



# the **BLACK** *bitch*

Linlithgow's news by Linlithgow's people

LINLITHGOW COMMUNITY MAGAZINE ISSUE 82 JUNE 2021

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## WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF LINLITHGOW?

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## MEET THE TEAM PAT SWAN



I've lived in Linlithgow for 27 years, having moved from Edinburgh on a bit of a whim when we were looking for a new house. I have two grown up girls who now live and work in Edinburgh and London. Over the years I've volunteered for various committees and organisations and feel I've done quite a lot for the community.

Four years ago, David approached me to ask if I'd write an "Arts" page for the magazine, and I agreed to give it a go. I am not a writer, English was my least favourite subject at school, and I work as an Accountant, so I'm not quite sure if he knew what he was letting himself in for. He knew that I was interested in the Arts and that I liked to be creative when I had the opportunity.

My first article was in issue 49 in April 2017, and I've written one in every issue bar one, since then. My first article was titled "Too much culture, too little time" as I felt it summed up my life quite well - I always had a long list of exhibitions to see, events to check out or gigs to go to.

I enjoyed researching what was going on in town and attended local events regularly.

In the past year things have changed dramatically and I did wonder if the "Arts" page could continue without any events to feature. I have however managed to find stories to write about, and introduced local artists to the readers, but I'm very much looking forward to being able to write about real live events again soon.

In my spare time I like to go on holiday, read, take photos, garden, and indulge in various creative activities. I'm a member of a textile and mixed media group, and have really missed being able to meet with them on a regular basis recently so I have participated in some other creative challenges to fill that gap. Last year I took part in 100 Days Project Scotland which encourages a daily creative practice (and I achieved that!) and I might challenge myself again this year despite it being a daunting prospect to keep up for three months. I'm a great believer in the health and wellbeing gains of creativity, and of nature and the outdoors, so it's good to get out and deliver some magazines too.



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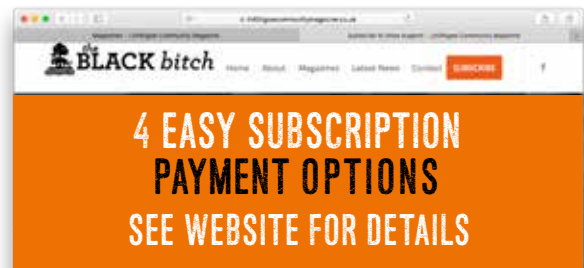
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**DAVID TAIT,  
EDITOR**

## SUBSCRIBE TO THE BLACK BITCH MAGAZINE



It's really remarkable that Issue 82 marks the 10th anniversary of the first issue of The Black Bitch magazine back in May 2011! This milestone is certainly worthy of celebration however given the current circumstances we're not really well placed to celebrate this fabulous achievement just yet as the effects of Coronavirus are not yet behind us entirely. So I promise we'll return to this theme later in the year when we can really do justice to our collective achievement.

In the meantime, mention of "Penguins Kill Polar Bears" in another article in this issue brought to mind the front cover of our first magazine (see below) which featured a band of that name with origins in Linlithgow Academy. It is hard to believe that 10 years have gone by since then and yet so much has changed.



One of the most striking changes has affected the Town's Conservation Area. Described by those with expertise as being of Outstanding Merit it is now dominated as you will have seen with two gap sites to add to the crumbling concrete monstrosity overlooking The Cross.

**With Linlithgow sitting as it does more or less equidistant from Scotland's two major centres of population - and easy of access - the town is ideally placed to be a thriving destination for visitors from far and near. However gap sites are not such a good advert for the town.**

Adding to the woes is serious concern within the community over plans for future residential development much of which will probably further impact both town centre congestion and air pollution. Plus more often than not new residential development is often of the wrong design, size and price bracket for the town's young people looking for affordable accommodation.

Against that background, our front cover and lead article pose the question "What is the future of Linlithgow?" It's well worth a read to find out about the work carried out over the past 20 years by Linlithgow Civic Trust, Linlithgow Community Council and Linlithgow Planning Forum to flag these issues and offer solutions.

With the future in mind, it is good to see the energy and enthusiasm of the

Linlith-go-Solar project gathering momentum, taking us towards the new future. Largely the vision of Neil Barnes and supported now by Scottish Communities Finance Ltd and Linlithgow Community Development Trust, Linlith-go-Solar will be reporting regularly on the progress of their Linlithgow projects and wider interests.

It's also good to see the High Street returning to life and even better to see the number of new businesses springing up to take on available premises and bring new ideas and products (as well as one or two we already have) to the town's retail offering. All being well it won't be too long before something closer to normal can return.

**Finally, as always, a very big thank you to all those who help to make the magazine possible - our volunteers, contributors, advertisers and growing list of subscribers - all of whose inputs are invaluable.**

**If you are not already a subscriber it's an easy way to contribute to the long term success of the magazine. Our aim is to inform our readers of what is happening - and not happening - in their town. We'd like to do this as regularly and as extensively as possible. Every contribution large and small helps us do that. So please consider making a subscription.**



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# WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF LINLITHGOW?

Just before the pandemic reared its ugly head, Linlithgow Planning Forum (made up of representatives of our community council, Linlithgow Civic Trust and other interested parties) finalised a revised edition of its 'Plan for the Future', ready for public consultation. This was a follow up to the first version of the Plan which had been supported by the great majority of those who responded to the Forum's first consultation back in November 2015.

It is hoped that the revised '**Plan for the Future**' can undergo its intended public scrutiny before too long. Its main updates are incorporation of the proposals for the redevelopment of the eastern half of the Vennel and of the approved plans for filling the town's gap sites.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the first edition of the Plan was its recognition that new housing development in the town was inevitable and that it should be located in such a way as to allow directly-related infrastructure (mainly roads) to be built for the greater benefit of the town, principally relieving the High Street of through traffic and allowing a proper public transport network to be provided,

avoiding low and narrow bridges. Examples of this sort of approach currently under construction can be found on the northern outskirts of Perth and, closer to home, in Winchburgh.

The best results of such approaches, especially with regard to achieving the best standards of building design and materials, seem to result from the initiative of the parties which/who own the land which could be developed. In Linlithgow, a number of landowners could get together to pool the land and jointly promote its development to the best possible standards. The two best current Scottish examples of such an approach can be found at Tornagrain and Chapelton of Elsick, new towns being constructed near Inverness and Aberdeen respectively.

Unfortunately, and most disappointingly, neither West Lothian Council nor the Scottish Government's reporters paid any attention to the extensively-consulted-upon-and-locally-agreed 'Plan for the Future' and, instead, the Council's latest West Lothian Local Development Plan allocated a piecemeal selection of housing sites around the town's boundaries, thinking that the Council could extract money from the developers towards the cost of projects like the west-facing slip roads to and from the M9 at Burghmuir.

Sadly, this may have turned out to have been a grave misjudgement, since the Council has received a letter from the Scottish Government stating that, in terms of the spirit of the relevant legislation (Section 75 of the Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997), there is not the necessary direct relationship between the Council's favoured housing sites (such as that proposed at Deanburn Road) and the M9 junction at Burghmuir. In other words, it is unfair to impose a levy on each new house to be built at Deanburn for a roads project that is never likely to be utilised by residents of these houses – if they are going to Falkirk, they will use Falkirk Road westwards, rather than drive along the congested High Street to Burghmuir!

This of course puts doubt on the Council's whole approach to new housing development in Linlithgow and spurs temptation to comment that if the 'Plan for the Future' had been taken seriously, the current stand-off between Council and Scottish Government could have been avoided.

Additionally, it begs a question about the legality of the Council having, in the past, extracted money from developers of sites in Linlithgow for use anywhere in West Lothian, a topic which has been raised from time to time at Community Council meetings. For instance, the 'Section 75







However, now there is a gleam of hope in the shape of the concept of 'Local Place Plans', now being advocated by the Scottish Government.

Agreement' for the McCarthy & Stone Templars Court development at The Cross required the developer to pay £90,000 to West Lothian Council for affordable housing purposes anywhere in West Lothian at a time when only 15 council houses had been built in the town since the 1975 local government reorganisation. When the Community Council recently queried whether the £90,000 could be used towards the cost of providing rented housing to fill the ugly gap site in front of Templars Court, the Council's answer was 'no'.

Similarly, when Linlithgow Burgh Trust asked whether the £5,700 or so payable by McCarthy & Stone for public art could be used as a contribution to its recent 'civic insignia' public art project, again the answer was 'no' because the Section 75 funding was being pooled for use in a West Lothian-wide public art competition. This again does not appear to accord with the spirit and substance of the planning legislation and the Linlithgow Planning Forum has written

to the Chief Planner at the Scottish Government to seek clarification on whether or not West Lothian Council is within its rights to spend locally-derived Section 75 money anywhere in West Lothian.

However, now there is a gleam of hope in the shape of the concept of 'Local Place Plans', now being advocated by the Scottish Government. These will be prepared by local communities with the intention that they feed into local authorities' Local Development Plans, in our case the next edition of the West Lothian Local Development Plan. We have been informed that our own 'Plan for the Future' is exactly the sort of community planning document that could constitute a 'Local Place Plan' – which will next time therefore have to be taken seriously by West Lothian Council, rather than being ignored as 'too difficult'.

This, of course, opens up the serious prospect of things like our High Street being relieved of most of its through

traffic, the 'Plan for the Future' having been designed to link housing development to directly-related infrastructure, whether achieved through prior landowner agreements (as mentioned above) or by legitimate use of section 75 agreements for the greater benefit of the town.

So keep a look out for any forthcoming publicity encouraging public comment on the community 'Plan for the Future'. This time, your valued attention may actually lead to results!

#### Marilyne MacLaren

*Convenor, Linlithgow Civic Trust on behalf of Linlithgow Planning Forum*

#### Images

**Tornagrain and Chapelton of Elsick**  
*How new housing development could look to style and detail.*

# NEW LIGHT EMERGING FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE AND GREEN JOBS

There's a big new discussion going on in town and across the country.

Local volunteers are buzzing about how their beloved local 'place' could look and work better for everyone whilst helping neighbouring communities too.

With the Green COVID Recovery & Green Jobs Revolution underway, we have a strong desire to ensure our young people get every opportunity to grow and flourish.

We want our housing, buildings, goods & services to have the least impact on the planet, and to have as much as possible delivered locally maximising benefits back into our community for good causes.



And we're not starting at ground zero. We've got so much going on: over 130 active community groups and clubs, local festivals and events, e.g. Party at the Palace, My Linlithgow, great schools and nurseries, Linlith-Go-Solar, allotments, Burgh Beautiful, Tool Library, Young People's Project, many local family-based businesses, local charities supporting vulnerable people, a large group of active and passionate volunteers, and so much more. And so many talking 'green': from reducing plastics to walking more, exploiting more energy from the sun and solving our litter problem together.

Our local Linlith-Go-Solar initiative demonstrates the benefits of a community cooperative approach, and one that could be scaled up across town.

With a modest start to our community energy ambitions, all 3 Linlith-Go-Solar Phase 1 and 2 sites – Rugby, Sports & Social Clubs – and 5 systems continue to perform well, despite the unpredictable Scottish weather and several days of thick snow cover in February.

