

ANOTHER GOLD MEDAL FOR LINLITHGOW...

AND TOURISM
AND COMMUNITY
HORTICULTURE
AWARDS 4



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LINLITHGOW'S NEWS BY LINLITHGOW'S PEOPLE

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Q. Would you like to help us out?

Many of us have embraced the outdoors more in the past year, and a lot of us have enjoyed noticing nature at an enhanced level because of our daily walks. If you enjoy a little walk and feeling that you've helped in the Community you might be someone who could help us out.

We publish 8 magazines per year and volunteers deliver 6,000 magazines to all households and businesses in the town each issue. Some simply deliver to the houses in their own street, some take on two or three streets and we have a few who go above and beyond.

Sharing the load makes the task manageable but we still have space for more helpers. Please consider whether this could be you. The dates for delivery are published at the beginning of the

year, so you can easily advise in advance if you are unavailable due to holidays etc. We are flexible but administratively it does require that you do your best to be free to deliver as many as possible. That could amount to as little as say 7 hours of your time over the course of a year.

If you wish to offer some assistance please email on.a.lead@gmail.com detailing the street you live in, whether you'd be willing to deliver in other streets close to your home, or whether you would deliver anywhere in town.

If you have any mobility issues please advise too as stairs are involved in some areas.

We look forward to hearing from you.



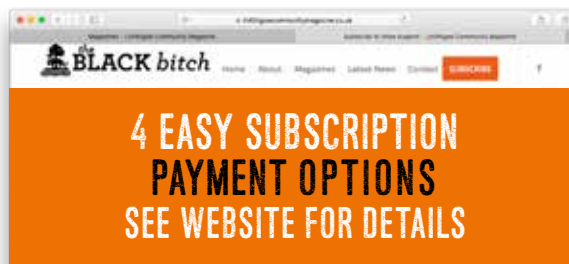
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CONTACT THE EDITOR
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**DAVID TAIT,
EDITOR**

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MAGAZINE**



BURGH BEAUTIFUL SETS THE STANDARD FOR LINLITHGOW



**Stunning... outstanding...
spectacular... partnership...
bucket loads of heritage...
jaw dropping**

Above are just some of the words used by the Beautiful Scotland judges to describe the achievements of Linlithgow Burgh Beautiful in this year's competition.

The Burgh Beautiful group has set the standard for what residents of the town and visitors should expect to enjoy on ordinary days and special days. The bar has been set high.

As you know, coronavirus has not left many people untouched. Every aspect of our usual routine has been turned on its head but through all of that the volunteers of Burgh Beautiful and all supporting groups have produced an outcome that would have been exceptional in normal times. In the present circumstances their performance is close to miraculous.

This has not happened overnight of course but is testament to what can be achieved even in the most testing of circumstances by teamwork, patience and perseverance.

Like all voluntary groups, Burgh Beautiful is always on the lookout for new members to strengthen their team. Now would be a great time to join and on page 6 of this issue under the heading "How you could help" contact details are provided.

There are two other stories in this issue which demonstrate The importance of perseverance is also demonstrated in another two articles in this issue.

Firstly, Linlithgow Community Development Trust has at last been able to announce it has been awarded a £636,000 grant from sportscotland to allow a start to be made on the construction of a cycle circuit at Kettilstoun. This project was first considered as far back as 2012 and will provide a welcome resource to encourage more of us to take to two wheels thereby making a contribution to improving their own health as well as reducing air pollution – and much else besides.

Secondly, the team behind The Festive Forest Christmas light show at Beecraigs whose first event in 2019 was rated by all as a great success, had to accept their show could not go on in 2020 under coronavirus restrictions. Prior to the event in 2019, however, they'd had to jump bureaucratic hurdles for three consecutive seasons before finally being allowed to put on the show in 2019. This year's event promises to be bigger and better and you can find more details on page (Chris check page number!!!)

On the One Linlithgow business pages you can also read the uplifting story of

success through difficult times. Mhairi Connor started off with a modest "kitchen table" business plan and is now exporting her Maisie Gray pottery kits all over the UK and Europe. Spotting an opportunity, establishing that demand was substantial and quickly responding to meet that demand has led to bigger premises in Braehead Industrial units and what should be a bright future.

Meantime at Du Vin Bouchers on the High Street something of a chance encounter has led to the development of a new line, adding malt whisky and a new name Du Vin Boucher Wine and Whisky Bar to the High Street.

And along in Linlithgow Bridge Industrial Estate another new name – Rainbow Railways – has appeared arising from business discussions during the lockdown period. Demand was clearly rising and Mark Darragh, long term railway enthusiast and owner of Playbuds in Linlithgow Bridge, along with colleagues Michael Evans and Colin Rae, saw the opportunity to build on an online business with a physical presence on the ground.

As you can see from the above there is a lot of really positive things happening in the town and I hope you are enjoying reading all about them in this issue.

Subscription Appeal: the magazine, of course, cannot do what it does without the support of the community at large and our business advertisers. So, as usual my parting words are to encourage you to support our efforts to bring you news of developments and activities in the town. Please consider subscribing to our appeal.

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



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Another Gold Medal for Linlithgow... and Tourism and Community Horticulture Awards



Linlithgow was visited by Beautiful Scotland competition judges Adrian Miles and Alison Anderson on 10 August. In preparation, the main emphasis was, of course, on ensuring that the floral displays were in prime condition for the judges, but much volunteer time was also spent on cleaning up the town's streets to a standard which would not detract from our other work. Help came not only from Burgh Beautiful members but from the wider community, all of it much appreciated, and Council staff helped where they could.

The judging began at our Clarendon base, followed by a walking tour of the town lasting two hours and 45 minutes, aiming to show off Linlithgow to its best advantage and emphasising the three main judging criteria relating to floral displays, environmental responsibility and community involvement.

