonder what an expert in planning law would say... has been a clear breach of contract... I have no doubt that the Council could sue the developer for damages - why has it not done so?..."

It may be that a public spirited lawyer with relevant experience of such cases would be willing to assist."

Andrea Burns



PLANNING MATTERS IN LINLITHGOW

This article is part of a series of updates for 2020 which aim to keep readers on top of key planning applications and other developments that will have a significant impact on the town. Previous articles have described the role of the planning system and the big planning issues.

Remember that if you want more detailed information on planning applications, go onto the Council's website (www.westlothian.gov.uk) and search under "Planning Portal". If you are looking for more information on planning policies and land allocations, you can view the West Lothian Local Development Plan (adopted 2018) online.

By far, the biggest planning issues facing the town continue to be current and future housing applications and the town's historic High Street. Previous articles have discussed the need for new housing but with concerns about infrastructure. The threat to the appearance of our historic High Street caused by the two unsightly gap sites continues to draw comment, with development/completion appearing to have 'stalled' at the time of writing.

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). At the time of writing, it is not known if the additional information required to address issues which arose during the consultation process has been submitted and what impact this will have on the application. The situation continues to be monitored.

Preston Farm, off Preston Road

(pre application consultation reference 1097/PAC/19). (Approximately 60 houses) Since the pre-application community consultation event in December 2019, an application for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion has been made (0060/EIA/20). It is the view of the applicant that in terms of the relevant regulations, an EIA is not required. Should this view be accepted by the Council, it is vital that the application is accompanied by thorough assessments of the impact of development on the landscape setting of the site, wildlife/protected species and the historic environment (i.e. the Union Canal and the Category 'A' listed Preston House).

It is also important that the full impact of the development on local infrastructure, particularly schools and roads is known and the appropriate measures/funding put in place to mitigate these impacts.

High Street Gap Sites - at the time of writing, there appears to have been no further movement on the McCarthy & Stone (Templars Court) and the Victoria Hall sites. Both the Linlithgow Planning Forum and the Linlithgow Civic Trust continue to discuss ways in which satisfactory solutions might be found to enable development of both sites.

The Vennel Redevelopment - readers will recall the draft Planning Guidance produced by the Council in 2017, relating to the potential re-use or redevelopment of land and buildings in the vicinity of the Vennel. The proposals were the subject of extensive public consultation in 2017. The Council will now be seeking committee approval to ascertain the market viability of any future development proposals. The Linlithgow & Linlithgow Bridge Community Council was successful in its participation request and has agreed terms with WLC for its involvement in the initial stages of this project.

Annet House - a planning application (1268/FUL/19) has been submitted for a change of use from museum to a house, and alterations including formation of vehicular access. The vehicular

The Vennel Redevelopment



access is through the wall to the south of the property. The proposed access does not appear to impact on the form of the 'Rigg' to the rear of the property, nor to encroach into too much of the garden area. There is no other parking available and conversion back to a house is to be welcomed.

In addition to the draft Planning Guidance on the Vennel, there were a number of other items of potential planning interest, which were considered at recent Council meetings:

Planning Guidance: Planning for Nature: Development Management and Wildlife

The guidance supports Local Development Plan policies which seek to ensure that protected habitats and species are considered appropriately when the Council takes decisions on planning applications.

Next West Lothian Local Development Plan Timetable for preparation of the next Local Development Plan (LDP2). A draft plan for consultation is expected in spring 2022 rather than spring 2020. This delay is mainly due to the new Planning Act and Scottish Government's publication of secondary legislation and guidance.

West Lothian Parking Strategy

Appointment of consultants to carry out parking strategy development work.

Draft Planning Guidance: House Extension and Alteration Design Guide

Sets out matters which householders should consider when proposing to alter or extend their property and submit a planning application.

Draft Supplementary Guidance: Wind Energy Development.

Sets out the Council's proposed approach to consideration of proposals for wind energy developments and the requirements that developers should meet when submitting such proposals.

Joyce Hartley

Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council - Planning Forum



Men and women of all ages from Linlithgow and surrounding areas will no longer have to travel to Edinburgh or Glasgow if they wish any skin concerns addressed.

Skin Happy, which has just opened in the former Boutique 42 outlet on Linlithgow High Street, is offering a range of non-invasive treatments using laser, light or radio frequency.

For founder and practitioner **Tina Arnot** it is a complete career change, but will allow her to continue a passion for caring built up over 14 years in the NHS as a pharmacy technician, then 12 years as a dental nurse.

Tina, who has lived in Linlithgow for 17 years, and has two young children, worked as a Dental nurse in her **dentist husband James' practice, Bridge of Allan Dental Care**, and is continuing her role as business manager there.

Said Tina, "In 2017 I decided I wanted to take on an additional role of my own, and to be at the forefront of helping clients achieve instant results with long-term effects.

With a personal interest in laser and light treatments I could see the huge benefits and relief these treatments have on a person's well-being - not only their self-esteem, but also the confidence and happiness it creates."

Tina said she completed her combined training with Lynton Lasers and the University of Manchester, gaining a Medical and Aesthetics Training (MATA) award. She qualified with a Level 3 Certificate in the Principles of Cosmetic Practice, and a Level 4 Certificate in Laser and Intense Pulsed Light Treatments.

"I'm now embarking on additional qualifications to further my knowledge, and improve my expertise in skin and skin care treatments."

Tina said that **Skin Happy** would be offering laser hair removal which would ensure pain-free treatments due to its cooled tip handpiece, which could be used with all skin types throughout the year.

Another treatment would be body contouring. This would employ clinically proven technology, with pain-free non-surgical liposuction and skin tightening for instant inch loss, and dramatic cellulite reduction. She would also have the industry-renowned "instant, non-invasive face-lift."

Tina said she would also be offering skin rejuvenation for reducing fine lines and wrinkles, lightening any pigmentation/sunspots/freckles, and removing red/thread veins. Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) is also extremely effective on Port Wine stains and Rosacea.

"We'll also be doing a skin care range - a selection of unique products. These work in synergy with and aid all aesthetic skin treatments, enhancing treatment outcomes and long-term results.

I focus on these non-surgical treatments because it is a safe and non-intrusive way to get rapid results whatever stage of life you are at, from recapturing your youth, to increasing your confidence."

Tina said that her treatments were available for all ages over 18. But they were proving to be especially popular with 35-45+ mums entering a new phase in their lives.

She cautioned that not everyone would be suitable for the treatments at **Skin Happy**. There would be an in-depth consultation carried out to examine concerns, expectations and medical history. Then clients could make clear and informed decisions.

"What you will get at **Skin Happy** is a personal service tailored to you. I am empathetic to your concerns, treating you as an individual. I am not like a company that usually has many unknown faces, and is too often focused on sales targets."

Added Tina, "I have been touched by the warm welcome I have had from other businesses, and the kind words of everyone who has been in touch. Linlithgow's community spirit never ceases to make me proud to be part of such a beautiful town."

Skin Happy is on www.skinhappy.co.uk and also FB "Skin happy" and, IS "skinhappyme". The contact telephone number is 01506 888138.



ONE LINLITHGOW UPDATE

We're working on a brand-new edition of the Linlithgow Visitor Guide. It was last updated in 2018, so it's high time for a makeover! We're working in partnership with other groups across Linlithgow to produce a publication that better reflects Linlithgow's tourism offering, while making directions to Linlithgow more prominent (for guides distributed outside Linlithgow). It'll start distribution in April, so keep your eyes peeled for it! If you'd like to request extra copies for your business, please just get in touch and we'll be more than happy to oblige.