In two years, we have:

- >> earned sufficient funds towards repaying our Community Bonds with interest in the longer term
- >> saved all 3 clubs around £900 on their grid electricity costs by using solar electricity instead, even with lower total energy consumption overall due to COVID inactivity
- >> generated surplus revenue for our community
- >> saved enough carbon emissions equivalent to driving a car almost 4 times around the Earth!

Between Scottish Communities Finance Limited (SCFL) and Linlithgow Community Development Trust (LCDT), we have exercised sound financial stewardship, thanks in particular to our Trust's Voluntary Treasurer, Ronnie Anderson. This allowed us to give a modest sum from the community surplus to sponsor the Vennel Bed in the centre of Linlithgow, managed by Burgh Beautiful volunteers. Themes and displays change through the seasons and there have been some very striking, diverse and colourful displays over the years, including the subject of 'growing local' and 'climate change'.



LCDT will continue to develop Linlith-Go-Solar and are working on a Phase 3 in partnership with ONE Linlithgow, SCFL, local businesses and the Big Solar Co-op as mentioned in our last article – **WATCH THIS SPACE**. This would involve installing more systems on commercial and other public buildings across town, including Mill Road Industrial Estate, similar in approach to Linlith-Go-Solar's first two phases.



We are also talking to other communities like Polbeth in West Lothian and others in Glasgow and Moray and elsewhere. We all have similar ambitions. To make our communities more resilient; do our bit for the planet; and create opportunities for our young folk. And we're planning on telling our story at Glasgow COP26 too with the Development Trusts Association Scotland and fellow community organisations.

The Trust and Linlith-Go-Solar are also working more closely with the Academy's Genesis Formula 1 in Schools Team (through to the global final in June) and have now supplied re-used wood for the Pit Stop display stand. We are also in the process of bringing in a Solar Kit to power the LCD screen and LED lights. We're planning for this kit to be used as a resource for future educational activities in Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths (STEM).

**LCDT & SCFL would like to thank the 3 local sports clubs, AES Solar Ltd, Young Energy Enterprise Group, Local Energy Scotland, Scottish Power Energy Networks, West Lothian Council, Locogen, Harper MacLeod, Meteronline, all community volunteers and our community investors, for the tremendous support in Phase 2.**

Thank you.

Further enquiries:

Linlith-Go-Solar Voluntary Project Lead:  
Neil Barnes: [energy@trust-linlithgow.org.uk](mailto:energy@trust-linlithgow.org.uk)

<https://www.facebook.com/linlithgosolar/>

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The Venetian Bed pictured with our LgS plaque.



## PUPIL LEADERSHIP TEAM AT LINLITHGOW ACADEMY



We are the Pupil Leadership Team at Linlithgow Academy - Pierre, Isla, Finlay and Eilidh, and our outlook on school has changed dramatically over the past year. As our final year at school comes to a close, we'd like to share our experiences of how the pandemic has interrupted the routines of normal school learning.

### Adaptations to daily life have come in many forms.

One of the major changes has been the digitalisation of the school experience. Through the various lockdowns, our classes took place online with teachers' voices accompanying powerpoint slides and our hands being raised by pressing a button. While this format allowed for very flexible and often independent learning, most missed hearing real voices and seeing real faces. On a similar note, our homework used to be assigned in class with an accompanying paper worksheet and directions to a very tangible textbook page. A year on, this seems rather old-fashioned. Today, all our homework is set, submitted and assessed online. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this has been a (mostly) resounding success and something similar will no doubt be used by teachers into the future. However, a notable downside is it does make it harder for the dog to eat the homework...

Another change was the introduction of a one-way system around the school. This was met with plenty of resistance. However, between classes there has been a noticeable cutback in congestion and on the whole, it is easier to commute from class to class. There has also been the introduction of split breaks and lunches. In the past, there was one whole school break and one lunchtime. More than a thousand hungry teens descending upon the cafeteria was always pandemonium in an already packed school. This system was changed to have split breaks and lunches to allow the separation of different years in the hopes of reducing spread of germs. Although this created a temporary timetabling nightmare with nobody quite sure when they were supposed to eat to begin with, the change has certainly made these times feel a little less crowded.

Perhaps the most obvious change you would notice if you immediately walked in, is the mandatory covering of the nose and mouth using face masks. In class, they get in the way as teachers struggle to be heard as easily and discussions are slightly hampered by muffled voices. Although it is necessary for the time being, this change is one that we will undo when we can.

For us at the Pupil Leadership Team and for all the S6s, it is a shame for our final year to be so unexpected in so many ways. We all had many plans and many ideas, but nothing could happen how we would have liked it to. We are all increasingly aware that ahead of us lies both uncertainty and freedom. With University deadlines approaching, conditional offers to meet and measures relaxing slightly, there seems to be an awful lot going on - and it is all whizzing by very quickly. School has been a place of safety and support for the last 13 years of our lives, with Linlithgow Academy accounting for 6 of them, and although the last of these was not what we were expecting, I think we are happy to have called Linlithgow Academy our home.

**The Pupil Leadership Team**  
Linlithgow Academy



## THE DEACONS' COURT VIRTUAL RIDING OF THE MARCHES 2021

While government restrictions begin to ease, restrictions around large gatherings continue to be in place and therefore, for the second year, the Deacons Court has had to make the difficult decision to cancel the Annual Riding of Linlithgow Marches and instead opt for a virtual alternative celebration on the First Tuesday After the Second Thursday in June (15th June 2021).

While the centuries old traditions of checking the Royal Burgh's boundaries, will not be happening in the usual way in 2021, the Deacons Court have been working hard to bring the Virtual Marches to life which will see the main points of the day recognised for everyone to be able to enjoy from the comfort of their own homes.

Last year's Virtual Marches celebrations saw the Deacons Court videos viewed over 60,000 times on our Facebook and YouTube channels. The videos were created mostly using photos and video footage as well as Marches messages from the Provost, Bailies, Deacons, individuals and groups in the local community. The Virtual Marches not only gave the opportunity to mark what would have been the Marches Day, it also gave the Deacons Court a chance to share

some of the aspects of the day that many people were unaware of happening and part of the day's celebrations. Following the 2020 Virtual Marches, we received a lot of messages from people who had not realised what happens on the Marches Day out with the processions. In particular the Fraternising at the Palace before the 11am procession and the proceedings when the Provost and guests head to Blackness.

This year the hope is to build on this again and tell people a little more of where the traditions come from and why what happens on the Marches Day, happens. It is important that the traditions of Linlithgow and the Annual Riding of the Marches continues for generations to come and the hope by sharing this online, is to encourage the people of Linlithgow to understand, appreciate and most importantly get involved in future Marches Days.

This year's Virtual Marches will be a similar format to that of 2020. Townspeople and Black Bitches from across the world will be able to watch the celebrations on the Deacon's Court Facebook page and YouTube channels, from 5am right through to 5pm. The day will be full of memories of past Marches, as well as new involvement from organisations, groups and individuals who normally take part in the day. In addition to this video celebrations marking the Crying of the Marches (11th June) and both Deacons Nights (5th and 12th June, respectively) will be shown on these platforms.

### How to get involved

The Marches Day is important to many, and often it is the day in the year where people see friends and family that they might not have seen

for a while. The Deacons Court would love to see this continue in our Virtual Marches, and so we would like to encourage anyone who would like to take part in the 2021 Virtual Marches, to do so. You can either send us a video message to be included or a written message along with a photo that we will incorporate as part of the day, before Friday 11th June.

Of course, individuals or groups of all ages could always design or create a float, decorated bicycle or costume to be included in the videos. Last year we were blown away by the entries that we received, that we created a prize category to acknowledge the hard work that had gone into the superb designs. The closing date for entries is Friday, 11th June – so there is still time to get creative!

We have also been running several competitions which has allowed people to get involved. This includes a "Best of the Best" Competition where we have asked anyone who has ever taken part in a Marches Procession to submit a photo of a float, bike or dressed up which we will be putting to the people of Linlithgow to vote for their favourite using our social media channels. We have also launched a competition, open to all ages, to design a Shield for the Burgh Halls steps. The winning design will be made into a shield that will be placed alongside the existing shields that adorn the steps each Marches Day.

While the day will follow a similar format to last year, each video will bring a little something different, along with more insight into the Marches Day. There may even be some surprises too!

While we know that the Virtual Marches can in no way replace the



day that we normally know and love, we hope that it will allow us to keep the traditions alive and allow us to come back bigger and better for the Annual Riding of Linlithgow Marches 2022!

**Stephanie Thomson**  
on behalf of the Deacons' Court

## Timetable to the Virtual Marches events:

**5am** Start the day off with the flutes and drums and a message from Provost Cunningham and other well known Marches faces.

**6am** the Town Piper and Drummer

**7am** The Reed Band will play the 23rd Psalm during a time for reflection before the Reed Band head of to "March of the Cameron Men."

**8am** Join us for a virtual Marches Day breakfast and Marches message from the Provost.

**10.15am** The Provost and My Lord Deacon of the Dyers are at the Palace for the Fraternisation.

**11am** As we head to the western boundary at Linlithgow Bridge we will share Marches messages and memories from organisations and individuals as well as sharing designs of floats and decorated bicycles and we will reveal the winner of the Best of the Best Competition.

**1pm** Find the winners of the Design a Shield Competition as well as the Winner of the float, costumes and decorated Bike entries.

**2pm** We check the eastern boundary in Blackness and pay our respects at the War Memorial and hear the Baron Bailie's report from Castle Hill.

**4pm** Vote of Thanks

**5pm** We will end the day with the traditional three times around the Cross Well before Provost Cunningham gives his closing remarks.

**Tune in to the celebrations of the day by:**

**Liking us on Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/linlithgowmarches>

**Following us on YouTube:** Search Linlithgow Marches and Deacons Court <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCC9UDJDMHJJ4BqyJBWRTnA>

**To participate in the Virtual Marches or for more information, please contact**  
[deacons.court.events@gmail.com](mailto:deacons.court.events@gmail.com)





## ONE LINLITHGOW LINLITHGOW'S SUMMER MARKET ONLINE



For the first time, we're running an extended digital Summer Market on mylinlithgow.com, all the way from Saturday 12th – Saturday 26th June.

Our short-term markets have so far brought in around £7,000 for local businesses, and we're hoping to blow them all out of the water with the two-week special!

The Summer Market will run concurrently with "FiverFest", a nationwide event aimed at encouraging people to support local business. Participating businesses display special offers throughout the event, all costing just £5. There will be plenty of items for £5 on the digital market, and all across town in real life, too!

There will be plenty of gifts and activities to buy for Father's Day (Sunday 20th June), and Linlithgow-themed items to celebrate Linlithgow's own Civic Week (sadly not happening in real life this year).

After the market is finished, we'll be looking at ways to make it more permanent. So far, we've had great feedback about the digital markets, and we're really pleased with how smoothly they're running.

Hold on to your flyer from this magazine and stick it to your fridge as a reminder... we'll see you on mylinlithgow.com in June!

## ONE LINLITHGOW: OPERATIONAL UPDATE

By the time you read this, the Linlithgow Visitor Guide 2021-22 will be no more than a week away... you may already have one! It contains everything a visitor could want to know about our wonderful town: all the usual staples are included (where to eat, drink, stay and shop, attractions and activities, walking trails etc.), as well as new sections with filming locations and links to audio trails.