After the tour, we had to wait until Thursday, 23 September to hear the results. Unfortunately, the razzmatazz of the awards ceremony last experienced with Britain in Bloom at Belfast in October 2018 was replaced by an event on Zoom, attended officially by Burgh Beautiful member Melanie Oxbrow! Not quite the same atmosphere of tension and anticipation, but such is life these days, and the organisers of the event, the environmental organisation Keep Scotland Beautiful, did their best to keep things festive.

We were delighted to achieve 'Gold' in the 'Medium Town' category, the highest level of award available to us. Also receiving 'Gold' amongst 'Medium Towns' were Forres, Haddington, Inverurie and Lanark, making it the most fiercely competitive category, especially when you consider that only 15 'Golds' were awarded in all 13 categories throughout Scotland!

We were also pleased to win for Linlithgow the 'Visit Scotland Award for Tourism' which recognises best practice in the promotion of tourism – in our case taking account of such projects as our 'Floral Trails' booklet and our civic heritage sculptures of the 'Black Bitch'

“

...beds at Learmonth Gardens were exceedingly attractive... The Serpentine bed was stunning.”



and St Michael, not to mention Dudley of course! We also received a Community Horticulture Award, recognising in particular the superb quality of Audrey Simpson's community garden at the West Port flats, described by the judges as 'faultless'.

Here are some of the other comments made by the judges in their report:

>> *"Linlithgow has bucket loads of heritage, which Burgh Beautiful are fully engaged with (and which) provides a fantastic backdrop for jaw dropping floral displays."*

>> *"It is obvious that the community fully support the work of Burgh Beautiful, with a regimented army of volunteers ready and willing to plant and care for the copious planters, beds and hanging baskets. The logistical challenge of achieving this over the last two years is outstanding."*

>> *"The beds at Learmonth Gardens were exceedingly eye catching, with a good choice of plants for structure and colour. The Serpentine bed was stunning."*

>> *The group should be commended for the standard of grass they maintain, particularly the edges which set off the planting wonderfully."*

>> *The success of the three sculptures of Dudley, St Michael and the 'Black Bitch' must be applauded, from a fund raising and project management perspective. The results are a great asset to Linlithgow, and the group's determination to see the project through is outstanding."*

>> *"It was great to visit the wildflower meadow areas in Rosemount Park ... the street trees project will be great to see, once they are planted". Advice was given on woodland management and the possibility of an 'Adopt a Begonia' initiative."*

>> *"The Family and First Steps project deserve commendation" in relation to encouragement of vegetable growing and giving purpose through growing and caring for produce, respectively."*

>> *"The amount of funding raised by the group is spectacular; the continued (financial) support from the community and local businesses for the planters and the hanging baskets is to be commended."*

>> *"The popular social media and website is testament to the support from the local community, as is the willingness of local businesses, such as Calnex, to support the group in a more physical fashion by helping plant up the Serpentine Bed."*





...amount of funding raised is spectacular... from community and businesses is to be commended"



>> *"The results of the partnership working are there for all to see, from those involved in the civic realm and buildings, to those involved in the horticulture and heritage. This holistic attitude was very obvious throughout the judging tour and is an asset to Linlithgow."*

It was wonderful that the judges had so much appreciated the hard work and support from everyone involved, including our donors and sponsors. And we received over 1,200 'likes' and over 200 favourable comments on Facebook when the awards were announced!

Our Thanks to All!

In the run-up to the judging, we were so grateful for everyone's help: both our local Rotary Clubs, youth organisations, local schools, Linlithgow Civic Trust (with their fantastic Carmelite Friary project), the Linlithgow Union Canal Society, the Community Council, the Town Management Group, the Linlithgow Business Association, local churches, the First Steps project, Family, the Community Development Project and the One Linlithgow BID to name but some.

And we literally could not do without the fantastic financial support of our sponsors. They all have our heartfelt thanks, as do all who support us through our other fundraising activities such as the Plant Sale and, hopefully, our usual Advent Fayre stall with its popular raffle!

How you could help!

Volunteering – As always, we need more volunteers, particularly for admin tasks, although more gardeners are always welcome – green fingers not essential!

Ron Smith

Convenor,
Burgh Beautiful Linlithgow

DO YOU ENJOY CHANGE OR DOES IT ANNOY YOU?

Many of you tell us that you don't like it when we move things about in the garden centre, and it annoys us when it happens in the supermarket but it is a retailers' trick to make you look at different things. Changing the Chelsea Flower Show from May to September was forced on the Royal Horticultural Society by the pandemic, and was seen as a huge risk... but it has been a great success!



We have just got back from three days of judging the Chelsea Show Gardens and Sanctuary Gardens and it was lovely being able to catch up with old friends after a gap of two years and to enjoy the greatest flower show in the world. This is The Trailfinders 50th Anniversary Garden designed by Jonathan Snow. Lesley was delighted by his inclusion of large shrubs to create this image of the foothills of the Himalayas. So many of the show gardens use large trees and then below them perennials, missing the in between layer of mature shrubs which are so important in our own gardens. The garden was also awarded the Best Construction Award, the rock work was stunning.

Other changes in the garden world are less welcome and these include the renaming of well known and loved garden plants. There are good botanical reasons for this renaming but it can be really annoying for us gardeners to have to learn the new names. When we got married Lesley kept her well known professional name, but when she books a hotel Dougal becomes 'Mr Watson' and if Dougal books it she is 'Mrs Philip'. But as they say: **love changes everything.**

Rosemary known to us as '**Rosmarinus officinalis**' has suddenly become '**Salvia Rosmarinus**'. Sage is named '**Salvia officianlis**' and the two plants are so different in looks and flavour, seen here with our Head Over Heels mosaic sculpture growing in a sunny well drained bed, but at least we can still call them by their common names Sage and Rosemary!



The Iceplant, previously **Sedum spectabile**, now has the mouthful of a name **Hylotelephium spectabile**. The alpine, low growing Sedums have kept their name which means 'plant-that-sits' but the tall growing ones have been changed.



start to grow up, from which it gets its name of Iceplant, finally flowering in August and September.