*We're still dealing with a backlog of enquiries after West Lothian Council issued our invoices with the name of the wrong BID on them, while pressing ahead with all the great projects we have in store! We like to try to meet everyone in person, so if we haven't got back to you yet, please rest assured we will soon! You can keep in touch by contacting office@onelinlithgow.com or calling us on **01506 205308**. If you give us your e-mail address, we'll sign you up to our mailing list, too.*

We'll shortly be issuing a business-specific survey about starting a monthly Linlithgow Market. It's important we do it in a way that helps, not hinders, our bricks-and-mortar businesses, so please keep an eye on our social media and mailshots.

Please remember that we're available in person at our 28 The Vennel office between 10am - 2pm every day except Thursday. On Thursday, it's Playbugs at Mill Road. We can also visit you at your place of business by appointment. It's always best to make an appointment, but we know not everybody's business runs that way and we are committed to being available to all businesses in the BID area.

Our revamped security kits have been flying off the shelves (perhaps unsurprisingly, as they are free of charge to businesses in the One Linlithgow BID area!). If you haven't had one yet, or if you just need a partial kit to replenish the bits you don't yet have, please contact us through the usual channels. Likewise, if your UV lamp needs a new bulb, your detector pen has run out of iodine, or your forensic marking liquid has run out, we're committed to keep everybody's security tip-top!



BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT



CRANNOG

To describe Shonagh Brown, who has taken over the popular Café Delights on Linlithgow High Street, as “experienced” does scant justice to her hugely varied background in catering.

Now called **Crannog** by Shonagh, in memory of the ancient dwelling houses said to have been constructed on islands on Linlithgow Loch, the name does more than reflect the rich history of the Royal Burgh.

It also serves as a pointer to the traditional Scottish nature of a number of dishes, with which Crannog hopes to tantalise the taste buds of locals and visitors alike.

With trademark Crannog tartan bowls of corned beef stovies, homemade Scottish cheddar macaroni, mince ‘n’ tatties, and a Scottish cheese platter, it’s not difficult to predict what will be popular choices.

The extensive menu also features a vegetarian soup of the day, and a “pudding of the day”, which will almost certainly be a traditional Scottish dish. Wherever possible, locally sourced ingredients will be used throughout.

For Shonagh, who has achieved a number of “highs” in many years in catering, Crannog is the realisation of a long-held dream.

“It was in 2007 I first tried to open a café in Linlithgow but for various reasons it hasn’t worked out over the years. I know Dick and Sheenah who had Café Delights, and when they said they were retiring and was I interested in taking over, I jumped at the chance. They have been very supportive and I’m really grateful to them.”

Shonagh said she had always had a passion for food, having graduated with a BA degree in Home Economics from Queen Margaret College in Edinburgh

in 1984. She subsequently studied for a qualification in catering and accommodation, also completing a teacher training course.

“I did teaching for a short while at Falkirk High and elsewhere, but it wasn’t for me. My real passion has always been for catering.”

In her career, Shonagh has been head chef for **Gardner Merchant at TSB** headquarters in Edinburgh, spent several years as head of catering at **Sky HQ** in Livingston, and also had spells with the franchise at pubs in **South Queensferry** and **Kirkliston**.

But over the years she has done a large amount of catering both for corporate and private celebrations. She intends opening Crannog to meet any requirements.

Shonagh moved to Linlithgow in 1988 - her husband **Malcolm** is area manager for Historic Environment Scotland - and has become well known for her catering for St Michael’s Parish Church Women’s Guild and other local groups and organisations.

COMPLETE HEALTH AT THE MILLSTONE

It’s fair to say there was much disappointment locally when **Gail Wright** announced she was moving on from Complete Health to pastures new, but fears that the popular health food store would cease to exist have proved unfounded, much to the relief of hundreds of regular customers.

The new owners, **Paul and Sandra Batchford**, admit they are on a “steep learning curve”. Paul, for whom running Complete Health is a dramatic change of career after a lifetime as a photographer in the RAF then civvy street, said that he and his wife were loving every minute of it.

“The customers are delightful and there is a lovely community feel about the shop. Although Sandra had reservations initially, she has been completely won over. Gail has been brilliant in helping us get established, given the extensive range of stock in here. Many customers have also been great giving us advice - and often locating products among the huge array on the shelves.”

The career change for Paul is perhaps not as dramatic as it might appear. He admits to being “obsessed” by food

and catering, and he has taken part in a huge range of cookery classes and courses. The latest is at West Lothian College, where he’s on a 3-year accelerated professional cookery course, which he’s been allowed to undertake with evening classes:

“I had been looking for an avenue into some sort of career in cooking, however tenuous the connection, and when I saw Complete Health was up for sale last year I was immediately interested.”

Paul said that it was while on a photo assignment some 15 years ago covering a Forth Valley College graduation at Stirling Castle that he suffered a very serious heart attack:

“I started to dream of leaving my job, which involved covering graduations in Scotland, Northern England, Ireland, and Northern Ireland, with a team under me, and had become really stressful. I realised that full-time catering could be just as stressful, and I hoped I could find a suitable opening somewhere. Now I have!”

Paul, who is originally from Nottingham, said in his **25 years as a photographer in the RAF** he served in the first Gulf War, Kosovo, The Falklands after the conflict, and in Germany.

In 1989, eight years after marrying **Sandra**, they came to Scotland, and he served 13 years at **Kinloss and Lossiemouth**.

They raised two daughters who were still up North with their families. When he left the RAF in 2002, they had moved to Central Scotland where he could get more freelance photography work.

“Sandra started work as a nursery nurse with Lesley Nock, the wife of an old RAF colleague Chris who had just started their own nursery at Oakwell near Philpstoun, where Sandra still works.”

Paul said he had helped his friend Chris look after 700 free-range hens for a time before photography work took over.

He added, *“Sandra and I hope customers will be patient with us as we learn the business. We will be bringing in a few new products, some like cured salmon I’ll be making, but it would be silly to change anything dramatically.”*



THE ROKE **ROSS MILLER**


sat
28
MAR

Ross has recently been travelling the world with performances in Australia at The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, Sydney, Ghana for the Caledonian Society of Ghana's Burns Supper and France for the Breton Pipe Band Championships with Bagad Cap Caval. He is on tour in Germany as this issue is released.

He kindly managed to find some time to do an interview for the Black Bitch magazine to give us details on his upcoming debut album.

At what age did you start piping?

I began learning the chanter aged 7 at Caber Feidh Bagpipes in Inverness. I got the lessons in the tiny shop in the Victoria Market. I received my pipes for Christmas when I was 8, the pipes are a family heirloom from my Great Aunt and I still have them now.

Is music your full time career?

Music is my full time career, I combine teaching on Arran, Wellington School in Ayr and private lessons including Skype lessons to the USA. I play at weddings, ceilidhs and perform at concerts, festivals and other events all over the place.

Tell us more about your album

My album, called **The Roke**, will be released on my 25th Birthday on 9th March and is a reflection of years of hard work honing my skills as a piper and composer.

The Roke is the tune of the Ancient and Royal Burgh of Linlithgow and I enjoy playing it every year when I wake up the town at 6 am on Marches Day. It's full title is The Roke, The Row, and the Wee Pickle Tow.

In this, my debut album, I have swapped the competition platform for a contemporary sound featuring full band arrangements, some stripped back performances and everything in between. There's even a pipe quartet where I perform all four parts.

The album is co-Produced with **Craig Irving**, a BBC Young Folk Award winner and former member of Scottish bands Mánran and Talisk. Craig also played guitar on the album.

I assembled a great band for his album. The musicians are some of my favourite to make music with and their input on the album brought the music and ideas to life. They are: **Charlie Stewart** (BBC Young Traditional Musician of the Year 2017) on fiddle and double bass, **Rory Matheson (Fara)** on Piano, **Callum Edwards (Red Hot Chilli Pipers)** on Drums and **Craig Baxter (Gnoss)** on Bodhran.

It will be available to buy through my website www.rossmillermusic.com and also available to stream on iTunes, Spotify, Amazon Music and Bandcamp.