The guide will be heavily distributed in Linlithgow, but also across West Lothian and beyond. In 2021, it's hoped that we'll be welcoming at very least "staycationers" from across the UK, but perhaps will even be welcoming foreign visitors once again.



The end of May saw the grand relaunch of the **Linlithgow Loyalty Lottery stamp-cards**, with a bumper £400 draw to reward loyal shoppers using local businesses despite restrictions. Now with 38 participating businesses across town, you can spend your vouchers on practically whatever you like! It works just like a coffee shop stamp-card, so when you're visiting a participating business, just ask for one, and get your first stamp when making a purchase (each business sets their own minimum spend to get a stamp).

Our staff members have now delivered over 250 "PPE/Linlithgow Loves Local" kits to member businesses, all while consulting member businesses, and we're working with Police Scotland to provide them with direct access to the town-centre and Mill Road CCTV systems.

## BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

### BONNIE WEDDINGS AND EVENTS

**Leanne and Adele Burns** have helped brighten the dark days of lockdown for young and old by making special occasions that bit more special than might have seemed possible.

The sisters, working from their homes in Kirkliston, have been delivering balloons of all types, and individually designed backdrops, to homes in the Lothians, Edinburgh and Fife for Zoom parties virtually celebrating everything from birthdays to anniversaries.

Now, Bonnie Weddings and Events has moved in to 34 High Street in Linlithgow, fulfilling a long-held dream of theirs. Leanne has a very relevant background, having been events manager for a large Edinburgh hotel for a number of years. Adele is the acknowledged "creative driving force" in





coming up with ideas to give all kinds of events that much sought-after “wow” factor.

Said Leanne, *“We did very well with weddings in 2019, but they obviously really dropped off. We then concentrated on supplying balloons and backdrops and other fun things for birthdays, anniversaries, new arrivals, and different family occasions.”*

*“We’ve even done a ‘hen party’, supplying large balloons with special messages on them to the ladies in their own homes, and we completely bedecked the bride-to-be’s kitchen with a backdrop and lots of balloons for the virtual hen do.”*

Leanne continued, *“It seems a strange thing to say, while the wedding side fell right away, the pandemic provided us with the opportunity to build up other aspects of the business. It was great to see the extra cheer we brought into so many lives at such a difficult time, from young kids to quite elderly people.”*

She said they were really happy to see the wedding side of their business begin to take off again. They supply complete packages – everything the bride and groom might want for the big event.

This included chair drapes, covers and ties, tablecloths and linen, backdrops and arches, centrepieces, LED letters, and dancefloors. And balloons of course!

Said Leanne, *“We offer a bespoke service that all begins with a free consultation in the chosen venue. This allows us to visualise everything and create a package that is individual and unique.”*

She said that she and Adele loved their shop in Linlithgow, and had very much appreciated the warm welcome received from neighbours, and many others. Their emphasis was very much on making the shop an informal, fun place to visit – especially for children.

Leanne added that Adele had three sons, Glen (21), Rhys (16), and Alfie (7), and her own son Aaron was five. Their respective partners Alfie and Michael, and their parents Georgina and Alan, had all been hugely supportive of the new venture.

## WHITE DOVE COFFEE ROASTERS

**A coffee roastery recently opened in Linlithgow’s Regent Centre, and already proving a big hit with locals, really can lay claim to having an international flavour.**

White Dove Coffee Roasters, opened by **Naiomi Smith-Skapi and her husband Ilirjan**, who is Albanian and a coffee roaster to trade, features coffee from a number of countries, tea from all over the world, and Sicilian pastries, cakes and focaccia from the couples’ artisan bakery in Perth.

Add to all that a choice of the most popular cakes from the famous, long-established **Fisher and Donaldson’s bakery** in Dundee and you have a winning formula which has had queues forming, and many customers taking advantage of the attractive seated area outside. Both here and inside, dogs are made very welcome.

Naiomi said that Ilirjan ran White Dove at the weekend, while during the week he operated his own business in Glasgow, U-Roast, which exports green beans, roasted coffee, and coffee roasting machines all over the world.



Naiomi Smith-Skapi and her husband Ilirjan

She said they had met in Albania when they were both students. Ilirjan had grown up with his grandmother, who hand roasted coffee at home. They had lived in Albania for five years, then four in Tuscany in Italy.

*“I really wanted to return home to Scotland, and feel part of a community here, as Ilirjan was in Albania. We moved here two years ago. Our son Olivier was born here, and his brother Leonardo has just started at Low Port Primary.”*

She said she and Ilirjan had set up the roastery in memory of her grandparents Philip and Sheila Whitehead, who sadly passed away within a short time of each other last year.

*“They lived in Linlithgow for 30 years, and they had the White Dove gift shop in the Royal Mile in Edinburgh for many years. They were very well known in the town, and heavily involved in supporting Cancer Research, Link, and Hopetoun House. We recently moved into their old house, which is just five minutes along the road”.*

Naiomi said that part of her childhood had been lived on the outskirts of Linlithgow, and after working in a number of countries for 15 years – including the US, China, Albania and Italy – in international development and teaching English, she felt she had come ‘full circle’.

She added that she and Ilirjan very much wanted to see the White Dove become a community hub, and she was keen to encourage local artists to exhibit work in it. She came from a family of artists – her grandmother specialised in rocking horses, her aunt was a potter, and her father was a sculptor, painter and photographer.

Their artisan bakery and cafe in Perth would continue to be run by their Sicilian partners Marco and Graziella Risiglione, who would be supplying gluten free and vegan cakes, including different kinds of brownies, and apple and almond cake, as well as pastries. Fillings for the focaccia would include Parma ham, sun-dried tomatoes, pesto and mozzarella.



## Broomyhill Community Orchard

Have you ever thought that having some fruit trees in your neighbourhood would be nice, but weren't sure how to go about it, or thought it would be difficult or complicated? Well read on, because I promise you that it's easy, inexpensive and a great way to bring a community together. It also gives nature a helping hand and can help to create a more welcoming environment.

The idea was born from looking to make better use of an unloved patch of uninspiring grass alongside Mains Burn on Broomyhill Place. There was a vision to introduce a small, informal community orchard for the benefit of both local residents and anyone passing through. It was a surprisingly straightforward process. Put simply, the steps were:

- >> Get the buy-in of the neighbourhood
- >> Get advice from local fruit tree expert via Burgh Beautiful on tree types and placement
- >> Check with West Lothian Council regarding potential buried utilities
- >> Source appropriate fruit trees from a Scottish supplier
- >> Repurpose tree tubes and stakes from well-established community planting which had outgrown them
- >> Pick a date to do the socially distanced planting
- >> Get digging!

It was very exciting when a package of bare root trees arrived in early December. Even with an extra trip to get more topsoil, the initial 8 trees were all safely in place in around an hour. Parts of the ground are very poor and stoney, so a little light pickaxing helped to dig out the planting holes. Two extra cherry trees were added later. These have filled the space really nicely and added a sense of completion.

The only other work needed has been extra watering during the very dry late winter/early spring. And once



*Planting of Broomyhill community orchard – young trees in trug.*



*Completion of initial planting of Broomyhill community orchard.*



*Broomyhill community orchard in early May – trees starting to blossom*

they get bigger, a little pruning will be required. Otherwise, we can sit back and enjoy the blossom in spring and (hopefully) the fruits in late summer/autumn each year.

Despite some initial concerns that

one tree was literally just a stick, they have all burst into life, with leaf buds/proper leaves, most with blossom by early May. The bees and other insects are thoroughly enjoying their presence. We're selfishly hoping





*The young trees in their neat holes, complete with blossom.*

that they'll help improve the pollination on our own more established, nearby fruit trees too.

Such a simple activity has already visually improved the space and has changed the way that the area is utilised. The path is heavily frequented by dog walkers, school children, shoppers, walkers etc.. Instead of just passing through, a lot more people now pause to appreciate the area. We've seen lots more play and noticing of nature going on. And also the very gratifying sight of two young families sitting between the trees in the sunshine. They were having a picnic before carefully exploring the burn.

This was an inexpensive project which has brought together our little community and we hope contributed to the wider community in the local area.

*Please contact [bbl@lbt.scot](mailto:bbl@lbt.scot) if interested.*

#### **Dianne Lamont** **Burgh Beautiful Linlithgow**

*Burgh Beautiful Linlithgow is part of Linlithgow Burgh Trust. Linlithgow Burgh Trust is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation – Scottish Charity Number SC047211*



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# BARRY SHARES HIS 'TREASURE TROVE' OF PHOTOS



**Barry Mulholland of Braehead Drive has created a local social media sensation by sharing some of his extensive collection of old Linlithgow photographs.**

Many show locations and buildings that are no longer with us and chart the development of the town over the last sixty years. The photos are provoking huge interest, not only from people who remember the scenes portrayed, but also from newer people to the area who are fascinated to see aspects of the Linlithgow we have lost.

Although there are some older prints and negatives, most of the collection is slides and Barry reckons there are several thousand of them. He is currently going through the painstaking task of scanning and digitising every one. *"I've been doing this for two years", he told me, "and I have only just scratched the surface. There are 122 slides in each magazine and there are boxes and boxes to work on."*

In the process, he is also trying to catalogue the photos and sharing them on social media helps with identification and dating. This is extremely helpful. After scanning, Barry posts his photos on the local Facebook pages and the ensuing discussions can last for several days, as memories are recalled, and questions are answered.

Barry inherited the collection from his late grandfather, **Mr John Young**, who lived all his life in Linlithgow and took a great interest in the town's history and traditions, especially the annual Riding of the Marches. Educated at the local schools, John had a great aptitude for all things

mechanical and when he left school in 1935, he took up an apprenticeship with **Donaldson's garage at 33-37 High Street.** (photo 1) This was directly opposite his Mum and Dad's fruit, vegetable, and confectionery shop at 54 High Street (now the 'Crannog' café).

When war broke out in September 1939, John was called up for active service with the 3rd (Indian) Corps of Signals and eventually posted to Singapore. After Singapore fell to the Japanese army early in 1942, John was among the thousands of allied troops who were captured and he would spend nearly three and a half years in various prisoner of war camps, under barbaric and inhumane conditions. He finally made his way back to Linlithgow in September 1945.

After the war, John worked as an engineer at the famous local haulage firm, **William Aitken & Sons, at Stockbridge on the Falkirk Road** (photo 2).

In the early 1960s, along with hundreds of others in West Lothian, he took up the challenge presented by the new British Motor Company plant at Bathgate. John's career there led to a managerial position within Quality Control, which took him all over the UK and Europe.

A long-time interest in photography really took off in the 1960s when John purchased a 35mm East German-made Praktika. This camera, together with a later Praktika Mark II, resulted in slides being produced, mostly of local scenes, Gala processions in Linlithgow and elsewhere, and other areas of interest, such as family holidays and tours throughout Britain. John was a life-long supporter of Linlithgow Marches and was always keen to capture scenes of



the procession. As well as an impressive array of photos, he also had Marches programmes, the earliest dating from 1919, inherited from his parents. Together with his Marches memorabilia, John gathered together interesting articles and press cuttings, all relating to Linlithgow history, and these will be a fascinating resource in years to come.