They look great all year apart from a month in the late winter when you cut the lovely brown stems down to the ground. Quickly the fleshy bluey green leaves



We could go on... Japanese Anemones changing from Anemone to Eriocapitella, whose name in Chinese means broken-bowl-flower because of the separate cup shaped petals making the flower look like a broken bowl. Don't start us off but you can still enjoy them flowering in the St Johns Avenue flowerbed without naming them!

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**FREE PLANT FOOD WHEN YOU SPEND
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NEW LIFE FOR THE CARMELITE FRIARY

CHRISTOPHER LONG



The central image depicts a group of Carmelite friars taken from the marginal roundel in the Book of Hours circa 1470, by kind permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. The friars, dressed in white vestments, are Carmelites. Their religious order originated in Carmel, in what, today, is Israel.

The Carmelite order established friaries throughout Scotland in the middle ages, including Linlithgow. Bruce Jamieson wrote about their activities in the town in issue No. 76 of the Black Bitch magazine last year. Several archaeological excavations of the site have taken place in the 20th century.

The outline of the extent of the friary is marked in a glade leading off Manse Road.

Linlithgow Civic Trust has recently undertaken a programme of environmental upgrades of the site. The following work has been undertaken:

1. A new interpretation panel has been erected outlining the history of the friary.
2. New bench seats and a bin replace older, vandalised street furniture on the site. These match others in the town.
3. The stones delineating the extent of the original friary buildings have been levelled and re-laid as necessary. Weeds have been removed from the areas of chippings and additional chippings have been laid.
4. While retaining the feel of a woodland walk, an additional layer of whinstone has been applied to the surface of the path leading from the Manse Road entry and Rosemount Park.
5. A circle of setts has been laid around the location of the original marches stone. Discrete directional signs have been erected at the two entrances to the friary site.

Above: Carmelite friars from the marginal roundel in the Book of Hours circa 1470

Each year the piper leads the official procession of the Perambulation of the Marches past the friary site to play at the 1835 marches stone. The 'Perambulation of the Marches' complements the official Riding of the Marches, giving citizens and visitors the opportunity to walk the route of a recorded boundary (or 'marches') of the Royal Burgh – in this case the 'Parliamentary Boundary' as established by the Representation of the People (Scotland) Act 1832. After the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act 1892, this also became the boundary of Linlithgow Town Council's



jurisdiction. The ceremony will be enhanced by these improvements when the piper plays next. A nearby small plaque explains its significance.



The marches stone marked LPB

The following sources of funding are gratefully acknowledged by the Trust: **Town Centre Funding from the Scottish Government, the Town Management Group, as well as funding from the Trust.**

The landscaping work was carried out by the Blackburn company **Fernbrooke Scotland LLB**. The Rotary Club of Linlithgow Grange assisted in removing shrubs and clearing the paths. The Civic Trust's sister group, **Burgh Beautiful**, also assisted.

A formal unveiling of the completed project was held on 28th July 2021 at the friary site. This was attended by **Fiona Hyslop, MSP, Councillor Tom Conn**, as well as representatives from **Linlithgow Civic Trust, Burgh Beautiful, Linlithgow Grange Rotary Club, Marilyne MacLaren, Convenor of Linlithgow Civic Trust** said,

"I am delighted with the transformation. It is now a peaceful woodland glade surrounding the ruins, which have been renovated, and you can almost feel the presence of the white robed friars peacefully going about their work. It is also great to see the path to Rosemount Park tidied up and made less muddy, and for one of the marches stones, marking the town boundaries, now revealed and sitting surrounded by new setts. The friary is on the route of the annual Perambulation of the Marches, run by Linlithgow Civic Trust."

The route was also followed by the Scotland in Bloom judges in August.

In the Scottish Parliament, **Fiona Hyslop, MSP**, tabled the following Motion regarding community heritage work in West Lothian on July 28, 2021:

"That the Parliament recognises the importance of place, community and heritage to towns, cities and communities across Scotland; believes that, because of the restrictions imposed

in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many more people have explored their local environs and discovered more about the places and people who have shaped their community; congratulates the people of West Lothian, which is in the Linlithgow constituency, who have delivered important new walks, trails and projects to share the heritage of the area's communities; commends the work of Linlithgow Civic Trust on its efforts to highlight and make environmental improvements to the Carmelite Friary at Rosemount Park in Linlithgow."



Linlithgow Civic Trust

Linlithgow Civic Trust is part of Linlithgow Burgh Trust.

Linlithgow Burgh Trust is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Scottish Charity No. SC047211





ONE LINLITHGOW BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT



Mhairi
Connor

MAISIE GRAY POTTERY

While lockdown presented businesses across the country with huge challenges, the Government restrictions actually convinced Mhairi Connor that her Linlithgow-based Maisie Gray “paint your own pottery” business could be a great success.

When families throughout the UK were looking for ways to fill their time during the tough lockdown period, Mhairi spotted an opportunity to provide people with everything they needed to paint and create their own pottery from the comfort of their home.

She created specialised painting kits that could be sent out with an array of blank pottery including mugs, plates, pet food bowls, and picture frames for people to customise and then send to Mhairi to fire in her kiln, immortalising their designs on the pottery. In the beginning, unsure of the demand for the service, Mhairi created just four kits that could be loaned out to local customers.

Soon, such was the demand for the kits and the pottery, she was sending them all across Europe-to Italy, Germany and the Netherlands, as well as across the UK. Now, she has more than 350 paint-at-home kits in circulation to her customers.

Mhairi, who can often be seen around Linlithgow making deliveries in her liveried car, said she had been “blown away” by the huge demand for the painting kits.

“It was quickly apparent that I needed a lot more than the four kits I had initially created. People were getting

in touch from all over to paint pottery to mark special occasions, to send to friends and family during lockdown, and even just as something to do together as a family. The most enjoyable thing about it has been seeing everyone’s designs coming back for me to fire in the kiln. Some of the design and artwork has been incredible.”