What have been your inspirations for the Album

After being a finalist in the 2019 BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year, a Danny Kyle Award Winner at Celtic Connections and also winning the World Pipe Band Championships with Inveraray and District Pipe Band I felt it was time to record my music.

The tunes on this instrumental album are all either my compositions or my favourite tunes to play. The music ranges from tunes I played in pipe bands given a new twist to modern Reels and Jigs played with passion and verve.

Can we see you play locally?

Yes! The live launch of the album will be in Linlithgow. I have assembled the whole band who played on it and we will be playing at **The Queen Margaret Hall, Blackness Road, Linlithgow on Saturday 28th March at 8pm. £10 and £8 for concessions** for a fabulous night. It's also family orientated ie. tea coffee etc. No bar.

You can get tickets from Kapital Kilts on Linlithgow High Street, (Thanks to Mark and team for your support), my website and I'm sure my Dad will have some. It would be great to fill the hall with lots of local faces.

THE DONALDSON TRUST



Laura Watkins is the Chief Executive of the Donaldson Trust, Scotland's leading charity for neurodiversity, which is based on Preston Road, Linlithgow. Established in 1850, the Donaldson Trust has provided much needed education and other learning and development support throughout its history and has recently announced plans to increase its support to neurodiverse individuals young and old.

Do you know what neurodiversity is?

Despite one in seven people in the UK being neurodivergent, neurodiversity is a word many people haven't heard of before or don't understand.

As Scotland's leading charity for neurodiversity, we at the Donaldson Trust are committed to educating people in Linlithgow and across Scotland on what neurodiversity is and how we can all work together to improve the life experiences of neurodivergent people.

Neurodiversity is something that individuals of all ages across the country can identify as being. Neurodiversities have a wide spectrum that covers a range of hidden neurological conditions, such as but not limited to Autism, Asperger's, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Tourette's and social anxiety.

Being neurodiverse means that an individual may think and learn in a different way to others. For some people, their neurodiversity can mean that they are better at some things than many other people.

The importance of raising awareness of neurodiversity

Recently we launched the Donaldson Trust's new 10-year strategy. The 10-year strategy ensures that the Trust extends its reach to a wider group of people across Scotland by providing a range of services that promote and support the needs of neurodivergent individuals.

The Donaldson Trust currently operates a number of services from our headquarters in Linlithgow. Our Learning Centre supports young people with complex additional support needs up to the age of 18, by providing tailored educational services to meet the individual needs of each pupil.

#Jun.X10n is our transitional support service for neurodiverse young people aged between 14 and 25. It provides a safe space, guidance, mentoring, and bespoke support, with person-centred plans for each individual we work with across the central belt.

Connect works in partnership with individuals, organisations and businesses to increase the understanding of neurodiversity and improve the experiences of neurodivergent people.

Making an impact

This year has already proven to be an exciting one for the Donaldson Trust and we're only just getting started. Not only have we launched our vision for the future, but we've grown our staff base with ten new members of staff across HR, Estates, IT and Learning Support.

In recent months we've also grown our community engagement, with more groups than ever before using our facilities to deliver training, weekly classes, meetings and more. From swimming lessons to cooking and gymnastics, we want to make sure the Donaldson Trust building is fully utilised and reflects the community in Linlithgow.

We also held our first Parliamentary Reception at the end of January, hosted by Fiona Hyslop, local Constituency MSP for Linlithgow. A hugely successful evening, the event provided us with an opportunity to showcase the positive work done at the Donaldson Trust each and every day to support young people living with neurodiversities, as well as introduce our plans for the future.

What does the future hold for the Donaldson Trust?

As Scotland's leading charity for neurodiversity we will promote and develop good practice related to neurodiversity within education services, organisations and businesses. We will work in collaboration with partners to improve accessibility and inclusivity for neurodivergent people, and through our work with neurodivergent individuals will improve the representation of neurodiversity socially, politically and culturally.

Additionally, we want to build on our existing relationships with individuals, organisations and schools in Linlithgow to create a neurodiverse aware community and town.

If you'd like to find out more about the Donaldson Trust and the services we offer, or learn more about how you can work with us to spread neurodiversity awareness, contact info@donaldsons.org.uk.



Laura Watkins

Chief Executive
of the Donaldson Trust



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Linlith-Go-Solar Phase 2

Phase 1 of Linlith-Go-Solar raised £17,000 in 2018 which enabled the installation of a pilot SolarPV panel system on the roof of the training facility at Linlithgow Rugby Club in May 2019.



Phase 2 needs to raise **£25,000 by 10th April 2020** to install SolarPV panels at Linlithgow Golf Club, Linlithgow Sports Club and a secondary system of panels at Linlithgow Rugby Club. We are looking for investment from as little as £50 from local people, club members and businesses.

Why invest?

- Profits from the project will be reinvested back into the community to support local projects.
- Local clubs will get electricity at a lower price.
- Solar energy will reduce the environmental impact of community sites across the town.
- Local clubs will be supported to become sustainable, enabling them to offer better benefits to members.
- Your investment will be returned in full with interest when matured.

For more information and to apply online please visit
<https://scotcomfinance.scot/community-bonds-Linlith-Go-SolarPhs2>



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**JOANNA TROLLOPE
MUM & DAD**



Joanna Trollope in conversation

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TEN THOUSAND VISITORS TO LINLITHGOW MUSEUM



The new Linlithgow Museum welcomed its 10,000th visitor in February, ten months after it opened its doors for the very first time. The visitors in question - Ashleigh Stewart (10), Sophie Aitken (6) and Phoebe Aitken (2) - were presented with flowers as they entered the museum.

"We were delighted to welcome Ashleigh, Sophie and Phoebe to the museum, and we hope that they enjoyed their visit," said Norman Dowie, Chair of Linlithgow Heritage Trust, the charity behind the museum. *"We like to offer a warm welcome to all our visitors, but there is something special about hitting the 10,000th visitor mark – especially as it's been less than a year since we opened."*

"The Trust is busy evaluating all the activity undertaken so far and a wider report, beyond visitor numbers, will be prepared shortly," added Norman. *"Having said that, we can already report that our Spring Talks series has been a success – given that it has virtually sold out."*

The Spring Talks series kicked off in February with a discussion on "Trial by Media" by Alex Adamson, looking at the press reporting of crime during the 1800s. It will be followed on 20th March by Scott McMaster's talk on "The Outlaw King; how accurately did Hollywood portray Robert the

Bruce?", and on 24th April by a repeat of retired Consultant Psychiatrist Dr Tom Brown's talk on "Wombs, Witches and Wars - a history of psychosomatic illness through the ages".

The final talk, by Linlithgow's resident historian Bruce Jamieson, is part two of his presentation on "Mary Stewart: Fact and Fiction." It takes place on 15th May.

The museum is already planning an Autumn series of talks, with a real mix of topics and presenters, but, if anyone has any suggestions, talks organiser Alison Train would be delighted to hear from you. You can contact her on enquiries@linlithgowmuseum.org.

She also has a tip for those who have missed out on tickets this time – become a member of Linlithgow Heritage Trust. Membership costs only £15 per year (£10 for concessions) and entitles you to preferential booking for events, among other things.

All the money earned from membership fees and ticket sales is used to keep the museum up and running, and this is also the purpose of the upcoming **Antique, Vintage & Collectors Fair**, which takes place in Linlithgow Academy on Saturday 21st March.

As well as the usual features – dozens of stalls; ample free parking; hot food provided by The Coffee Neuk; and

tea, coffee and home baking provided by our volunteers – this time the Fair includes a professional valuation service from Trevor Kyle of auction house Lyon & Turnbull.

The Fair is open 9am-4pm and admission is just £1. The valuations will run from 10am-2pm, on a first-come, first-served basis, at the cost of 2 items for £5. So why not have a look through your attic and see if there is something you can bring along. You never know – you might just get a nice surprise!