**With the Marches being cancelled again this year, due to the Covid 19 situation, Barry will be digging into his grandfather's treasure trove and sharing lots of old Marches photos in the coming weeks. No doubt, these will evoke great memories, as people recall happier times on the First Tuesday after the Second Thursday in June.**

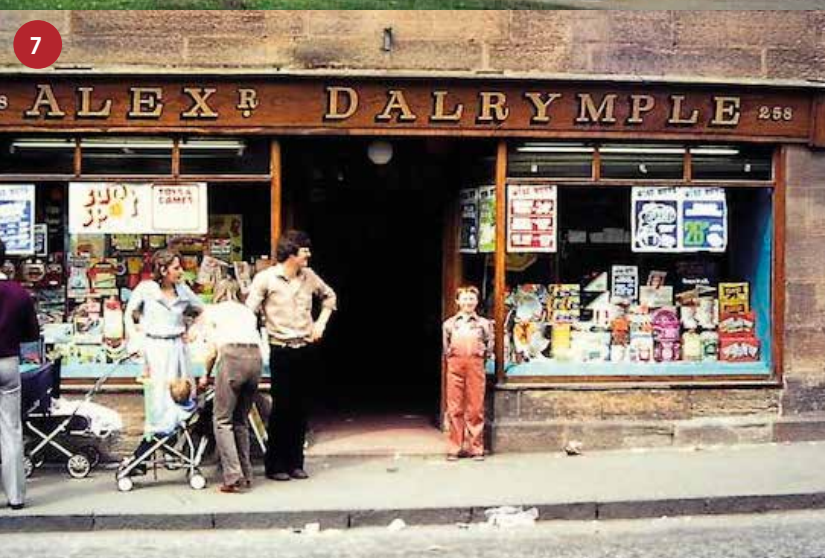
*Photo captions.*

1. Donaldson's Garage, 33-35 High Street
2. William Aitken & Sons Haulage, Stockbridge, Falkirk Road
3. Younger's Baker Shop and the Windsor Buffet
4. The White House on the Blackness Road
5. Regent Works at the Low Port
6. Cup-winning 'showboat' decorated vehicle at the Marches
7. Dalrymple's shop, 270 High Street.
8. The Ritz cinema
9. Marches vehicles at the Low Port, early 1960s
10. The McGinley family at the 1974 marches
11. Mr John Young with grandsons Barry (right) and Mark (left).

**Murdoch Kennedy**









# REED BAND TUNES UP FOR A BUSY(ER) SEASON

Little did we think that when we formed up to play at the Guides Thinking Day in February 2020 that it would be the only engagement we were to play in the whole of 2020. It is definitely the quietest the band has been since it was created (apologies for the bad pun!)

However, there has still been plenty going on for our band members. Since August 2020 we have been providing virtual lessons for our learners. While not everyone has been able to participate in this way, we have been able to continue lessons for over 30 players of all ages. This has also proved a real help to the tutors who have found it a useful way to give some meaning to the strange existence we have experienced, as well as benefiting from the social contact that came round about the lessons. This has also ensured that when we return we will still have new blood coming into the main band, which will be vital as we look to return to playing together.

Earlier this year, with 'normal' rehearsals still seeming very far away, the committee took the decision to try some online rehearsals. Each session has seen band members play along (on mute) to a recording of some of the pieces the band regularly play – we can honestly say that the band has never sounded so good! Of course rehearsals are not just about playing, so we have used breakout rooms to have group chats with one another to keep in touch with everyone's news. We have even been able to be joined by our Honorary Member Carsten Freitag from the Hochsauerland region of Germany, and other members across the central belt of Scotland.



In these sessions, we have also welcomed four members who have been progressing through our training set up and our now ready to join the main band. One of these is James Veitch (16), who said "The zoom lessons have worked surprisingly well through the past year and I feel I have made good progress with my saxophone since the start of the online lessons. It was nice to still have something on during the pandemic to keep me busy. The virtual band rehearsals were also great fun and it was nice to meet so many new people and chat to them at each rehearsal between the playing of pieces. Although these virtual rehearsals and lessons were great, I am very excited about playing with everyone in person. It will be my first time playing with the main band which will be challenging but I am really looking forward to getting a first experience of playing in a marching band."

The band also present the James Hamilton Trophy each Spring, usually at our Spring Concert. This is awarded to "the most improved young player" in the eyes of the band committee. We were delighted to recently award this to James and his friend Arthur Flint who have both gone from complete beginners to playing Tenor Saxophone in the main band within 2 years which is no mean feat.

Another event which we were not able to celebrate in the way we would have wished was the 90th Birthday of our Honorary President and founding member, Eddie McKenna in May 2021. To many people in Linlithgow, Eddie is Mr Reed Band, so it was sad that we were not able to gather with him to celebrate. However, we did have an online rehearsal that night and dedicated our playing of "Light of Foot" to him – that was the first march played at the very first Reed Band rehearsal in January 1956.



However, brighter times are on the horizon. We got confirmation on Tuesday 11th May that organised performing arts groups were able to restart outdoor activities from Monday 18th May. We had previously looked for outdoor accommodation which would meet our requirements, and thanks to Linlithgow Rose Football Club we were able to hold our first real rehearsal in over 15 months at Prestonfield on Tuesday 18th May. We would also like to thank Linlithgow Rugby Club who also offered us use of their facilities – the main advantage of using Prestonfield is the enclosed nature of the space as we are not supposed to draw a crowd! Our normal rehearsals are two hours, but we will need to build up to this after such a long time of not playing together. Initially we will be restricted to the music which is in our march pads, but we hope it will not be too much longer before we can meet inside and can resume work on a wider musical programme.

We are also very much looking forward to our first booking of 2021 to play at a small crowning ceremony for the Linlithgow & Linlithgow Bridge Gala Day, to allow them to crown the 2020 Queen. We hope this will be the first of many engagements which we are able to play at throughout the rest of 2021 and beyond – we have already had tentative thoughts about outdoor events we can do as soon as these are allowed.

**Seonaid Scott**





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# LINLITHGOW HIGH STREET – 400 YEARS OF CHANGE

## PART ONE - THE BURGH ROODS

The surviving minute books of the old Town Council begin in 1620, and in these I found lists of the burgh roods for the years 1665 & 1687. The lists are divided into quarters with the Dog Well separating east from west. Each quarter is recorded left to right as viewed from the street which means that the south side has the SE and the SW quarters, and this is repeated for the north side with the NW and the NE quarters.

A minute in March 1664 revealed that the width of a rood was 7 elnes (elne = 37inches) which results in a plot width of 21feet 7inches (6.58m). From this, I was able to trace the plots on the first Ordnance Survey of 1856, which showed there had been very little change in the towns layout since then. Apart from changes in the width of some of the plots, the most significant change was on the south side where additional wynds were added (originally there was a single wynd known as the Easter Wynd which later changed to St Michael's Wynd).

The answer to the perennial question 'how much has the streetscape changed' is, by not very much in 400 years.

This is the first in a series of Articles in which I examine the changes in the architecture of the High Street over the past 400 years. What has been described in various books is mostly misleading, e.g. there is no evidence for cantilevered timber facades, or for houses being mostly built gable-on to the street.

The illustration by Sir William Allan PRSA (1782-1850), shown above right, portrays the assassination of the Regent Moray, in a High Street that is entirely the creation of the artist's imagination and could not be further from the reality. A case in point is that the crime was perpetrated on the Cross Brae, but the street depicted is drawn as being level and straight. There should be a change in direction at the Dog Well Wynd, just beyond.

The building from which the fatal shot was fired survived until c.1860 when the Sheriff Court House was built and bares no resemblance to the building depicted. The lower illustration (wonky perspec-



tive corrected by me) has wrongly been attributed to artist Philip Henry Delamotte (1829-89), who would not have produced such an incompetent drawing. It is clearly the work of an amateur artist who got the perspective completely wrong.

From at least year 1500, the town was divided into four quarters for administrative purposes with the Dog Well (circled yellow in the street view above) marking the change between east and west. Although the well (cast iron replaced the stone well in 1852) has disappeared, its position is marked by the Dog Well Wynd. The wynd became a feature of the town in 1602 when the council bought this Burgess plot. It had been abandoned 50 years earlier and soon became ruinous. It was not long before people took advantage of this and started using it as a shortcut to their agricultural plots south of the town wall.

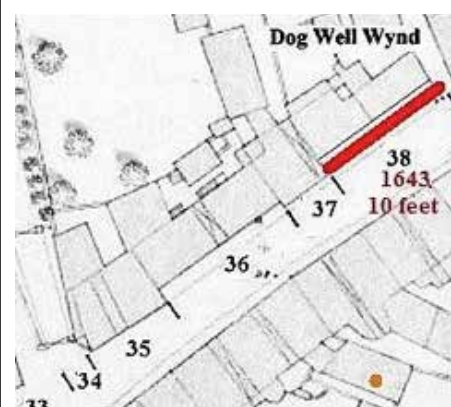
Each quarter was divided into plots which were listed as viewed from the street. The widths of the plots increased in quarters from 1 rood, to 1¼, 1½, 1¾ and so on, up to the widest plot which was 6 roods wide (one plot is listed as 11 roods wide).

In the minute books I also found complete lists of the burgh roods for the years 1665 and 1687. These can be related to the first Ordnance Survey of the town, dated 1856, and the result was extremely accurate.

This was corroborated by measuring several of the frontages.

An example of the list of the burgh roods is shown below and also the part plan to which it refers. I added the plot numbers for identification purposes.

		Roods	half rood	quarter rood
33	Laird Riccartoun Lodging	2	0	0
34	Mr An, Kerr, wrying chamber	0	1	0
35	James Curries	2	0	0
36	Marie Myln, Lyfrentox	3	0	0
37	Robert Barclay	1	0	1
38	George Bell - dog well	2	1	1



Red indicates the frontage of this building advanced into the street by 10 feet in 1643. This will be looked at in more detail in the next installment. Issue 83

Laurie Alexander





## 'THIS COULD BE A GARDEN' - GET INVOLVED

### CRAFT BOMBING INSPIRATION

#### Context

'This Could Be A Garden' is a temporary installation on the gap site at the old Victoria Hall in Linlithgow. It asks the developers, and those with responsibility over the site, to do more to progress its improvement. It was erected in April 2021, and people quickly began adding flowers and other garden-related decorations to the fencing.



#### An invitation to get involved

You may have heard of 'yarn bombing', which uses knitted and sewn decorations to raise awareness or protest about an issue. We think of the Victoria Hall site as a craft-bomb, and we hope lots of people will continue to add home-made decorations to the site, to show support for the campaign and encourage our council members, MSPs and the developers to get to work on improving the site.

#### Here are some practical suggestions and creative inspiration:

- 1. Location.** You can add your decorations anywhere along the eight fencing panels shown in the photo above. The site is between the Oxfam charity shop (98 High Street) and Center Stage Dancewear (86 High Street).
- 2. Permission.** We obviously don't have permission for this installation - it is a protest after all! So you should be aware that you're adding any decorations to an unauthorised installation (at your own

risk, etc etc), and your creations may be removed at any time.