Initially operating from the garage at her Springfield home, the success of the postal kits allowed Mhairi to open her own Linlithgow studio at Braehead Business Units, giving her the opportunity to offer her service locally. Now, in addition to the thriving paint-at-home kits, Maisie Gray is seeing a great demand for children’s and adult parties, group sessions, painting classes, and even one-to-one sessions in the studio.

Mhairi, who moved to Linlithgow 10 years ago to be close to husband David’s family, said that being able to offer great personal experiences in the studio had been her aim when she started Maisie Gray.

“Although the paint-at-home kits have been great, there is nothing better than seeing people come into the studio and create some amazing designs. We do everything from birthday parties to hen parties, and we’ve even had a few couples in on date nights!”

Mhairi said summer had been really busy with pottery camps for children during the school holidays, with weekly classes also popular, and it had been very rewarding seeing people of all ages letting their creative side take over.

She added, *“I’m always looking for new ideas and experiences, and my four kids have been a great sounding board for what will work. My two toddlers love playing with tactile things - that was the inspiration for our recent “Slime and Clay” workshops, and we’ve got plenty of other ideas in the pipeline.”*

Mhairi can be contacted on [maisiegray.com](https://www.maisiegray.com) or hello@maisiegray.com

DU VIN BOUCHERS

Sam Lawrie may be a recent convert to the taste and adventure presented by fine Scotch malt whisky, but he's already sharing his new-found passion with both those who have a deep knowledge of Scotland's national drink, and newcomers to its delights.

He could not be better placed to "spread the gospel". His wife Catherine owns the popular Du Vin Bouchers Wine Bar on Linlithgow High Street. It's now Du Vin Bouchers Wine and Whisky Bar - and that's not a gimmicky name change designed to attract some additional customers.

Sam has amassed a total of around 100 (principally malt) whiskies for his latest menu, and is constantly looking for interesting and unusual bottlings of all ages and prices to add to his shelves. And all this from a man who admits he didn't really enjoy the amber nectar - until 2019!

Explained Sam, *"It was in 2019 that a local resident, Bruce Farquhar, came into the bar on a few occasions. We got talking over a glass of wine, and it transpired he owned a local company that bottled individual cask whiskies. Initially we dismissed the idea of stocking specialist whisky as our main line of business was, and still is, wine."*

Sam said Bruce then suggested a whisky tasting evening, which was a huge success, so a second one was quickly arranged thereafter.

"There were 24 round the table with over 250 years of experience between them. They were from all walks of life, and it was a real eye-opener. I then realised I was really enjoying the drams, and I realised that we were missing a great opportunity at the wine bar... and so the journey began."

Sam said that to show their allegiance to Bruce they had decided to stock all Dramfool bottlings, and this had created a real interest among both existing and new customers. Demand began to outstrip supply, and they realised they should really tap into the incredible world of malt whisky.

Everything had been put on hold due to the lockdown, but to compensate he'd held online whisky tastings almost every week, and this had introduced him to a number of tasting groups with invaluable knowledge.



Sam Lawrie

"Since we've reopened it's been exciting to see our customers' reaction to the changes we've made. For many the main attraction is still the wine and our food platters, but after a night socialising a special dram or two is a must for quite a lot of our customers."

"Very quickly we noticed that customers were buying our more specialist whiskies, and we found the reason for this a real surprise. They were buying drams that were either obsolete, or they owned a special bottle that was tucked away for a rainy day, and they wanted to sample it. Our adventure to source more unusual drams then began."

Sam continued, *"The first big success was a 1975 Linlithgow St Magdalene's, bottled by Gordon McPhail, the Macallan Editions Series, the Jim McEwan Series by Dramfool, Rosebank 12, and on and on. I'm still finding online and in-person tastings invaluable, along with research I've been carrying out. I've also tasted over 300 different drams - also in the interests of research!"*

He added, *"Over the last year I've been taught an invaluable lesson - whisky doesn't need to be £300 a bottle to be a fantastic dram. It's down to individual taste - a £40 bottle should be treated with the same respect."*

Contact details for Du Vin Bouchers can be found on duvinbouchers.co.uk

ONE LINLITHGOW UPDATES

A partnership of One Linlithgow, Linlithgow PubWatch, and the Linlithgow Town Management Group have agreed to pool resources and supply emergency defibrillators at late-opening venues across town, as well as at other key areas such as Braehead Business Units. These will complement the existing defibrillators at Mill Road, and although we hope nobody has to use them, they may just save a life or two.

In another collaborative effort, we have submitted an application with Linlithgow Community Development Trust (LCDT) to the Scotland Loves

Local: Round 2 fund. If successful, the two organisations will share a funding pot of up to £25,000 to maintain and improve the town's go-to website, mylinlithgow.com, and to set up an outdoor market with a focus on local provenance and community. We will of course update through the usual channels.

As well as physical outdoor markets, there will also be a permanent online marketplace on mylinlithgow.com, operated by that same collaboration of ourselves and LCDT. This edition of the Black Bitch is a wee bit early, and the next one too late, to cover the launch,

however! Please make sure to follow our social media ("One Linlithgow" on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), and if you're a member business, make sure you receive our twice-monthly business updates by requesting to be added to the list at office@onelinlithgow.com.

Finally, if you'd like to contact HomeSmart Windows, who were featured in the previous edition without contact details, you can call them on 01506 888561, email on admin@homesmartwindows.co.uk, or visit at Unit 22 Little Mill Business Park, Linlithgow EH49



BEECRAIGS FESTIVE FOREST

It promises a magical Christmas family experience, with the longest light tunnel in Scotland, and, if you go down to the woods today - or in not too many sleeps time - you're sure of a big surprise!

The Festive Forest is back at Beecraigs country park near Linlithgow in December, and the locally-based organisers, Rowen Events, have pledged that it will be “bigger and better” than it was in 2019, and more than make up for the disappointment of the event planned for last year having to be cancelled due to the pandemic.