Meanwhile, work is continuing in the museum itself. The latest developments include the creation of gallery summaries in eight different languages - French, Spanish, German, Italian, Dutch, Japanese, Chinese and Gaelic. These will shortly be available, helping more visitors than ever to understand the history of Linlithgow.

The museum is also planning an Easter version of its Christmas scavenger hunt, which proved very popular with younger visitors. Details of this will be released soon.

According to Norman, there are many people to thank for the ongoing success of the museum, but top of the list are the volunteers who give up their time and expertise to help. More are required, however, and the museum is particularly keen to find people to help in the galleries. Each shift lasts three hours and is not onerous. It simply involves welcoming visitors and manning the till in the shop.

So if you have three hours free per week (or per fortnight) and would like to find out more, please get in touch. Call Julia Branch on 01506 670677 or email julia@linlithgowmuseum.org.



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LINLITHGOW BASED, 16+ YEARS

SPRING CLEAN YOUR HOUSEPLANTS...

We had a lovely short break in January on the 'floating flowerpot' – Madeira. The weather is rather like our summers at that time of year but you are surrounded with all manner of ornamental plants, most of which we would have to grow inside back home. Madeira's plants have arrived on the island by ship from every part of the world but you recognise so many of them as plants we are offered as houseplants.



Tropical lushness of Dracaenas and peace lilies. Right: Peace Lily and Goosefoot plant as groundcover.



Then last month I had a spare day down south and popped out to RHS Garden Wisley to see their display of houseplants

which had taken over a Victorian house set inside their big glasshouse. There wasn't any space for humans in the house because it was full of plants which provided amusement and a delightful spectacle for the many visitors on a cold winter's day.



Plants up the stairs at RHS Garden Wisley, featuring Spider Plants, Devil's Ivy, and the fashionable succulent Rhipsalis.

Being immersed in houseplants during the winter really focussed our minds on the revived popularity of houseplants in the UK. We do see some very sad specimens in folk's homes, struggling on because 'they are alive' but really delighting no one. Some are just too old, but many are looking sad because they have never been fed or, more likely, because they haven't been placed in a position that suits them!

This month we would encourage you to have a spring clean of your houseplants, and to make some big decisions... should some be sent to the compost heap (or bin) and might you indulge your home with some new permanent residents?

We have a leaflet on 'Indestructible Houseplants' which shows you 16 of our favourite houseplants that are easy to care for. But you need to give them the right conditions of light and minimum temperatures in which they will thrive.



Indestructible houseplants.

If you have a very bright 'sunny' position that gets sun for much of the day you would choose succulents and cacti. Ironically because they are often from deserts they will tolerate quite cool night time temperatures (10°C) and very hot daytime temperatures.

Most houseplants will enjoy a position where it is 'easy to read all day' and you do need to check minimum temperature as they will vary between 7 and 15°C. On east and west facing windowsills and up to 5ft from a window you can enjoy Spider Plant, Devil's Ivy, Umbrella Plant and Dracaena amongst many others.



Sunny succulent planters outside in Madeira.

If you can only just read a newspaper at midday we would call this a 'shady' position and Peace Lily, Mother-in-law's Tongue and the Cast Iron Plant will be very happy here. Pick up our free Purple Piglet Project leaflet when you come to choose your new resident Houseplants!

Dougal Philip and Lesley Watson,

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Constable Andrew Murray and Constable Peter Robertson are the community officers based in Linlithgow Police station, which is now located within the newly refurbished **Tam Dalyell House at Linlithgow Partnership Centre, High Street, Linlithgow**. They are keen to get involved in local community issues and want to hear your views and opinions on these issues. We will be publishing an article in the magazine every month, covering ongoing community issues which we are keen to address within the ward. There is also a public assistance desk at the station, which is open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

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

- school bus
- walk (like everyone else had to do when we were younger)
- 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.

PARKING IN LINLITHGOW

Police Scotland are disappointed to report that despite several appeals to the residents that the inconsiderate and illegal parking is still continuing in the High Street and surrounding streets.

Parking on single yellow lines

Nearby signs should indicate when single yellow line restrictions operate. Single yellow lines indicate areas where parking is prohibited at certain times.

There are no set rules about when single yellow line restrictions operate and the limits can vary street by street as well as between towns and cities.

Parking on double yellow lines

Unless you hold a disabled parking permit you cannot park on double yellow lines.

17

A recent 2 hours Hi Viz foot patrol on the High Street and surrounding streets resulted in 17 parking tickets being issued by one officer !!!

Remember adhere to the signs or pay the fines !!!

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 find out details of future **Linlithgow Community Police Surgeries**, please log onto West Lothian Police Facebook page or Linlithgow Facebook Page or Neighbourhood Watch Scotland for future dates or alternatively check local press for details.



TO CONTACT THE POLICE...

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

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

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

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCOTLAND

Police Scotland is one of many partnership agencies who are working alongside Neighbourhood Watch Scotland in order to develop and promote the Alert system.

This system allows users to receive alerts from Neighbourhood Watch and Police Scotland. 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



Alasdair Wallace



It's been a while since I talked about the **Burgh Halls Gallery** in any detail. It's a beautiful light space to exhibit in, and it's not surprising that the quality of the art on display is always high. The latest exhibition by Glasgow artist Alasdair Wallace is called "Settlements" and it includes new and recent paintings and prints.

Alasdair has exhibited widely since graduating from Glasgow School of Art in the 90's, predominantly in Glasgow, Edinburgh, London and New York. He also regularly features in the SSA and RSA annual exhibitions in Edinburgh.

The artist takes inspiration from the city's rural and urban fringe. He grew up in the western outskirts of Glasgow, and his attitude to landscape remains coloured by childhood explorations of what seemed to him like a wilderness at the time. These 'edge lands' continue to influence him, and his invented landscapes are combined with oblique observations of real locations to present a world that is at once recognisable and unsettling. His art is suffused with the surrealism of the everyday. At any one time there are many pieces of work in progress in Wallace's studio. Often they overlap, leapfrog and interweave with each other. Some paintings can be stalled, sometimes for years, until they one day 'make sense' again alongside some newer work.

A new exploration for Wallace has been the combination of text and imagery, where disembodied words float amidst etched landscapes. You may find unexplained presences and clusters of incongruous objects. The work might intrigue and baffle you, but hopefully it will also make you engage with the work imaginatively.

I hope my summary of this colourful exhibition encourages you to pop in one day for a look at **The Gallery** before the exhibition finishes on 17th May.

Forth Valley Art Beat

Exhibitions often make me want to visit an artist's studio to see the process. Forth Valley Art Beat gives you a chance to experience that on a grand scale, and this year runs from 13th-21st June. The artists involved have not yet been announced but I hope to feature any local artists that are planning to take part, so if that's you please get in touch. Get these dates in your diary, and perhaps plan to visit a few studios and meet some artists at work.

Far From the Madding Crowd

Our local bookshop continues to host an amazing selection of authors right here in Linlithgow, as well as being a welcoming place to shop for books, stationery and gifts etc. Coming up.....

Joanna Trollope is coming back to Linlithgow! The perfect gift for Mother's Day is surely hearing Joanna Trollope in conversation, talking about her writing life, inspiration and her latest sumptuous

novel, *Mum & Dad* - Tuesday 17th March, 11am, Linlithgow Burgh Halls, £10

Kiran Millwood Hargrave the best-selling author of *The Girl of Ink and Stars* and *The Way Past Winter*, turns to the witch trials for her first book for adults, *The Mercies*. It's inspired by the real events of the Vardø storm and the 1621 witch trials - Saturday 14th March, 3pm, St Peter's Church, £5

Roger Morgan-Grenville knows a thing or two about hobbies, but he wasn't prepared for the life changing effect of taking up bee-keeping in later life. On the surface, this is a story of two hapless friends and their attempts to become expert beekeepers, but in reality, it's about something much more profound - Wednesday 25th March, 7pm, Linlithgow Canal Tea Rooms, £5

And briefly:

Red Door

Red Door on 13th March, 23rd April, 8th May, 19th June - tickets at **Far from the Madding Crowd** or reserve from reddoorlithgow@gmail.com T. 07884 9509407.