**3. Fixing your creations.** You can simply tie your creations to the fencing, or use cable ties or bulldog clips. Make sure they're nice and secure, so they don't blow away and create litter.

**4. Materials.** You can use any materials for your creation, although they will last longer if they are rainproof and reasonably robust to withstand wind and outdoor conditions. It's good to use natural, upcycled or recycled materials where you can, and it's best not to use anything too heavy that would risk destabilising the fencing.

**5. Share your work!** We'd love to make sure as many people as possible see the growing installation. Please share photos on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, with the hashtag #LinlithgowGapSites.

**6. Theme.** Building on the wording 'This Could Be A Garden', any garden-themed decorations could be added. It could be plants or flowers, bees, butterflies or insects, children playing, gardening tools... let your imagination run wild!

#### Some pictures for inspiration:



Some online instructions to get started: *(but feel free to use your own ideas too!)*

>> Making flowers out of recycled plastic bags: <https://www.artycraftykids.com/craft/recycled-plastic-bag-flower/>

>> Making flowers out of plastic bottles: <http://blukatkraft.blogspot.com/2014/01/recycled-plastic-bottle-crafts.html>

>> Making butterflies out of plastic bottles: <https://diynspired.com/recycled-water-bottle-butterfly/>

>> Simple ladybirds made out of milk bottle lids: <https://craftsbyamanda.com/plastic-lid-ladybugs/>

>> Milk bottle top flowers (the page is in French but lovely simple photo ideas): <https://www.faitparcicia.com/expositions-installations/59-rivoli-paris-1er/>

>> A YouTube tutorial of a simple crochet flower: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKRiQOTYNY>

>> A YouTube tutorial of a simple knitted rose: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gPoagK33Xrc>

>> A range of designs for sewed / fabric flowers: <https://www.oneprojectcloser.com/make-fabric-flowers-tutorial/#ruffled>

#### Concerned Residents



# CHARITY FUNDRAISERS REACH MILESTONE YEAR

Local charity fundraisers – ‘The Walk for Jock’ – will stage their tenth annual assault on the West Highland Way from the 3rd to the 8th of September and a series of special events are being planned to celebrate this milestone year.

In conjunction with the Linlithgow Distillery, they recently launched ‘Jock’s Gin’. The recipe contains ten ingredients and was put together by members Andy Goodwin, Cheryl Dick, and Fiona Wallace. A commemorative book is currently being prepared and will be officially launched at a special event in October.

The driving force behind ‘The Walk for Jock’ group is well-known local character **Davie ‘Deep Sea’ Paterson**, who has organised charity events in the town for many years. Davie walked the West Highland Way for various causes from 2008 onwards, but the loss of his elder brother Jock to cancer in 2012 led to the establishment of a fundraising group set up to honour his memory.

Jock joined Davie and other friends in tackling the 98-mile path from Milngavie to Fort William in 2011 and really looked forward to doing it again. Sadly, he was diagnosed with cancer a few months later and passed away on the day before the Marches in June 2012.

Davie was devastated by the loss of his brother at the age of only 47 and hadn’t the heart to tackle the West Highland Way that year. His friends, however, thought otherwise. He told me:

*“My best mate, Les Pattison, said ‘Do the walk for Jock in his memory’ and that’s how we got the name. My cousin Audrey quipped, ‘It’s what you do’ and we turned that into our motto, ‘IT’S WHAT WE DO’.”*

The **Platform Three** pub acts as the group’s base and the monthly quiz nights there are a major source of fundraising income throughout the year. The lockdown restrictions meant that the pub couldn’t be used, but they simply moved everything online, as Davie Paterson explained:

*“People were missing the regular quizzes, so my pal Kevin McCluskey set everything up and we did it all online. We had two quizzes every week, on Sunday and Thursday nights, with 70 questions every time. Each quiz took six hours to write and one hour to present. In total, we ran 89 quizzes and asked 6240 questions, with around £5000 being raised for ‘The Walk for Jock’ and various good causes.”*



Davie Paterson and his Mum, Mary, at the launch of ‘Jock’s Gin’ at Linlithgow Distillery.

Being online meant that a far bigger audience could be involved than simply those gathered in Platform Three and teams came from all over the world. Famous names taking part, included Ryder Cup golfer, **Stephen Gallacher**, who lives in Linlithgow, veteran actor **Paul Young** from ‘Still Game’, and members of the pop/rock group, **Showaddywaddy**.

The impact of the quizzes was neatly summed up by **Crawford Flint**, who is well known as the Deacon of the Fraternity of Dyers in Linlithgow.

His team was involved in every one and he said:

*“There is no doubt that 2020/2021 will go down in our memories as a difficult time. Mental health problems rocketed as lockdown took its toll. However, despite the difficulties, some good things have happened that helped us through and kept us smiling. Davie Paterson was an old hand at running pub quizzes but live on social media was a new challenge! Davie quickly became comfortable with the new*

*virtual format and so the twice-weekly quizzes took shape”.*

*“Who would have thought after the first few weeks that the quizzes would still be happening over a year later? Families found it a great way to pass the time. Many – like us – used it as an excuse to meet old friends on Zoom and do the quiz, chat, and generally socialise. We saw friends much more often than we normally did. Same procedure every week – meet at 6.45pm, quiz at 7, commiserate at 8, chat until 10. Brilliant! And the questions! If I hear another live lyric question or movie round, I will scream. Family Fortunes? – enough said! Quite where Davie got his inspiration, I don’t want to know!”*

Full details of ‘The Walk for Jock’ can be found on the group’s Facebook page.

**Murdoch Kennedy**





# LINLITHGOW MUSEUM WILL BE RE-OPENING!



When you arrive, you will be welcomed by a museum volunteer. To provide 'Track and Trace' information, you will be able to scan our QR Code or complete a contact information card. In line with current guidelines, we must collect this information from every individual visitor. Face coverings should be worn during your visit and we have several hand sanitising stations and a one-way route through the museum. We want everyone to have a safe and enjoyable visit. Please try to follow signs and guidance as best you can to help us help you!

You are still welcome to browse our shop and payment by card is encouraged. We are also able to accept donations by card and these are greatly appreciated as they help us to meet our running costs.

We have acquired the "We're Good to Go" accreditation. This Industry Standard mark means that Linlithgow Museum has followed government and industry Covid-19 guidelines.

So we're good to go – all we need now is visitors. We hope to see you soon!

**Alison Train** Trustee

From May 21st, Linlithgow Museum will be re-opening!

We are delighted to be back and look forward to welcoming everyone. We will open three days a week: Friday - 10:00am – 4pm, Saturday - 10:00am – 4pm and Sunday 1:00pm – 4pm.

Entry to the museum is free, but visitors will need to book a timed slot online. This is so we can manage numbers and maintain social distancing. In line with current guidelines, slots will be limited to a total of six people (under 12s do not count towards the total). Please book online at [www.linlithgowmuseum.org/open](http://www.linlithgowmuseum.org/open) For "on the day" availability please phone the museum on 01506 670677. We will try to accommodate you but cannot accept walk-ins at this time.

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# LINLITHGOW'S AMBULANCE

Bruce Jamieson



It was this old, grainy photograph that put me on the track of Linlithgow's first ever motor ambulance, as the building shown, Dan McColl's Garage, was the vehicle's base for 20 years. Since it stopped operating as a garage, the building has had many uses – as the Craft Crannie shop, Money Check, McEwan Fraser Legal Agents and now PL Joinery.

The suggestion that Linlithgow should purchase an "Ambulance Waggon" was first mooted by Dr Caithness, a local medical practitioner. The idea was taken up by the Town Council and, at a public meeting held in April 1928, chaired by Provost Hebson, it was agreed to pursue the matter urgently as the existing horse-drawn ambulance was no longer fit for purpose. It was pointed out that it was slow, that the patient was often subject to a very uncomfortable, jolting ride and that it was proving very difficult to keep the horses permanently in harness until they were required.



*A typical horse-drawn ambulance*

There were also other problems! While Walter Brown of the Midlothian Yeomanry was being carried to the wagon, he was kicked by one of the horses which "propelled a set of keys in his pocket into his flesh."

It was agreed to call a further meeting to discuss the provision of a motor ambulance, this time chaired by the Rev Robert Coupar of St Michael's, and at this gathering an Ambulance Association was duly formed with an entry fee of half a crown and a subscription of one penny a week. Paid-up members could get free use of the ambulance and, within a week, there were 110 people willing to join. Local companies could obtain group membership and so Lochmill and Lovells Paper Mills and Aitkens the Hauliers each donated £50.



*A young William Aitken and his Stockbridge HQ*



A management committee was appointed, consisting of: Lieutenant Commander Kenneth Mackenzie of Longcroft; W. Burns, Glenavon; G. Reading, Fernlea; J. Baxter 276 High Street; A. Macgregor, 145 High Street; W Rafferty, 11 Mill Road; R Combe, 164 High Street; A. Johnston, 11 Avon Place; Dr Caithness West Port House; Rev R. Coupar; J. Houston, Friarsbrae and the Association Secretary, Mr A Beattie.

With funds now available, the committee appointed garage owner Dan McColl to source a vehicle and he recommended a Morris de-luxe, mounted on a one-ton commercial chassis with specialised springs and

balloon tyres. It arrived in October 1928, complete with space for two stretchers and seating for seven patients.



*A 1928 Morris ambulance*

The new ambulance was viewed by Provost Hebson and Dr Caithness who both pronounced it ideal for the town's needs. And indeed, it was certainly needed as in its first year it was put into service 166 times, carrying 171 patients and amassing a total of 5532 miles.

The maintenance of the machine was undertaken by Mr McColl and in 1933 he reported to the committee that, as the vehicle had clocked up 60,000 miles, he recommended a replacement engine and this was duly installed. A tribute to the care and attention given to the transport is reflected in the fact that during its first five years there had not been one breakdown - or one emergency call unanswered.

A quick scan through the newspapers of the time reveals the types of emergencies to which the ambulance was called.

*"Attended to William Sands, boat attendant on the loch, when he crashed his motorbike at Champany corner."*

*Boats for hire on Linlithgow Loch*





"Called to the Star and Garter where Dr Carter was reviving David Ferguson who had been knocked off his bike outside his workplace, the Newlands Agricultural Implement Works. Once recovered, the ambulance conveyed him home."

"Attended to Betty Coleman, a young girl who fell from a car at Stockbridge when the door flew open. She was taken to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary."

"Called to assist a young Police Constable, Thomas Fordyce, after a motorbike accident on the Linlithgow to Bo'ness Road."

"In attendance at Linlithgow Station to assist injured passengers after a sudden jolt by the train. Linlithgow Station Ambulance Corps also assisted."



*Linlithgow Station Ambulance Corps*

"At Oatridge point to point, the ambulance was summoned to assist Mrs A. E. Johnston. Murieston, who had been thrown from her horse at the second last jump."



The importance of the town's ambulance was shown by the fact that by 1936 there were well over 1000 members of the Association and, with more financial resources at their disposal, the committee agreed to purchase a more modern ambulance. Consequently, in 1936, Dan McColl was commissioned to take the train to the Morris Commercial Factory in Birmingham and bring back a silver-grey, "streamlined", 24hp Morris Wadham ambulance, equipped for comfort with giant low-pressure tyres.