Two years ago it drew 24,000 visitors, and this year - with 10,000 tickets sold already - it's hoped the spectacular event will attract around 30,000 to the scenic beauty spot from December 3 to Christmas Eve.

Ewen McMartin, co-director along with his business partner and lifelong friend

Roy Snedden, said they had been working tirelessly on the venture to ensure that it would deliver a truly memorable Christmas experience for the whole family - with surprises galore!

“In 2019 we had a 12 metre uncovered light tunnel - this year, at 70 metres,

it will be the longest light tunnel in Scotland. The entire trail through the forest is 1.5 km, and we've engaged one of the country's most respected specialists to create breathtaking festive illuminations, special effects and sounds.

WIN A FAMILY TICKET

“HOW MANY VISITORS DID BEECRAIGS FESTIVE FOREST HAVE IN 2019 ?”

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

HAMNET MAGGIE O'FARRELL

Hamnet is a fictional account by O'Farrell exploring the life of playwright William Shakespeare and his family, although she takes extraordinary care never to mention him directly by name throughout the novel. He is referred to as tutor, son, brother, father, husband, playwright, and this is very deliberate, because this is not his story. He is not centre stage - he is not the main protagonist - he is consigned to the wings, the occasional character who wanders in and out of the scene. Instead, the novel brings to life his wife Anne Hathaway and their respective families although most crucially, it focuses on the lives of the children they had together, especially their only son Hamnet.

This novel is beautifully and exquisitely written with all the pace, wit and cunning of a Shakespearean play itself. While the novel is inspired by the different bonds that exist between family members, it also explores themes of love, ambition, desire and sacrifice. It is clear that O'Farrell wrote this novel as a tribute to the nation's most celebrated playwright, to pay homage to his son who, though cast into shadows through the annals of history, undeniably gave his name to one of the most celebrated plays ever written.

The story is mainly delivered through the character of Anne - or Agnes as we discover she was most probably known as this is how she was described in her own father's will. She is Shakespeare's wife and is surrounded by an aura of mystique, wisdom and compassion. As a central character she is strong, bold and compelling. A woman of equal measure to her ambitious husband. Agnes understands the natural world, how to draw and sustain life for all living creatures and plants, and who is depicted as a survivor - capable and assured in her beliefs.

"She is like no one you have ever met. She cares not what people may think of her. She follows entirely her own course." He sits forward, placing his elbows on his knees, dropping his voice to a whisper. "She can look at a person and see right into their very soul. There is not a drop of harshness in her. She will take a person for who they are, not what they are not or ought to be." He glances at Eliza. "Those are rare qualities, are they not?"

O'Farrell draws her readers not only with the wonderful descriptive prose of the novel, but also the Shakespearean techniques she employs of foreshadowing, subterfuge, misdirection and disguise. She uses metaphor and imagery to good effect, building suspense and heightening drama.

The reader is in the elevated position of knowing overall how the story will end which adds an extra layer of intensity to the events as they unfold. O'Farrell's use of language in this novel is deliberate. Her prose is flowing and sated with description - the reader is forced into a slower pace to stop and consider the meaning of each line and how each description adds to the greater enjoyment and understanding of the people and the time.

"Outside, the colours accost his eyes: the glancing lapis sky, the virulent green of the verge, the creamy blossoms of a tree, the pink kirtle of a woman leading a nag along the road."

As the story narrative progresses, this becomes less a story of Shakespearean life and is consumed by the detail of how a mother might even begin to process the loss of a child. O'Farrell writes with outstanding compassion and insight into the unimaginable and unparalleled level of grief that is felt when the natural order of life is interrupted. This theme is harrowing and raw - not easy to read - but O'Farrell writes with such passion, understanding and care so as to break down societal barriers of confusion, hurt and fear to those experiencing this level of pain through grief.

"What is given may be taken away, at any time. Cruelty and devastation wait for you around corners, inside coffers, behind doors: they can leap out at you at any time, like a thief or brigand. The trick is never to let down your guard. Never think you are safe. Never take for granted that your children's hearts beat, that they sup milk, that they draw breath, that they walk and speak and smile and argue and play. Never for a moment forget they may be gone, snatched from you, in the blink of an eye, borne away from you like thistledown."

I felt a sense when reading this book that it was an important work of modern fiction. It is interesting and appealing in one sense because of the time-period and for her celebration of the strength of women and their roles within a family. However, it is O'Farrell's sensitive handling of grief, loss and reserves of strength that truly elevate this novel to stratospheric status.

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



"Along the way, seating areas with warming stations will be provided. The length of the route we're going to have 12 four-foot model elves, which we've called "S-Elfies", so kids can take photographs with them as a memory of their visit to the Festive Forest."

Continued Ewen, "We also have The Grinch, or perhaps two, to spring a surprise on the kids when they least expect it! And lots of rude noises of course! We'll also have favourite family film characters wandering about, and stilt walkers to give a real circus feel to the experience."

Roy said that the popular Santa's Grotto would again feature the storytelling experience which had captivated youngsters at the inaugural Festive Forest, and he would be accompanied by his friendly elves. Children would also be able to send their letters to the North Pole so they would get there ahead of Christmas Day.

"The Grotto is in Santa's village, where there will also be children's amusements, festive food, drink and market stalls. We'll have mulled wine, cider, hot chocolate and toasted marshmallows.

"On top of this we will have our Radio Forth Silent Disco - with headphones provided - and the Cala Homes live stage, with a DJ, musicians, and performers such as singers, choirs, carol singers, fire acts and jugglers."

Added Roy, "Yet again this is truly going to be a unique and magical family event and will provide a Christmas experience for all ages. We really do have something for everyone, and we can assure all our visitors we will be strictly adhering to government guidelines."

Ewen said that one thing they hoped to do was attract more local traders to provide goods and produce for market stalls, which Rowen Events would staff, and take a 20 per cent commission. The uptake so far had been "a little disappointing" given the opportunity the event presented.