Linlithgow Arts Guild

The 50th Anniversary season of the Arts Guild comes to a close on 25th April, but before that you still have a chance of catching mixed musical themes with the **Kosmos Ensemble**, a viola and piano duo and finally harp and saxophone with **Babayaga**. www.linlithgowartsguild.co.uk

Pat Swan

patswan@virginmedia.com.



Ruth Nicol



Linlithgow Jazz

Linlithgow Jazz on 4th April and 2nd May.

The Line Gallery

Ruth Nicol is exhibiting her new work "East Neuk" at The Line Gallery from March 14th until April 14th.

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



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"the job of the artist is to always deepen the mystery"

ART OUTINGS

MARY QUANT AT THE V&A DUNDEE OPENS ON 4TH APRIL.

The V&A has become renowned for its spectacular fashion retrospectives and this is the first one to travel to Dundee. Over 400,000 visitors saw it in London so I think it will be worth a day out. Mary Quant was the designer who brought miniskirts to the mainstream and this exhibition revels in the style and rebellious spirit embodied by women in the Swinging Sixties. The building is worth a visit in itself, or if your other half isn't in to fashion.

PUBLIC Art on the High Street John Smith



The striking "Black Bitch" sculpture, recently unveiled in a beautiful seated and landscaped setting on Linlithgow High Street, owes much to a wide array of volunteer fundraisers and donors.

But it's fair to say the legendary black greyhound from the Royal Burgh's ancient seal and coat of arms might not be there atop its sandstone plinth were it not for "One Man and His Dog".

The title from the long-running television series seems an apt analogy for the perseverance displayed by **Ron Smith**, convenor of Linlithgow Burgh Trust's Public Art and Burgh Beautiful committees, in having the project - and later in the year the St Michael sculpture at the Low Port - actually delivered.

He received one of many plaudits for his tireless efforts from Provost Tom Kerr at the recent unveiling ceremony, who affectionately described him as "a bloody nuisance".

The Provost said that he wanted to thank all the fundraising organisations, crowdfunding and individuals who had contributed.

"Ron Smith deserves a huge thank you, not only for the success today, but for taking Linlithgow's Art Project forward."

The sculptor, **David Annand**, said it had been "a real privilege and joy to work with Ron and his team of storm-troopers on the Black Bitch and Dudley the Cat".

(David sculpted Dudley, also in bronze, in memory of the well-known cat owned by the late Liz Burrows, a founder member of Burgh Beautiful. It's situated at Linlithgow Canal Basin near her home).

The artist added, *"Burgh Beautiful is positively contaminated with obsessives who are total fanatics about looking after this lovely historic town. Thank goodness for them all... I hope it is never-ending."*

Ron Smith, who for most of his career was a town planner with leading roles in a number of regeneration projects in the Gorbals and elsewhere in Glasgow, said working with so many public-spirited people on the Art Project had been "a great privilege".

Ron said that among those who had funded the Black Bitch statue were Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Town Management Group, Linlithgow Town Centre Business Improvement District (an area now covered by the new One Linlithgow Improvement District), the Scottish Government's Town Centre Fund, the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the Burgh Trust itself.

In addition, over £15,000 had come from local voluntary organisations, including the Crowdfunder campaign, Platform 3, Linlithgow and Bo'ness Rotary Club, and a very welcome substantial anonymous bequest.

Ron said everyone involved was pleased about the reaction to the Black Bitch sculpture, and hopeful that the St Michael sculpture would meet expectations. Both had been widely consulted on.

He added, *"We were pleased to work with local primary schools in making the pupils more aware of Linlithgow's insignia of the Black Bitch and St Michael, and we will be publishing their drawings and stories in a book later this year."*

Legends abound about the dog and the addition of the tree, but, most likely the Black Bitch is a hunting dog, symbolising the Royal hunts around Linlithgow.

The most popular of the legends concerns a law-breaker sentenced to death for his crimes by being chained to an oak tree on a small island in Linlithgow Loch.

However, much to the surprise of the townspeople, the chained criminal remained alive and well. Through closer observation, it became apparent that his pet, a black greyhound bitch, had been providing him with food and water by swimming across to the island during the night. Rather than reward the dog's loyalty to his master, the town's powers-that-be chained the dog to the tree!

Over the years, this traditional tale of canine loyalty has been adopted by the people of Linlithgow to the extent that every person born and bred in the town is proud to be called a "Black Bitch", irrespective of race or gender.

TROUBLE AHEAD? - WHY HAVING A DIVERSIFIED PORTFOLIO IS IMPORTANT!

> Diversification can help to manage risk.

> You may avoid costly mistakes by adopting a risk level you can live with.

It's easy to find people with investing ideas—your hairdresser, your neighbour, or an “inside tip” from a someone “in the know”. But these kinds of well-meaning but not necessarily informed suggestions aren't a replacement for a real investment strategy.

At Virtue Money we believe that setting and maintaining your strategic asset allocation are amongst the most important ingredients in your long-term investment success.

No matter what your situation, this means creating an investment mix based on your goals, risk tolerance, financial situation and timeline and being diversified both among and within different types of stocks, bonds and other investments.

Your portfolio needs a regular check-up. You should check your asset allocation at least once a year or any time your financial circumstances change significantly—things like losing your job or getting a big bonus. This is also a good time to review your existing assets and risk strategy to see if it still meets your current situation and future plans.

Why diversify?

The aim of diversification is not necessarily to improve performance – it won't ensure gains or guarantee against losses. However, once you choose to target a level of risk based on your goals, time horizon and tolerance for volatility, diversification may

provide the potential to improve returns for that level of risk.

To build a diversified portfolio, you have to look for assets—stocks, bonds, cash, or others—whose returns haven't historically moved in the same direction and to the same degree; and, ideally, assets whose returns typically move in opposite directions. This way, even if a bit of your portfolio is not performing so well, the rest of your portfolio is more likely to be growing, or at least performing better. This means that you can potentially offset some of the impact that a poorly performing asset class can have on an overall portfolio.

A diversified approach can help to manage risk, while maintaining exposure to market growth.

Why is it so important to have a risk level you can live with?

The value of a diversified portfolio usually reveals itself over time. Unfortunately, many people struggle to fully realise the benefits of their investment strategy because when markets are on the up, they tend to chase performance and purchase higher-risk investments. When there is a market downturn they do the opposite and look

To build a diversified portfolio, you have to look for assets—stocks, bonds, cash, or others—whose returns haven't historically moved in the same direction and to the same degree; and, ideally, assets whose returns typically move in opposite directions.



to move to lower-risk investment options. These are actions which can lead to missed opportunities.

It is important to understand that the decisions that you make about how to diversify, the time you choose to get into or out of the market, as well as fees you pay or underperforming funds choose, can cause you to generate returns far lower than the overall market.

Having a plan that includes appropriate asset allocation tailored to your attitude to risk and reviewing your portfolio on a regular basis can help you overcome (to a certain degree) the challenge of an uncertain market.

If you would like to make an appointment to speak to one of our advisers, please contact me, **Susan Ralston, directly on 0345 034 3424 or email me at Susan@virtuemoney.com.**

Your first meeting with an adviser at Virtue Money is completely free of charge so you have nothing to lose.

PLEASE CONTACT

**Susan Ralston, directly on
0345 034 3424 or email
Susan@virtuemoney.com.**

This information is intended to be educational and is not tailored to the investment needs of any specific investor.

Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Diversification and asset allocation do not ensure a profit or guarantee against loss

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Happy Mothers day to all the Mums!

To all the daughters and sons of Linlithgow, spoil your Mum this Mothers Day with a Four Marys Gift set. Go on! She deserves it.