*A model Morris Wadham ambulance*

This vehicle served the community well for 12 years, clocking up 104,117 miles - again without a single breakdown while it carried 6088

patients. Until he died in 1946, the driver was Mr George Anderson who also played with the Torphichen Pipe Band.

In 1948, the Ambulance Association was wound up on the formation of the National Health Service. At a farewell ceremony, Dr Caithness was hailed as the inspiration behind the organisation and the Secretary, Mr Beattie, was thanked for his many years of service during which it was remarked that he was so proud of his position that he would have slept in the ambulance if he could. Mr Beattie announced that the organisation still had £1600 in its bank account and it was agreed to donate this to the St Andrew's Ambulance Service. Dan McColl was thanked for his 20-year service to the Association and he agreed to continue looking after the St Andrew's ambulance.



*Provost Road*

So, next time you're in Provost Road, spare a thought for Dan McColl and the garage which housed Linlithgow's first motor ambulances.



## GARY CLINTON, MUSIC TUTOR

The recent easing of restrictions has seen the reopening of many more businesses on our High Street including what has for many been sorely missed – no, not the hairdresser – the pub! Although I am also very glad Boxx Hair reopened as I was sick of looking at myself on Zoom calls whilst teaching, looking like a cross between Kurt Cobain and a mop.



Such is our love of a quiet pint and cocktail at one of Linlithgow's many watering holes lots of us (your humble author included) braved the unpredictable Scottish weather to enjoy a wee tippie outside. Furthermore, at the time of writing at least, we now don't need to bring a full range of weather provisions like sunglasses, flip flops, brollies and parkas as we can once again enjoy a scoop or two indoors. Sadly, though, our pub experience isn't completely back to normal as it's still missing one very important element – live music.

I recall not all that long ago **The Star and Garter** was hosting an open mic night on Sunday evenings and then at one point live acts on a Saturday. I've been entertained by singers and guitarists in **The Four Marys** in the past – in fact I recall one guy playing 'Nothing Else Matters' by Metallica which incidentally many of my Higher students include in their performance programme – so that was cool – and I also know Du Vin Bouchers were hosting live jazz before it all had to stop.

So this got me thinking about individuals who contribute to, and support, local music and also what can be done to help get live music back on its feet locally. After all, hardworking pub singers and upcoming bands have probably been one of the hardest hit during the pandemic so to find out more about the local scene I got in touch with Linlithgow's very own music journalist and West Lothian Regal Radio presenter **Stuart McHugh**.



### Music In Linlithgow Stuart McHugh

Back in 1998 Stuart was frustrated by many upcoming Scottish acts like Belle and Sebastian, Mogwai and Delgados being ignored by the existing music press (NME etc) and started 'Jockrock. org' and then in 2002 'Is This Music?' magazine which featured Scottish talent and gave a voice to younger upcoming Scottish bands too. Stuart reported an increase in submissions of new Scottish music during lockdown with over 1000 singles and albums sent to him for consideration over the past year.

*"That's mainly due to people finding time, perhaps from lockdown, becoming more creative, and exploring new recording techniques and realising that DIY music can be just as good as that made by an established band and via a major record company. It's amazing what can be created out of adversity."*

I also asked Stuart if he'd covered any Linlithgow based artists over the years:

*"Linlithgow hasn't had a great number of famous musical names forming from it (I'm willing to be corrected!) – best-known son would be Alan Rankine of 80s chart act The Associates, and Graham Sharp – who was part of This Mortal Coil – is also from here. Aside from that, Penguins Kill Polar Bears had a short underground career, and most recently Altanak – formed at the Academy – played at Party at the Palace."*

**Party At The Palace** is of course now Linlithgow's biggest music attraction and with the attention that brings I think a vibrant scene could one day be forged here. The town's businesses certainly boom when the bands come and pre-pandemic Linlithgow offered jazz, folk, rock and classical performances. Stuart himself has toyed with the idea of putting shows on and his wife Sue is active in this area including the aforementioned jazz at **Du Vin Bouchers**.

*"Maybe the lack of gigs for a whole year will spur me on... though the challenges for any promoter will be greater over the next year or so, as distancing and restricted numbers make the road to recovery for the live music industry really uncertain."*

*Oddly perhaps, the music scene in the town is pretty healthy – the folk club and festival have been going for years, there are a couple of very well-attended choirs, there are quite a few classically-oriented events, and there's Linlithgow Jazz – that's run by my wife Sue (I roadie for it)."*

Undoubtedly it's a long road back to recovery for live music however I suspect there are many Black Bitch readers out there of a similar mind-set to Stuart, his wife Sue and myself who would support and champion Linlithgow as a hotspot for music. I certainly work with guitarists of all ages who I think would be interested in an 'jam night' somewhere in the town intended to allow people to gain live experience in a supportive environment and maybe meet some new friends too.

**So if you are supporting local businesses during the road to recovery and if you have never attended any live music in Linlithgow, perhaps it's something to consider when the time comes. Oh and do you know a new record store is opening on the High Street? I am very excited about this and I hope to feature 'Lowport Music' next month.**



### New Releases

**'DOT GOV' by Skelfs** (self-released) – Hailing from Linlithgow, my chat with Stuart McHugh turned me onto these exciting, young alt-punk-rockers whose 6th single pulls no punches.

**'Similar Faces' by The Katuns** (self-released) – Fronted by a graduate from my very own school of rock, Adam Frame, these talented young Indie lads are planning a debut UK tour in September with a few shows sold-out already. Better get your tickets fast!







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## UNLOCKING OURSELVES



**H**opefully the restrictions on all of us will continue to ease over this month and we thought we'd tell you how the team here at New Hopetoun Gardens have been. Our Pink Lady has been welcoming you all back at the front since we reopened on Easter Monday. Dougal felt she needed tarting up a bit as she has had such a busy time reminding everyone to wear masks and enter by the side gate into the plant area.

We have all commented on how disturbing it can be to see television programmes made before Covid where everyone is crowded together and not a mask to be seen. But don't we all long to feel safe with no masks and being able to hug anyone we choose to? Before this happens we thought we'd record some of the team at work in masks and socially distanced. Our lovely team in the tearoom have not been wearing masks in the kitchen because it can be so hot and stuffy, but they have been keeping socially distanced.

Nicola, Claire and Olivia are working in the houseplant area in the Garden Shop. Claire and Nicola are in charge of plant sales and ordering them



all from the 30 growers we use across the UK. Dougal tends to order the houseplants so they are always keen to see the new arrivals and tease him about some of the ones he particularly likes and orders.

Sales from the gift shop have been brisk since the tearoom opened at the end of April. Lesley, Morag and Julie were debating their favourite fragrances this day, facemasks don't help at all. They are desperate for trade shows to start up again to find lovely things to offer you, the last ones were in February 2020 but it looks like they'll be able to visit the Harrogate Gift Fair in July.

The men have also been busy since we opened keeping us stocked up with compost and pots, both of which have been difficult to keep in stock because of demand. Here Scott, Graham and Tim escaped inside to the Bird House to check out the stocks of Fairy Gardens, Bird Food and Lanterns, all selling well as everyone spends more time in their gardens, soon able to invite family and friends to join them outside.



Our favourite facebook posts always involve the two cats Willow and Rowan. They have been very pleased to have us back here everyday although sometimes they retire to the office when it's very busy.



They both like to get into the space we want to work in, but then again they like to be outside when they want and inside when they want. Typical cats! Rowan does a little less miaowing now which is a relief but Willow can be naughty and sometimes stays out at night now the weather is warmer.

**Dougal Philip and Lesley Watson**  
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**WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU!**



Constables Andrew Murray and Peter Robertson are the community Police officers based at 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. Unfortunately due to the Covid Pandemic the Linlithgow Community Police Surgery has been suspended.



## CALLING ALL PARENTS

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

Unfortunately some of these groups have been involved in the consumption of alcohol, drugs, setting fires, littering, damaging property and other anti-social behaviour.

Police and other partners are aware of these issues and will be conducting patrols in the area.

This behaviour is having a negative impact on the local communities and there are also concerns regarding the personal safety of those involved in this conduct.

The police would encourage parents in Linlithgow to have an open discussion with their teenage children, as to where they are going and what they are doing when out with friends in the evenings and check the contents of their rucksacks.

Also make them aware of the current Covid Government Guideline in relation to gatherings.

Their reckless behaviour is putting themselves, friends and family members in danger.

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

## BOGUS CALLERS / WORKMEN IN LINLITHGOW AREA

"Rogue traders" usually cold call, claiming to be workers offering to make repairs or carry out work on your house, garden or driveway. They will charge over inflated prices for work that is often of poor quality or completely unnecessary. If you feel threatened, unsafe or suspicious of a caller then contact police immediately.

- >> Be on guard if someone turns up unexpectedly.
- >> Use a door chain or bar and keep it on whilst talking to callers.
- >> Always ask for identification.
- >> Do not feel pressured into agreeing to immediate work.
- >> Do not agree to buy from the first person who calls.
- >> Do not pay cash up front.
- >> Do shop around if you decide you need work done.
- >> Do report them. Don't ever feel embarrassed if you feel you have been the victim of doorstep crime.



Why not consider the council's Trusted Trader Scheme.

## ONLINE SCAMS AND FRAUD

Over the past couple of months reports of online scams and fraud have been on the increase. These are becoming more and more sophisticated. Here are a few examples

- >> Courier Fraud
- >> Identity fraud
- >> Online shopping and auction sites
- >> Romance and dating fraud
- >> Ticketing fraud
- >> Scam mail
- >> Computer software service
- Fraud Banking and Card Fraud

TAKE FIVE is a national campaign that offers straightforward and impartial advice to help everyone protect themselves from preventable financial fraud. This can be found on the Police Scotland website.

SO WHEN ONLINE BEFORE YOU MAKE ANY DECISIONS OR INVESTMENTS... TAKE FIVE

### STOP

Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.

### CHALLENGE

Could it be fake? It's ok to reject or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

### PROTECT

Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it.



## TO CONTACT THE POLICE...

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

Alternatively you can email [westlothiancommunityeast@scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:westlothiancommunityeast@scotland.pnn.police.uk) or through Contact us Service

Your Local Community Police – Linlithgow  
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Hopefully when we are through the pandemic the Linlithgow Community Police Surgeries will resume. We shall keep you posted.



MY MONEY? MY INFO? I DON'T THINK SO!

# THE ARTS

## "EXPERIENCE ART IN A NEW WAY THIS SUMMER"

Pat Swan [patswan@virginmedia.com](mailto:patswan@virginmedia.com).



### Forth Valley Art Beat

I'm a bit excited – I am writing about an Arts event that is actually happening and it's an interesting one too! I've written about the annual Open Studios event, **Forth Valley Art Beat**, in the past. Given the challenges of the past months, it's great to hear that the organisers have been shifting the focus this year to the outdoors, encouraging people to explore the beautiful Forth Valley whilst viewing new artworks which will be in situ from 3 July until 31 August 2021. **FVAB** received funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to develop the 2021 event around sustainable travel, with an 'ArtCycle' project that is working with commissioned, invited artists to create participatory outdoor artwork, integrating mapped cycling routes into the event. This sounds like a great family activity, and hopefully will inspire people to get out and about and appreciate some Art.