Tickets - adult £18, over fours £12, family tickets (for four) £57, and £8 (all ages) to see Santa and receive a gift - had to be purchased in advance at www.beecraigsfestiveforest.com

Ewen added that Rowen Events were having a recruiting event at the Burgh Halls in Linlithgow on October 21 from 7-9 pm to recruit marshals, characters, and staff for stalls.

In a special competition to win a family ticket, entrants are being asked "how many visitors did Beecraigs Festive Forest have in 2019?". Entries to be sent to the Black Bitch at on.a.lead@gmail.com



THE SORRIES

FINALLY MAKE IT TO LINLITHGOW!! Murdoch Kennedy

Rose Social Club
November 6



Linlithgow's flourishing folk and traditional music scene will be boosted on Saturday November 6th when Edinburgh Fringe favourites The Sorries finally make their long-awaited debut in the town.

The duo recently earned rave reviews for their three-week concert run at this year's Fringe. They were due to play a fundraiser for Linlithgow Folk Festival Association in April 2020, but this was cancelled due to the pandemic. Now their first Linlithgow appearance will finally take place in the Rose Social Club on November 6th.

The Sorries are Douglas Kay (vocals, guitar, mandolin, bodhran) and Martin Philip (vocals, guitar, tres cubano, bodhran). Inspired by a love of The Corries, they perform a range of traditional songs from the Scottish songbook. Although many of the songs the duo perform are hundreds of years old, the pair's arrangements and harmonies make the tunes sound as fresh and vibrant as ever.

Martin and Douglas formed The Sorries during a tour of the Highlands where both were performing as part of separate projects. Coming from very different musical backgrounds, they discovered a shared love of Scottish traditional music. Over a bottle of whisky, they decided that the duo is still an ideal format in which to present so many of the sensational folk songs in which Scotland is so rich.

The Sorries made their live debut in Edinburgh during December 2006 and during the next three years moved from the pubs of Edinburgh to playing sell-out shows all over the country. 2009 saw the duo complete a successful three week run at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe which garnered attention from the national press. That first Fringe run was the start of an annual engagement which has continued ever since.

With audiences steadily increasing through the subsequent years, the lads have played venues including Hampden Park, Murrayfield, and the Thomas Paine Chapel in Sussex. In 2019 they played the Carnegie Hall in Dunfermline, sold out their run at the Fringe, went down a storm at Moscow's Samhain Festival and released

their sixth album, 'The Chevalier's Muster Roll'.

Plans for 2020 were curtailed by the Coronavirus pandemic but the pair did work together remotely, recording their podcast "The Scottish Song Guide" (scottishsongguide.com), performing at an online Burns Night in America and a North American Whisky tasting.

August 2021 finally saw The Sorries back on stage in front of live audiences as they made an emotional return to the Edinburgh Fringe. Their largest Fringe audiences to date demonstrated that the pandemic had done nothing to diminish either the public's desire to hear Scotland's traditional songs or the duo's unique approach to delivering them.

Tickets for the show at the Rose Social Club on Saturday November 6th are priced at £12 and can be ordered by phoning Linlithgow Folk Festival Association on 07910 729 736 or emailing contact@linlithgowfolk.com. They are also available from Wilson's Newsagents at 1 The Vennel, Linlithgow and Far From The Madding Crowd at 20 High Street.





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Dominoes – 1.30pm
Wednesday afternoon dominoes competition

Saturday 4th December

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Vocal Harmony Duo
£37.50 per person, Dinner 7.30,
Carriages 12.45

Friday 10th December

Cabaret Show
Dynamix & Robert T ❄️
Leonard as Meatloaf
£37.50 per person, Dinner 7.30,
Carriages 12.45

Saturday 11 December

Cabaret Show ❄️
Saffron is Diana Ross
& Whitney Houston
£37.50 per person, Dinner 7.30,
Carriages 12.45

Friday 17th December

Cabaret Show
Jesse Garron, The Rebel Rouser
& Trina Milne, Little Miss Diva.
£37.50 per person, Dinner 7.30,
Carriages 12.45

Saturday 18th December

Hot 2 Course Supper;
Heather Dickson with
Cover Up 4 Piece Band
£30.00 per person ❄️
Dinner 7.30, Carriages 12.45

Monday 20th December

Christmas Lunch Show,
Tea Time Buffet
Paul Taylor's Ultimate Legends
Show - Dynamix
and Sharon Hope ❄️
£40.00 per person,
1.30pm - 9.00pm

£20 per person deposit on
booking, balance due by
30 November.

HOGMANAY PARTY

Sharon Hope with Malcolm
Dougall. Piper & Buffet
Tickets £18.00 per person
9pm – 2am

MENU

Homemade Lentil Soup

*Pate & Oatcakes,
Bed of Salad*

Prawn Cocktail

Turkey with all the trimmings

Roast Gammon

Steak Pie

*All with seasonal veg and roast
potatoes*

*Apple Tart with Fresh Cream
or Ice Cream*

Cheesecake with Fresh Cream

Chef's Homemade Trifle

*Tea, Coffee, Shortbread
& Mints*

Menu applies to all events on
4, 10, 11 and 17th December

*Special dietary requirements can be
catered for with prior notice when booking*

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Friday 22nd October
semi-final,
admission
£4.00

Friday 29th October
semi-final,
admission
£4.00

Friday 19th November
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*All times
8.00pm – 12.30am*

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MIDHOPE CASTLE 'LALLYBROCH'

Bruce Jamieson



My daily exercise during “lockdown” saw me cycling one day to Midhope Castle, just a few miles from Linlithgow. To my shame, I’d never been there before. I had, of course, seen it in episodes of “Outlander” and knew that it was regularly visited by tour parties – one of them including Diane Gabaldon (the author of the Outlander books). When I visited, the castle was ‘locked down’ and I could only see it from a distance – but it caught my imagination, and I decided to do some historical research.



Locked gates barred the way to Midhope during lockdown.