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Linlithgow and District Allotment Society (LADAS)

POTATOES

Many thanks to those of you who braved the wind, rain, sleet and snow flurries to come to our Potato Day on 22 February and buy some seed potatoes. For information about growing potatoes please go to our website, which is at <https://linlithgowallotments.org.uk>

- > Continue to dig in or mulch your vegetable plot with compost or manure in preparation for next year's crops.
- > As the weather gets colder, protect tender plants with cloches or fleece.

Things to do on your vegetable plot in March

Things really get going in the vegetable garden in our area this month. As always, be guided by the weather when sowing or planting outside. The average date for the last frost in the Linlithgow area is the second week of May so I cover most crops with horticultural fleece or cloches until the weather warms up a bit.

- > Start chitting Potatoes early in the month.
- > Sow summer Cabbages indoors - week 1.

- > In week 1 sow Broad Beans in pots inside for planting out in spring.
- > Sow early types of Peas such as 'Meteor' outside under cloches in week 1. On our allotment mice and voles will eat pea and bean seeds unless they are soaked in paraffin before planting. Nothing else seems to work. I have given up sowing peas and beans in my plot and now grow them in the greenhouse until they are about six inches high before planting out. Rodents will leave them alone then.
- > In week 1 sow Chilli and Sweet Pepper seeds in a propagator. They need to be kept warm to germinate. The minimum air temperature they need to germinate is 60°F (15.5°C), the ideal being 85°F (29°C).
- > In week 2 sow Broad Beans outside under a cloche.
- > Sow Celery and Celeriac seeds inside in week 2.
- > In week 2 prepare the soil in your vegetable plot for Courgettes, Pumpkins and Squashes. To do this, dig a planting pocket for each plant about a spade's depth and about one foot (30cm) square. Fill the hole with well-rotted manure or compost ready for receiving your plants in June.
- > Week 3 sow early Carrots under cloches.
- > Sow seeds of early Brussels Sprouts in week 3. I usually start mine off in the greenhouse or indoors.
- > Plant spring planting Garlic towards the end of the month.
- > Sow Tomato seeds in a propagator in the greenhouse in week 3.
- > Sow Kohl Rabi seeds inside in week 4
- > Harden off Cauliflower seedlings sown earlier, ideally in a cold frame or outside covered with horticultural fleece.
- > Maincrop Peas can be sown outside in week 4.
- > As always, keep on top of the weeding as weeds can smother young crops and harbour pests and disease.

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

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





The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), monthly residential property market survey for January 2020, reported that the majority of member surveyors across the UK had an optimistic outlook for increased volumes of property sales in 2020.

In Scotland a net balance of approximately +30% of surveyors expected volumes to increase in the next three months. Further evidence that the decisive general election result seems to have delivered more certainty and confidence in the local housing market, can be seen in that Paul Rolfe saw 5 property sales in December 2018, but this increased to 10 in December 2019.

Latest house price statistics available from the Scottish Registers are for December 2019, and show a marked increase in the volume of property sales

in West Lothian compared to December 2018, up 24% to a total 346, out pacing the increase for Scotland as a whole, up 9.3%.

The average property price in Scotland in December 2019 was £186,483, an increase of 3.1% on the average property price in December 2018.

Energy Efficient Homes

We have previously mentioned that the **Scottish Government** has introduced minimum energy efficiency standards for properties in the private rented sector, which will come into force from April this year and over a period of time, these minimum standards will rise.

The Scottish Government has now put out for consultation the introduction of tough new renewable or low carbon heating requirements for all new build homes in Scotland from 2024. The term "Low carbon" heating is often used to refer to heating systems that don't rely on gas boilers, such as Air or Ground source heat pumps.

We will keep you posted as the consultation process leads to firm proposals for legislation.

Closing The Housing Gap

A recent study by **Heriot Watt University** suggests that there is currently a gap of around 1.2 million new homes versus demand. Household projections from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), and that demand for homes will continue to grow for the next 15 years suggests that household growth over the next 15 years will create demand for a further 2.9 million dwellings by 2035.

In 2018/19 275,000 new dwellings were added to the housing stock. In theory if this annual rate of new additions was maintained the housing gap could be plugged by 2035. However it is hard to be certain about this as projecting future population growth is difficult, and the private sector may not keep building at its current rate.



HORNETS 'STING' NATIONAL OPPOSITION

Local volleyball club Linlithgow Hornets recently scooped Gold in a national competition. The annual District Cup - organised by the Scottish Volleyball Association (SVA) and held in Dundee - attracted clubs from as far afield as Orkney.

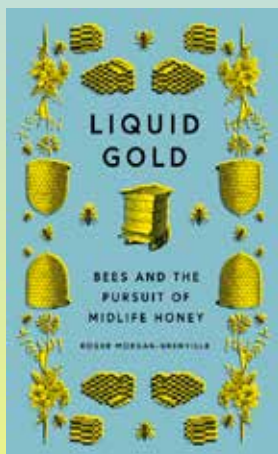
The competition was a massive success for the SVA, but even more so for the West Lothian club, who fielded 3 strong teams in the 16-team competition - a sign of the recent surge in club membership. Not only did the 1st team take top honours, but a 2nd team only just missed out on a Bronze medal, finishing in 4th place.

The Hornets have been in existence for over 20 years, and regularly enter teams in the Lothian & Borders Volleyball Association Mixed and Men's district league, as well as in national events. The club trains weekly at Linlithgow Academy on Wednesday nights 19.15-21.45, and new players are always welcome - regardless of experience.

First night is free!

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Sir George Harvey's painting of curlers on a frozen loch, 1835.

Linlithgow Curling Club is 200 years old – an anniversary celebrated at a dinner in the Burgh Halls on February 8th. Curling was played in Linlithgow long before the advent of an organised sport and at least two early curling stones have been found on the bed of the loch. Lying there also is the cauldron brought to the bonspiel in 1964 by Mrs Judy Gray. Full of hot soup, she placed it beside the curlers until they were ready for lunch – and through the ice it melted – the soup long gone cold – the memory still warm.



The bonspiel on Linlithgow Loch in the 1960s.

The Linlithgow Curling Club began on January 22nd, 1820 when ten 'good men and true' sat down to duly constitute the local organisation.

Following the French and Napoleonic Wars, the Scottish economy was in a perilous state. Unemployment was high – swelled by returning soldiers and sailors. Discontent with the aristocratic government was rife and mutiny was in the air.

In April 1820 a band of protesting workers was intercepted by troops and dealt with in no uncertain terms. Eighty-eight men were accused of treason and two ringleaders were later executed.



The memorial near Bonnybridge commemorating the insurrection of 1820.

LINLITHGOW CURLING CLUB 1820 – 2020

Bruce Jamieson

Linlithgow Provost John Boyd was commanded by Lord Advocate, Sir William Rae, to "keep careful watch against any radical activity in your burgh". Boyd wrote back saying that he believed the inhabitants of Linlithgow were "folk of good Christian character who will toe the line and regularly attend the kirk."

It is recorded in Council Minutes that in order to keep the populace attending church during the severe winters of the early 1820s, Provost Boyd advocated the installation of heating stoves in St. Michael's and this was duly done. And during those severe, early 19th century winters there was something else to occupy the attention of the populace – curling on the loch.



Sir George Harvey's early 19th century sketch of curling on Linlithgow Loch.

What better game to keep the spirits up and divert disaffected men from opposing the rule of law than curling and so the Linlithgow curlers were, in 1820, formed into an organisation designed to standardise the laws of the game and bring cooperation amongst players.

An annual subscription of one shilling was asked of all members – a trifling sum today but in 1820 it could buy you five nights accommodation with dinner in McKenzie's Inn (later the Golden Lion – and then The Red Lion – and now Bar Leo).



Previous image: Linlithgow High Street in the 19th century with 'The Red Lion' on the right.