'ArtCycle' is an eco-art project, celebrating the creative outdoors and these artists are currently working on their commissions, responding to the local landscape in new and vibrant ways.



**Natalie McIlroy** is creating a series of **Blikvanger**-style artworks for a number of locations along the NCN 765 cycle route between Stirling and Bridge of Allan. Inspired by the artists' own experience living in the Netherlands, the cycling capital of the world, the **Blikvanger** (bike path nets) comprising large catching nets will collect cyclists' rubbish as they pass. Beautiful, sculptural forms in their own right, using recycled fishing nets, they will be individually handmade, brightly coloured forms that add to the enjoyment of cycling.

'Inscriptions in Arcadia' by **Audrey Grant**, will be a series of site-specific artworks situated in the beautiful and protected landscape around the **Bothkennar Pools**, near **Skinflats**. Visitors are invited to walk on easily accessible paths through this landscape with its pine trees and lagoons, its reedbeds and fields, and imagine another, the semi-mythical land of Arcadia. You will encounter artworks created from found and made objects placed within elements of the land's rich industrial and cultural past, highlighting the unique historical environment of the area.

**Milk & Two** are a Design and Illustration studio based in Falkirk. 'The Trails are Calling' will be a series of artworks in the landscape of Canada Wood reflecting their love of the area which they frequently use and enjoy. Each artwork comprises a colourful, bold, 4-sided hand painted wooden panel structure that will be placed in a number of points creating a circular path to be experienced either on foot or by cycling.

A series of walking and cycling events are also planned led by the 'ArtCycle' artists as well as **Stirling Active Travel Hub**, enabling audiences to meet the artists and find out more about the works. Another artist, **Holger Mohaupt**, will lead cycling events and as he is a photographer, perhaps he will share some tips.

There will also be an **Open Studios Weekend** on 10/11th July with more



Jane Charlton

than 40 artists opening up their studios, garden sheds, and more, from Linlithgow to Dunblane to Drymen. Local artists **Jane Charlton** and **Hilary Brown** will show their work in Jane's studio at Venue 45, 26 Highfield Crescent. The studio will be open 10am-5pm both days.

**Jane is a textile artist and freelance textile tutor.** She is mainly inspired by architecture and cities, especially Venice. Her practice involves painting, dyeing and screen printing textiles, often collaging different fabrics, then adding texture with stitch. She recently exhibited in The Tolbooth in Lanark, and is also a member of Indigo Tracks, a group of contemporary textile and mixed media artists. Find her on Facebook and Instagram @janecharltontextiles.

**Hilary paints and her favourite media is acrylic, but she also enjoys pastel, charcoal, pen and watercolour.** Landscapes and seascapes are her chosen subjects, but over the last year she's completed several dog portrait



Hilary Brown



commissions. Hilary said "I've been painting and drawing all my life but in recent years have taken it up more seriously, and having given up my job recently I can now concentrate on my art". Her work is available to see and purchase through her Facebook page, Hilly B Designs, and over the last year through Firefly Designs in Bo'ness.

### White Dove Coffee

It's lovely to see that the newly opened White Dove Coffee has incorporated an Art Space in their coffee shop, along with using some interesting materials in the furnishings in the café itself. I met with Naomi who shared her passion for art and her desire to support local artists. A whole wall is dedicated to displaying art and there is also a range of hand-made greetings cards for sale.

Naomi told me that she was happy for artists to approach her about having their artwork on display and for sale. At present she will offer a three-month trial to artists, but as it's early days further ideas will no doubt develop on how to use the space. I can recommend the coffee too!

### The Line Gallery

The Line Gallery is back, and from May 29th to June 15th the Frontline Thank You exhibition will run. Linlithgow artists Elaine Woo MacGregor, Victoria Ross and Siljes Elisabet Thorin joined artists from throughout Scotland in making portraits of key workers throughout the pandemic (or painting other works to their specifications) as gifts to say 'thank you'. Many of these works will be on display before being given to their recipients, together with a small range of other work created during lockdown. Part of the proceeds from the sale of these pieces will be donated to Foodbanks throughout Scotland, including in Linlithgow.

I really hope to be back writing about more local arts events soon, so if you are planning one please do get in touch as soon as possible. We publish every 6 weeks, but with print deadlines and printing and delivery schedules it is best to plan well ahead to get the timing right.

patswan@virginmedia.com.



**QUOTE OF THE MONTH**  
"an artist is an explorer"



## BLACK BITCH

### BLACK BITCH BEER GARDEN.

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## LEJOG ON A TANDEM CALLED 'MaNDy' IN AID OF MND SCOTLAND

I would like to introduce myself, I am Craig Kennedy (a local, recently retired firefighter). My tandem partners are Susan Johnston (a P7 teacher at Low Port Primary School) and our lovely classic 27 year-old Dawes tandem (MaNDy).

On the 1st of July, we are embarking on a challenge to raise funds and awareness for MND Scotland. Our amazing friend, **Cath Corrie** was diagnosed with MND in 2019 at the age of 50. **Cath**, her husband **Alan**, and daughters **Katie** and **Rachel** have all been supported by MND Scotland over the last 2 years.

We became friends back in 2009, when our daughters all played in Linlithgow Rose's first ever girls football team. It's safe to say that during our many matches, tournaments, and nights out, Cath, the team's first aider, smiled the brightest and laughed the loudest. She is fighting MND with determination, grace, and bravery - an amazing lady!

Susan, MaNDy, and I are endeavouring to cycle from Land's End to John O'Groats in 16 days, covering approximately 1024 miles!! We will start off our adventure in Land's End, making our way through Cornwall & Devon, and briefly visiting Wales on our way north. Then through Cheshire where we will have a pit stop



in Frodsham with Doug Johnston (ex-head coach of the girl's football team). Although adding extra miles, we felt that we couldn't complete this adventure without visiting Langholm in the Borders (Cath's home town), and of course Linlithgow. Cycling into our home town on Saturday 10th of July will be a very welcome sight and give us a day off to catch up with our families and dogs (Rocco and Ruby). From Linlithgow we will head west to Balloch, then north to Glencoe, and through the Great Glen to Inverness. We will finish our penultimate stretch to Altnaharra, finishing on Friday, the 16th of July in John O'Groats.

Although this is going to be a really tough and gruelling challenge, it's nothing compared to what Cath and her family have gone through since her MND diagnosis. We hope lots of people will give us a wave along the route and support this fantastic charity. We have set up a JustGiving page, and would be really grateful for any donations. Sponsor forms will also be available in Platform 3.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/mandydoeslejog>

**Craig Kennedy**





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**MARTIN GALLAGHER**



# EXCITEMENT BUILDING AFTER MONTHS OF LOCKDOWN

## LUCS OPENING TO THE PUBLIC 29TH MAY

After what seems like an eternity since there was boating activity on the canal, Linlithgow Union Canal Society have announced that they are at last able to reopen the canal basin from 29th May to welcome back visitors and guests to the tea room, and the ever popular boat trips.

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The Society, locally known as LUCS, and which is totally run by volunteers, looks after and runs all the facilities at the Canal Basin in Linlithgow, a venue that includes Scotland's only Canal Museum housed in the former canal stable buildings. Following some sterling work by their Covid Recovery Group, LUCS have been awarded the "Good To Go" accreditation confirming that The Society has followed government and industry COVID-19 guidelines, ensuring processes are in place to maintain cleanliness and aid social/physical distancing.

But, as Chris Matheson Dear, Interim Chair at LUCS says *"While we are delighted to be opening again, it will be on a very limited basis in the first instance, until we see how our arrangements to welcome visitors work out. We are only opening at weekends (from 29th May until 26th September) and the numbers permitted on the boat trips, and into the tea room will be very restricted at all times so that we can comply with all the relevant Covid guidelines."*



*"We will have helpers on hand to assist and advise, but we would ask all visitors to remember that all our staff are volunteers. Please respect any guidance or requests they may make ~ they are just trying to keep everyone safe."*

LUCS will be operating a 25 minute



town cruise on "Victoria" which will be running at 30 minute intervals from around 1:30pm until 4:30pm. No booking is possible for these short cruises with tickets purchased on the day, but payment will be by card only. The longer Avon Aqueduct cruises need to be booked in advance on the LUCS web site ([www.lucs.org.uk](http://www.lucs.org.uk)), and will depart at 2:00pm every Saturday and Sunday, returning to the basin at around 4:30pm.

Chris continues *"Unfortunately it is not possible to run some of our most popular events such as the annual LUCS Fun Day and the 'World Famous Cardboard Boat Race' normally held in August. It is just not possible at the moment to plan for the huge crowds that normally attend this popular event. We are however hoping to bring this back even bigger and better in 2022 which also sees the 200th anniversary of the opening of our Union Canal."*

*"Our monthly trips out to The Falkirk Wheel are also on hold at the moment as it is not financially viable to run these extended trips with the restricted numbers needed to achieve the recommended social distancing. We will be constantly reassessing the situation and following Government guidelines, and will bring back more and more of the events and features we are so well known for and appreciated by the local community. Please keep an eye on our web site and Social Media pages, where we will be announcing any future changes to opening days and times, and the availability of boat trips."*

Meanwhile LUCS are looking for volunteers to help out with the many tasks involved in running the Society. There are lots of possibilities to get involved such as helping out in the tea room, to maintaining the boats and premises. There is even a driver training programme, so if you just fancy messing about on a boat, why not get in touch.

LUCS also have a vacancy for a booking secretary to coordinate their on-line booking system. One of the advantages of this role being you can work from home in your own time, yet still benefit from the camaraderie that exists throughout the whole friendly organization.

So if you want to get involved, in any capacity, large or small, why not get in touch with LUCS at [info@lucs.org.uk](mailto:info@lucs.org.uk). You will not be disappointed.

**Or contact: Stuart Rennie**  
Linlithgow Union Canal Society

**T. 01592 201431**

**M. 07847 611398**

**E. [marketing@lucs.org.uk](mailto:marketing@lucs.org.uk)**







## LASER TATTOO REMOVAL SEMI-PERMANENT MAKEUP (SPMU) REMOVAL FREE RADIOTHERAPY SPOT(S) REMOVAL

The above 3 treatments are all different types of tattoos which can be removed using Q-switch lasers.

A Q-switch laser is considered by dermatologists as the safest, most clinically effective, and reliable procedure for the removal of amateur and professional tattoos of various sizes and colours with consistent, predictable results.

At Skin Happy we can fully remove tattoos and cover-up tattoos. We can part remove a tattoo or fade it down ready for a cover up.

### HOW DOES TATTOO REMOVAL WORK?

The laser light passes through the skin and is absorbed by the tattoo ink, causing rapid thermal expansion and an audible shock wave that shatters the ink into smaller pieces all without burning or damaging the upper layer of skin.

It is then possible for the smaller pieces of ink to be absorbed by your body's natural immune defences disposing of the ink gradually over time. Visually, we see the tattoo fading over a series of treatments.

### HOW MANY TREATMENTS ARE REQUIRED?

This depends on several factors such as the density, colours, and age of the tattoo.

Amateur tattoos can be quick to remove, taking 3 to 8 treatments, whereas professional tattoos vary considerably and can take up to 15 treatments, some can be more.