Although the building is now just a shell, the history of the edifice is a fascinating one. Built as a tower-house in the late 15th century, it stood in the centre of a small hamlet. Documentary references to Midhope occur from the year 1458 when it was

mentioned in legal papers concerning a boundary dispute between Henry Livingstone and John Martin, who is titled ‘the Laird of Medhope.’

Further staking his claim to the estate, John Martin had a solid manor house built, although, by 1478, the castle is recorded as being in the hands of a branch of the ‘rival’ Livingstone family.

It would appear that the original five-storey keep was enlarged in the 16th century when the building was then owned by the Drummonds of Midhope. Under their charge, a lower wing was added and bartizans (small towers) constructed on three corners of the older building. The initials of Alexander Drummond and his wife Marjory Bruce are still visible above a gateway.



A sketch of Midhope and the Drummond marriage lintel.

Alexander was a law lord, a member of the College of Justice - an institution created by King James V. One of Alexander’s sons, William, joined the Scots-Dutch Brigade and was killed at the Battle of Grolle in 1627. This event, important in the Dutch attempts to break away from Spanish control, is commemorated in the Netherlands every two years, in a three-day reenactment, involving 350 participants.



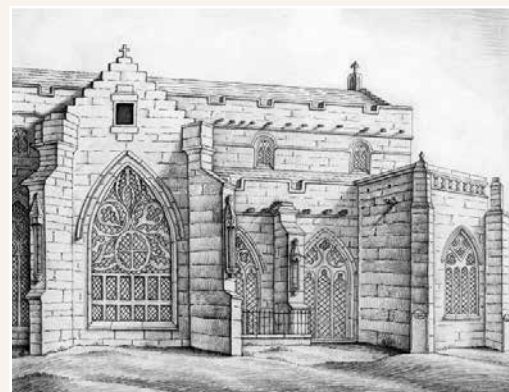
Reenactors fight the Battle of Grolle where William Drummond of Midhope was killed.

Midhope Castle remained in Drummond hands until the 1660s when it became the property of George Livingston, the 3rd Earl of Linlithgow, and it is his cipher, GL, which stands above the entrance staircase – well known to Outlander viewers.



The entrance to Midhope.

As several documents signed by the 3rd Earl are headed “Midhope,” George Livingston must have actually lived in the building from time to time, although his main residences were Callendar House and Linlithgow Palace, where he was hereditary keeper. The Earl died in 1690 and was buried in an underground mausoleum beside St Michael’s Church.



The Livingston Mausoleum (now demolished) is on the right of this early sketch.

Midhope next fell into the hands of the Hope family who re-modelled the castle and its formal gardens. The Hopes had accumulated their wealth through trading operations and then, through marriage, from the profits of lead mining in Lanarkshire. This allowed John Hope to purchase the lands of Abercorn, and he duly moved his family into Midhope while plans were made to build a stately mansion nearby. Sadly, John Hope never lived to see the work commence. In 1682, while accompanying the Duke of York on a journey to Scotland, the ship they were travelling in, HMS Gloucester, hit a sandbank and sank with a loss of 120 lives.



The wreck of HMS Gloucester, by marine artist Monamy Swaine.

The Duke of York, later King Charles II, and the future General John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, survived. John Hope did not and never again saw Midhope, described in 1710 by Sir Robert Sibbald, Edinburgh physician and historian, as a 'fine tower house with excellent gardens and a substantial pigeon house, one of the seats of the Earls of Hopetoun.' The B-listed doocot, dating from 1695, has two chambers with a combined total of over 2000 nesting boxes.



The Midhope doocot. Only the most powerful landowners were allowed to own one.

John Hope's widow and son moved into their new, imposing dwelling, Hopetoun House, in the early 18th century and over the next 40 years that building was enlarged and gloriously decorated under the supervision of the Adam family of architects. Midhope was allowed to decay and by 1851 it was being used to house farm workers.

When architects David MacGibbon and Thomas Ross recorded the castle in 1890 they stated in their report that it was "inhabited by Pensioners of the Hopetoun Family." Enough of the interior was left to record "a fine oak staircase with twisted balusters and some fine painted ceilings."

The ceiling décor included cinquefoil (five-petalled flower) motifs and the motto "ad astra per ardua" (To the

stars through hardships). The overall design probably commemorates the marriage of Sir Robert Drummond to his wife, a Hamilton heiress. When the building was eventually abandoned in the 1950s the ceilings were removed and reinstalled in the Abbey Strand Tea Room, outside the gates to Holyrood Palace.



Abbey Strand Tea Room - now gone.

By the 1960s, Midhope was crumbling and nothing was done to it until the late 1980s, when work was undertaken to consolidate the outer fabric. The interior was left to decay, so that when the Outlander film crew arrived all that could be used was the exterior façade of what the TV series calls

Lallybroch – the home of the fictional Fraser family. All the interior scenes of the castle were filmed using studio sets. A sad end to an interesting, historic pile.



Filming "Outlander" at Midhope.



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Sat 30th Oct from 9-12 Gerry's Halloween Karaoke

Sun 31st Oct from 5-8 Pure Malt

Sat 13th November 9-12 Lynne Size female vocalist

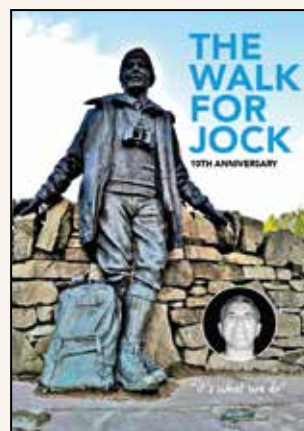
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deep.sea21@yahoo.co.uk



A new local group has recently been formed called Stitch Matters. Their 2021/22 programme of talks with a Textile Art theme started last month and new members will be welcomed openly. For the time being meetings will be held via Zoom but hopefully that can change soon. The group will "meet" on the last Wednesday of the month from September to May at 7pm. Generally, there will be a speaker for about an hour, and then social time to chat. It is hoped that workshops will be held occasionally, and stitch afternoons are planned, where members will either work on their own projects, or a member may offer a mini workshop in a stitch technique.