There were a few critics of the early organisation – with the Rev James Dobie declaring that it would encourage foul language and Sabbath breaking. However, that seems unlikely given the composition of the early club. Some were elders of the kirk and all were sincerely dedicated to upholding the good name of their sport and, if anything, somewhat severe in their demeanour.

Their rather strict approach did not go down well with the younger curlers in the burgh who decided, in 1830, to form a breakaway club, "The Linlithgow Juvenile". This was no bunch of 'tearaways' however, as the rules of the fledgling group stated that all members had to be "of respectable character".

The Senior Club were not impressed at this splinter-group challenge and for some time the members refused to accept invitations to a match from the rival club. When they did eventually meet, the victory achieved by the Juniors was met stoically by the older curlers.



A scene from a Linlithgow Loch bonspiel.

Feelings remained strained for some time but, in 1864, the two organisations did agree to combine forces to take on a City of Edinburgh team.

The mid 19th century was a period of intensely cold winters and in December 1847 the water on the loch froze nightly for over 10 days. By January 1848, the ice had reached 10 inches thick – the depth required by the British army before marching men are allowed to walk on frozen lakes. And the ice had to be thick, as over 6000 folk packed on to it to take part in or to spectate at a magnificent bonspiel. Lunch was taken in the field in front of Bonnytoun House – the home of Provost Dawson.



A section of the painting
"The Linlithgow Grand Match"
by Charles Lees.

On the right (R to L) are Andrew Gillon of Wallhouse, Linlithgow solicitor, Robert Glen (in flat cap) and Provost Adam Dawson.

After 1848, the mini ice age came to an end and when the loch did not ice over so often, the question of creating a shallow pond that would quickly freeze over was mooted. Eventually, Captain Stewart of Balvormie (Bormie) gave permission for curling rinks to be constructed on his land, high in the Bathgate Hills.

Winters continued to be warmer than before and with membership of both clubs dropping it was decided, at a meeting in the Red Lion in 1884, to amalgamate the Senior and Junior Clubs. With interest in the game growing, and thanks to the efforts of local architect William Scott, another pond was created behind the Burgh Halls and many a match was played thereon - until the advent of indoor rinks such as at Crossmyloof in Glasgow and others in Edinburgh.



A 1950s map showing the curling
pond behind the Burgh Halls.

And indoors is where the club members still play - at the National Curling Academy in Stirling - proud members of a two centuries - old club.

LINLITHGOW SPEAKERS CLUB

Palms sweating, dry mouth, heart thumping and the sudden urge to run from the room! This is the way many of us feel when we are asked to speak, whether we are in a meeting, giving a presentation to work colleagues or (perish the thought!) asked to give a Best Man speech.

Help is at hand in the form of Linlithgow Speakers Club. Part of the renowned Toastmasters International organisation, this group meets fortnightly to give members a chance to practise speaking in a variety of situations, but always in a safe, friendly and non-judgemental environment.

The ethos of the club is quite simple - everything is run for the members by the members. Speeches are given and evaluated, every meeting has a team of helpers to ensure its smooth running and mentors can be assigned to guide newcomers through their journey. As well as speaking, there are opportunities to practise leadership skills.

In our modern world, there is an increasing demand for people who can communicate effectively and be part of teams. Communication and Leadership training is at the heart of a Toastmasters Speakers Club and this is what we do at Linlithgow Speakers. Members can gain confidence and skills using tried and tested methods, all at their own pace.

Club President, Colin Hervey, said, *"Our philosophy is that communicating effectively is a skill like any other - it can be learned and needs to be practised. This is why we have regular meetings - so that you keep improving and don't become rusty."*

"My favourite aspect is the feedback you get through evaluation. This is always constructive in that positives are highlighted along with areas for future improvement."

Linlithgow Speakers Club meets **every other Tuesday at 7.30 - 9.30pm** at the Mel Grey Centre next to the Canal. The first 3 meetings are free, so anyone can come along to see what we do.

We will be holding a public 'Open Evening' on **Tue 21st April** in The Lowport Centre, Linlithgow.

If you have a presentation to give and it keeps you awake at night, get tongue-tied in meetings or you just want to be entertained, why not come along to Linlithgow Speakers to see how it could help you.



Key Facts: Linlithgow Speakers Club

2020 Dates: March 10th & 24th, April 7th
in Mel Gray Room, Linlithgow Union Canal
Society, Canal Basin, Manse Road, EH49 6AJ)

April 21st (Open Evening in The Lowport Centre
(opposite Tesco), 1 Blackness Rd, Linlithgow,
EH49 7HZ)

Thereafter: Fortnightly in Mel Gray Room
as above.



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Signs of Spring

Writing this in February is a slightly odd sensation, as I'm talking about a season which is yet to arrive. But even now the first signs are appearing and by the time you read this, spring will have truly sprung.

Next time you're outside listen out for birdsong. With the exception of robins, birds don't waste their energy during the cold winter months by singing, as they have no need to defend a breeding territory. When you hear it, you can actually pinpoint the bird that's singing. Birds will always try to sing from the tops of trees, posts or other structures with an unobstructed high point, allowing the sound to travel further. So follow the direction of the sound and look up at the ends of the higher branches.

Birds are often busy at this time of year, building nests and performing courtship displays. For this reason please keep dogs on leashes when in areas such as the loch, to minimise disturbance to nests, especially those on the ground.

Courtship can vary, but one of the highlights in Linlithgow is the great crested grebes, which can be sighted from the wooden bridge up at the reed beds in the loch. These birds develop exquisite orange and black head plumes in spring, which they were once hunted for to be made into hats. Thankfully they are now protected and can be watched performing their elegant courtship in early spring. The two birds

perform a symmetrical ballet above and below the water, and often include the unique prop of water weed in their display. It's well worth going out to spot it.

Something else will be flying around in spring. Bees, butterflies and other insects coming out of hibernation will be very appreciative of any early flowers in your garden (such as wood anemones, stinking hellebore and any flowering trees such as pussywillow and crabapple) as a source of nectar. It can also be worth recording the date you first see different species of butterflies and passing this information onto Butterfly Conservation, who use this data to monitor the effect of climate change on butterflies.

Speaking of flowers, head out for a walk in the woods and there will be flowers and buds aplenty to welcome the new season. Lesser celandine, a bright yellow wildflower, is already carpeting the banks of the stream by Capstan Walk. One of my favourite signs of spring is wild garlic - I'm probably a little early for it just now, but soon those star-shaped white flowers will be blooming and that gorgeous garlicky scent will waft across the forest.

I'm sure everyone has their own favourite sign of spring - the rich song of a blackbird, the excited flights in and out of a nest box by the local blue tits, the sleepy buzz of a newly awakened bumblebee, or perhaps that first delicate hawthorn blossom. Whatever it is, make sure you get out and enjoy it.

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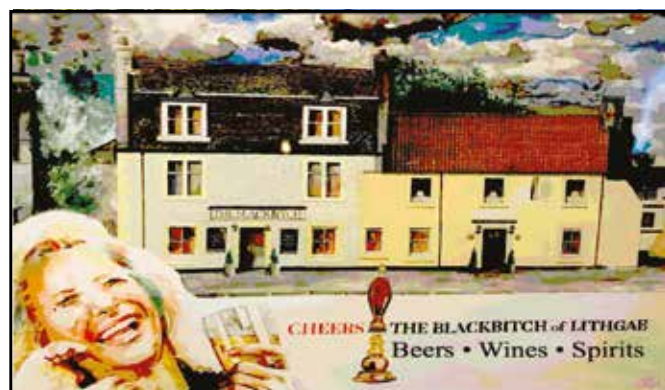
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“NOW YOU’VE NAILED IT” ...