Semi-permanent makeup removal on the eyebrows usually contains less ink and are not placed as deep as a

standard tattoo. These can take 1-5 treatments to removal or less if they just need to be faded down ready for new semi-permanent brow treatments.

Radiotherapy spots can take between 4-8 treatments.

Treatment intervals are spaced at 8-10 weeks apart. Overall, removing a tattoo can be a long process taking several sessions over several months. Patience is required but you will be happy with the results.

### HOW LONG DOES TREATMENT TAKE?

Each treatment can take anything from 5 minutes to 30 minutes depending on the size of the tattoo.

Large tattoos will need to be split into different appointments or they can be treated alternately over several sessions.

### DOES TATTOO REMOVAL HURT?

Clients describe the sensation like a hot pin prick or the flick of an elastic band. Most clients tolerate the treatment well and is often described as no more discomfort than having a tattoo done. A skin cooling device is often used to reduce any discomfort.

### WHAT IS THE RECOVERY PERIOD?

The area treated is likely to feel tender for a few hours and can be red and swollen for up to 48 hours.

Some tattoos may form a graze or blister which must be left to heal naturally.

These are classed as normal reactions. Detailed aftercare advice is given to all clients.

### CAN ALL COLOURS BE REMOVED?

No. Laser tattoo removal works best on dark ink. The most difficult colours to remove are green and pale blues. White cannot be removed.

If you are looking for a coverup tattoo these colours are typically easy to cover.

## FREE RADIOTHERAPY SPOT(S) REMOVAL

I am currently offering a free Radiotherapy Tattoo Removal Program for Cancer Survivors.

### WHAT ARE RADIOTHERAPY SPOTS?

Radiotherapy spots are tattoos usually placed at the side of the breast area and/or directly in the middle of the breasts.

Depending on the type of radiotherapy you have had, your radiographer may have made 1-5 pinpoint tattoo marks or dots on your skin. Those markers will then be used to line up the radiotherapy machine, making sure that they treat the exact same area each time.

### WHEN CAN THEY BE REMOVED?

Before treatment to remove the spots can be commenced you are required to discuss this with your consultant and get their approval with a written letter.

Your radiotherapy treatment needs to have been completed and you are in remission for a period of time, indicated by your consultant.

### SHOULD I HAVE MY RADIOTHERAPY SPOTS REMOVED?

This is optional and depends on how you feel about them. Some ladies do not want a permanent reminder of how poorly they were in that stage of their lifetime and feel the removal of them is a good way to move on.

The process to remove radiotherapy spots involves a free 60-minute consultation and patch test followed by a series of treatments spaced 8-10 weeks apart.

The treatment time only takes a few seconds and in terms of pain, it is tolerable.

### COMING UP IN THE NEXT EDITION OF THE BLACK BITCH MAGAZINE:

How to have summer safe skin and what to look for in a good sunscreen. We restore radiance back into your skin to help you feel confident, carefree, and skin happy. For more information and to book your consultation, visit our website.

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**Joseph Pilates said**

*"If your spine is inflexibly stiff at 30, you are old: if it is completely flexible at 60, you are young."*

Check out the website:

**mariahyszerpilates.weebly.com**

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### Why Does Stress Make Us Ill? –

**Author Bio Catherine Strang** Lisa Nettleton

After reading "Why Does Stress Make Us Ill" I was fortunate to have an opportunity to arrange an online video call with author Catherine Strang. It was interesting to learn of Catherine's life journey and experiences, all of which led her towards writing this self-care book last year when she found herself, like so many others, with additional time on her hands.

As you might imagine, Catherine has enjoyed a long career in mental, emotional and physical wellbeing and healing therapies, training as a therapeutic massage therapist over thirty years ago after a short period of her life working as a chef. Catherine has lived, worked, taught and studied in many places across the UK before finally settling in Linlithgow, describing how the beauty and character of the town captured her heart many years ago when she visited by chance, to deliver a stress management training course in the Low Port Centre.

When asked to pinpoint one aspect of her book for our magazine readers, Catherine recommended the sections relating to wellbeing, self-care and mindfulness. Making time for oneself, being present in the moment and finding inner calm within situations are all worthy techniques to practise in our daily lives. The world around us is fast paced and ever changing, never more so than this past year, and Catherine draws upon her vast experience and training when she advocates being kind and forgiving to ourselves – both inside and out. Good habits for diet, sleep and exercise play an important role in our overall mental health and wellbeing.

Catherine is working on a second book, relating to journeys for personal growth. More information about Catherine's self-care books, sessions and groups can be found on her website - [www.catherinestrang.com](http://www.catherinestrang.com). Catherine also has a helpful 'free stuff' section on her website, where she shares audio files for promoting and incorporating calm, emotional wellbeing practices into our own lives.

## WHY DOES STRESS MAKE US ILL?

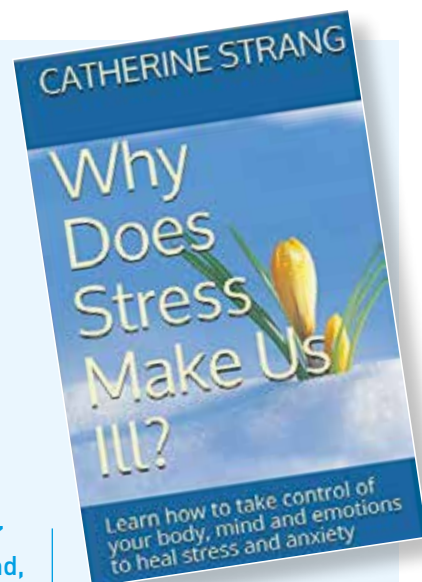
CATHERINE STRANG

Catherine Strang is a trained therapist with over thirty years' experience in the mind, body and spirit industry. In this self-help book, she aims to gently guide readers towards their own understanding of overwhelming or adversely emotional experiences.

Readers will find Catherine's book accessibly informative and thoughtfully structured to aid identification of stress and anxiety triggers, body responses and potential pathways to restore inner calm. What comes across when reading Catherine's book is a sense of helping each person to understand their own emotional and physical self, and to guide each person towards identifying the external factors that can upset or unsettle mental wellbeing.

**"Everyone's life has difficult periods; learning how to navigate these periods without illness, complete exhaustion or personality change not only obviously benefits oneself, but also it benefits those close to us."**

This book is quietly and reassuringly informative and there is a sense that each person will take a different level of advice and meaning from its pages depending on their level of need. There are helpful signposts through each section on where and when to seek further support and intervention as necessary. Catherine's own website has additional guidance and stress-combating exercises. This book does not profess to find an instant cure, instead readers are encouraged to embark upon a steady, consistent journey of self-care and love that transcends into all aspects of life.



Each chapter of this book leads smoothly from one to the other. Catherine explains each concept clearly, using diagrams where necessary. There are explanations towards good, common-sense approaches for leading a healthy, balanced life as well as more in-depth, detailed sections on therapies and practices to explore such as mindfulness, Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) and EmoTrance.

"Why Does Stress Make Us Ill?" is a calm, reassuring book aimed at informing and assisting others on their own journey of stress and anxiety management and healing. There is an emphasis on being kind to oneself and taking time to feel centred, calm and secure. In short, Catherine has written a book that will have something to offer for everyone who has identified a discord in their own being and who would like to reset and reinstate a feeling of calm and wellbeing through self-care and relaxation methods.

**"One of the most important things...in the journey back to emotional and physical well-being is that there will be setbacks; for this the practice of Loving Kindness on yourself is key. Kindness in all that you do makes a profound difference to life but begin by being kind to self, from here kindness to others flows more easily."**

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





Ruaridh is a 2-and-a-half-year-old Siberian cross British Short Hair.

Ruaridh's owners describe him as extremely sweet, chatty and a frequent visitor to neighbours for snacks and a snooze!

His loud purr makes the house shake when he is happy and his patience is of the highest standard, even allows toddlers to pull his tail! Ruaridh also takes every opportunity to groom his brother Angus. He was terrified of little Angus when he first arrived but using feliway plug-ins and a gradual introduction meant they now adore each other.

He is at his happiest when the sun is shining and he can play with his other best friend, Archie. All mouse shaped rattle toys are a favourite as is being up as high as possible.

Ruaridh has several tricks up his sleeve when it comes to getting some attention, and food. Chewing wires and purring loudly beside his sleeping owners usually work!

We asked his owners if having Ruaridh helped over lockdown, they said:

"We got Angus in September 2020, so we spent the first few very jarring months with just Ruaridh, and he really did lift our spirits when we were feeling low! My husband worked from home from March onwards and Ruaridh didn't leave his side! He also started following us on our little strolls round the neighbourhood which was very entertaining. Luckily we live in a quiet and safe (from cars) neighbourhood! His funny little quirks kept us entertained, watching him leap around the garden with his friend, Archie, was so sweet!"

Recently, Ruaridh has been a regular patient at the Westport Vet Linlithgow practice following an attack by a dog. Emergency treatment and procedures were carried out followed by multiple visits, medication, hospitalisation, observation, wound checks

and additional procedures with a wound drain being required. Ruaridh is the most wonderful patient at the vets. He is a sweet, animated and gentle natured soul who really has taken all his treatment in his stride.

His owners have done an outstanding job managing his care at home. They have used a variety of aids to prevent him licking his wound, monitored him and his wound closely and administering his medication. They also made sure his mind was kept occupied on rest with fun enrichment activities, including watching and playing with fish on a tablet!

His owners say:

"He's doing so well, he is just the most patient and sweet boy. You can tell that he was getting a bit fed up of us always trying to give him medicine or clean him up a bit, but he never snapped at us once!! He's nearly there, over a month later. I remember the first day he managed to get on to the bed since his attack, I came upstairs and he was in a wee loaf pose on the bed and you could tell he was so proud of himself! I think he just wants to get back to normal now, the weather is getting nicer and he would normally be out sleeping on all our flowers!! We kept Angus and Ruaridh separated for a long time just because Ruaridh was so delicate we didn't want anything to stress either of them out, so we put a baby gate at the top of the stairs, and Angus would sleep on one side and Ruaridh on the other, sometimes they would chirp at each other, it's enough to make you weep!!

When our pets sustain injuries, this can really be stressful for owners and the unpredictable events which happen can be a great shock. Ensuring that, like Ruaridh's owners, you know what to do for your pet in an emergency can be vital to treatment and recovery.



Veterinary

practices all have out-of-hours emergency care options available. Westport Vet Linlithgow has a phone system which links through to the out of hours veterinary team base in Falkirk. It is always worth ensuring you are familiar where your emergency vet is located should you ever need them.

As we move through the seasons pet owners should start to think about what their pets are exposed to outdoors.

The following are highly toxic to cats-

>> Lillies, tulips, daffodils, azaleas

>> Lawn fertiliser

>> Slug & snail pellets

Signs of poisoning include-

>> vomiting >> drooling >> diarrhoea

\*collapsing

Other dangers to be aware of are bee stings, allergies and dehydration.

If you suspect your pet may have had contact with any toxins always seek veterinary help immediately - this is always classed as an emergency.

The Westport Vet Team is always here to help. In an emergency, or if you have any concerns about your pet call 01506 844165, for enquiries email surgery@westportvets.com.



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