Last year I declined an invitation to have “the secrets” of a TV presenter’s nail polish revealed to me. Not that I didn’t think long and hard about it: but I finally gave way to a woman friend’s advice that the dismal state of my cuticles would probably get me a lifetime ban from any future events of a similar nature. “I suppose you’re right,” I admitted grudgingly. “I might have been tempted to try some of their products, and you know how useless a man is until his nail varnish is dry.” Apparently fingernails like hair continue to grow after you die, but pop-up ads on Google tend to decrease significantly which is something of a relief. Stupidly, I forgot to ask if she thought a spray tan would be appropriate in preparation for my next job interview.

Thoughts about nails returned, however, as I passed along Linlithgow High Street the other day. As one retail business closes, it seems yet another nail bar takes up residence in the same premises. And in case there’s any confusion here, they are not selling

any of those tools that enable you to extract the fixings holding down your floorboards. The latest figures show around 38,000 nail bars operating in the UK, grossing over three-billion pounds in turnover. And although the work is done mostly by women, men are reckoned to be responsible for a mushrooming of the customer base. In some places couples are agreeing to include beauty and grooming costs in their divorce settlements.

At one time Linlithgow High Street had banks and building societies standing shoulder to shoulder along its length. Then it was hairdressers, wee cafes, and shops selling weird things like fruit and veg. Now it’s nail bars. On the darker side of the business, many manicurists south of the Border are victims of human trafficking, Vietnamese women caught in the trap of what’s called modern slavery. It’s a thought I carry home with me. Perhaps countries need to have dirtier fingernails and cleaner minds. Nevertheless, there’s more important work to be done. I have nails to file, although if I feel like it I might just dump them in the recycling bin.

Most people know Linlithgow is twinned with a commune near Paris called Guyancourt. Less well known is its link to Grapevine, Texas, which comes from the town being part of a twinning arrangement crafted by West Lothian. The question is why? I only ask because my usual source for totally unnecessary information, Garibaldi Waldie, is unavailable at present due to his employment as a part-time scarecrow in a field of cabbages somewhere out on the Blackness Road.

Anyway, what possible connection could there be between Linlithgow and its twin-towns? Actually, it might well be alcohol, considering at one time Guyancourt had 16 wine merchants for 614 inhabitants. And the name ‘Grapevine’ tends to speak for itself when it comes to Bacchanalian festivals such as the Linlithgow’s Marches. Grapevine recently reported a significant increase in wineries in the town, in which case they would be impressed by the number of licensed premises in Linlithgow. I must remember to check this out with the locals next time I’m in the Lone Star State.

On other hand, it could be murder and assassination that links us. Near Grapevine in 1934, two people with Scottish forenames – one called Bonnie and the other Clyde - shot dead two state troopers. A mere 360 years earlier a man with a Scottish surname, James Hamilton, shot dead the Earl of Moray from a position where the Court Hotel now sits. And if you ask what Guyancourt has to do with murder, well...they have the French headquarters of a famous global burger chain in their town. Slow death by animal fat and obesity maybe? Does that make sense? I must ask the Guyancourtois if they agree when they arrive later in the year. But before that please feel free to express your own opinions. As for me, I think I ought to go somewhere quiet and lie down for a bit.

Kirk Gates



Illustration: Sandra Gibson. E: sandrajgibson2004@yahoo.co.uk



WEST LOTHIAN EAGLES



A Linlithgow based Australian rules football team - The West Lothian Eagles - is

aiming to make an impact as one of 6 men's and 4 women's teams playing in the Scottish Australian Rules Football Leagues (SARFL) this year. The club has players from West Lothian, Falkirk, Edinburgh, Fife and Australia and competes in the summer playing fixtures at Linlithgow Rugby Club. The Scottish version of Aussie Rules Football is a full contact game played on a rugby pitch with 9 players on each side kicking and hand passing a rugby shaped ball to try and score goals to claim a victory.

The West Lothian Eagles were founded in 2016 as a group of about 10 friends kicking a ball around and playing friendly matches vs established Scottish clubs.

With a huge amount of support and donations from the West Coast Eagles, one of the biggest professional teams in Australia, the Eagles officially became a constituted club in December 2017 and entered the Scottish Australian football men's league. In July of 2017 the club formed its ladies' team and was instrumental in the start of the 2018 SARFLW which was the first ever women's league in Scottish Australian Rules football.

The club has grown substantially since it's formation and today has around 50 members and is made up of players from age 16 to 60 as well as a large supporting crew of family and friends of all ages making the Eagles one of the largest and most inclusive clubs in Scotland. Already in 2020 around 10 new players have been along to try training with the club, some of them never having played sport before, some have just moved to the area and looking to make friends and others who just wanted to try something they might never have heard of. The Eagles are always on the lookout for new players and are happy to take on beginners who are keen to learn something new! Most new players who come along to the club have never even seen a game of Aussie rules footy. Because of this the club has always prided itself on welcoming newcomers and teaching beginners about the game. This is achieved using the experience of the Australian coaches some of whom played the game professionally in Australia as well as several male and female players at the club being fully fledged Scottish

internationals.

As well as both men's and women's sides playing their league fixtures and training twice weekly in Linlithgow; the Eagles run several major club events throughout the year including the Ashley Palmer Trophy which is a tournament hosted by the club at Linlithgow Rugby Club on an annual basis. Ashley is a local lad who is incredibly passionate about the game and was unfortunately involved in a terrible car accident and confined to a wheelchair. The event is an all gender tournament held in his honour and helps to keep Ashley active in the club and in the game. The club also holds an annual club BBQ, club awards dinner, their Christmas night out and also an end of season trip (planned for Amsterdam in 2020).

All these events are targeted to be as family friendly as possible so there is a real spirit of togetherness around the Eagles. The club has also recently been involved with local schools such as Winchburgh Primary School to run sessions for the children to learn about the sport.



You can find out more about West Lothian Eagles or even join the club on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. If you need or would like any further information on the club or how to join up, please feel free to get in touch @ WestLothianEagles@Gmail.com

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When his previous owner passed away, he unfortunately ended up with people who did not want him and was badly mistreated. A rescue came to his aid, but the poor lad was in a sorry state, requiring surgery to remove an eye and treat him for a fractured skull.

Through this rescue he found himself a wonderful home with loving a family who understood the Border Collie breed. The family adapted life to accommodate his needs and cared for him through the recovery processes required so he could live a normal and happy life.

The family describe Monty as being stubborn, cantankerous and the loveliest, friendliest nature in the world!

His most favourite thing to do is to get a wee treat of vanilla Haagen Daz and he just loves to lie sleeping in the garden with his cats.

His favourite toy is a tennis ball - don't try to get it off him, it's his!!

Being of a very social nature, he loves going out for plenty of short walks in the park and meeting his friends - human, canine and feline.

Monty is a wonderful example of how a life can be saved with human compassion.

As dogs age their care requirements also

change. Their care routine should be considered and adjusted to suit their needs throughout their different life stages.

Older dogs require less exercise, more rest and frequent toilet breaks in their routine. Incontinence or changes to frequency should be addressed - infections or health issues can escalate more quickly in older animals.

Dietary requirements also change through the stages of development and as they get older. It varies with breed and size, but at around seven your dog will benefit from gradually moving onto a diet designed for senior dogs. Senior diets contain less fat and calories so aid weight maintenance, contain more fibre to keep them feeling full and include age specific supplements to help keep their bodies healthy and balanced.

Being aware of the exact volume of food and water you give your pet makes it much easier to manage their weight and monitor for changes if you know what is 'normal' for them. Always mention any changes in their eating, toilet habits or behaviour to your vet as there could be an underlying medical reason for these.

Regular vet checks for senior pets helps to identify any needs or issues early. A lot can change in a short time, so we recommend



regular health check-ups and weight checks in between their annual vaccinations.

Westport run a special senior pet MOT health check, where we do a full check of all their vitals including things such as liver and kidney function and blood pressure.

Contact the Westport Team on 01506 844165 who can discuss senior pet care and any issues or concerns you might have about your pets.

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