Many of the current members were previously members of the Embroiderers' Guild, but as local groups are no longer supported in the same way by this organisation, this independent group of people with an interest in Textile Arts, decided that "stitch matters" enough to keep the group active.

Textile Artists stitch on fabric, but also on paper or found objects, they print before stitching, they may rust fabric or dye it with plant materials, they make tactile geometric art, they experiment and recycle with washers, cables and waste packaging, they make installations as well as framed pieces, they make artist books,



they design repeat patterns for fabric, they collage with fabric, they use machines as well as slow stitching with their hands – the list goes on. If this sounds of interest to you, this group may be a great way of learning new things and hearing from some amazing artists. Have a look at textileartist.org if you are intrigued, where you will find how diverse this artform is.

The images show some work by members, reflecting traditional stitch, and a more contemporary take on textile art.

The next two talks couldn't be more different - titled "Dyeing for Theatre and Film" and "Textile Treasures of the Tudors", one is historical, and the other is by an artist who has recently worked on costumes for Outlander. In 2022 there will be talks looking at women's lives through the clothes they wear, the Culross needlework group, a textile artist who tells stories of everyday life through stitch, and the textile journey from Berlin to Scotland, of an artist who trained as a ladies tailor in 1980's East Germany.

Please contact Doreen Eaglesham on d6eagle@gmail.com if you are interested in joining, or maybe just attending a talk as a visitor.

Burgh Halls Gallery

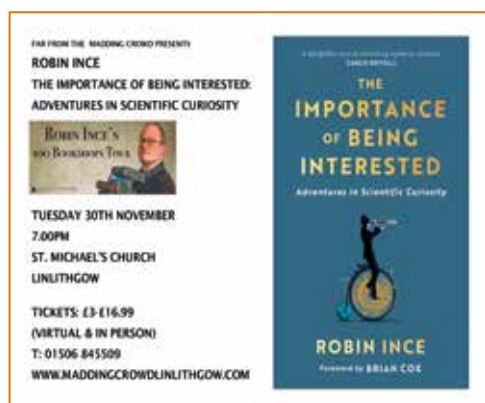
The latest exhibition at the Burgh Halls Gallery is "The Attraction of Opposites", by oil painter Clare Andrews. It also marks the first time the gallery has had an Opening Night since the pandemic! Here's to more events like this and artist talks too. Clare has travelled from Brazil to exhibit work from the last ten years.

Her technique is traditional oil paint on canvas but she is really interested in contrast. She uses the figurative and the abstract, large areas and shapes of flat colour interacting with realistic figurative images and apparently unrelated subject matter. The resulting pictures may have some sort of narrative but usually do not. It's perhaps one for sitting quietly and taking in her intriguing and ambiguous imagery. It runs till January 2022 so you have plenty of time to indulge.



And briefly, other Arts news:

Far From the Madding Crowd have events running this Autumn – see the poster for an event with Robin Ince, a comedian, writer and podcaster, often found alongside Professor Brian Cox in the phenomenally successful Infinite Monkey Cage series.



See page 14 for details of **The Sorries** concert on November 6th.

The Festive Forest at Beecraigs runs from 3rd to 24th December and tickets are on sale now, with some timeslots already sold out.

The Arts Guild's 21/22 programme is in full swing – see linlithgowartsguild.co.uk.

Local Creatives are still meeting socially, and the next meeting is on Thursday 14th October. Contact k.e.welch@hotmail.co.uk if you want to join in.

Please do get in touch - patswan@virginmedia.com if you would like to be featured, or would simply like a mention.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH
“being creative is not a hobby, it’s a way of life”

Tribute Bands at the Burgh Halls

The Festive Forest at Beecraigs may be far and away the “big event” for **Ewen McMartin and Roy Snedden**, but the duo have added another string to the bow of Rowen Events - organising a series of concerts featuring tribute bands designed to have a wide appeal.

The first, on **Saturday 6th November** in the Burgh Halls in Linlithgow, features **JJ Gilmour and Christie Oliver** - “The 10-year anniversary, back in the Burgh” at 7 - 12pm. At the same venue with a 7pm start on **Saturday the 27th** it’s **Party Fears 3** with support from Christie Oliver, for an Advent Fayre concert.



The same band and support are appearing again at the Burgh Halls on **Friday 10th December** for “a Countdown to Christmas” concert.

Antique, Vintage and Collectors Fayre

Saturday 23rd October 2021, Queen Margaret Hall, Linlithgow 10am - 4pm Entry is £1. In aid of Linlithgow Heritage Trust



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GARY CLINTON, MUSIC TUTOR

Bands Are Back

Over the past few months live music has made a welcome return to music venues, clubs and pubs offering musicians all over the world the chance to get their careers back on track and not 're-train', as a certain Conservative chancellor once rudely suggested. Well a former student of mine, Adam Frame, has certainly not thought about retraining and has already been busy with his exciting indie-rock outfit 'The Katuns' as well as playing live cover sets.

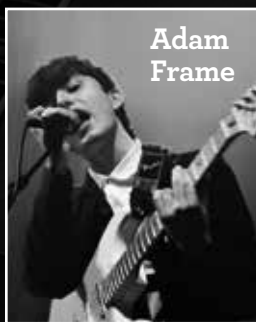
Adam Frame

I first met Adam (20) in 2010 when he was only 9 years old and I still ran my tuition business from my parents' home in Livingston, which is where Adam still stays with his family. Adam began working his way through the Rockscool grades whilst picking up the classics from AC/DC, The Shadows, Jimi Hendrix, Nirvana etc and it wasn't long before he started to show a very natural talent for writing ideas on the guitar. Then in 2013 I decided to introduce him to Arctic Monkeys material and we learned 'Bet You Look Good On The Dancefloor' followed by 'Mardy Bum' which were both huge hits for the Sheffield supergroup.

This may be my claim to fame if Adam continues on his current, exciting trajectory in the music industry as when Adam stopped tuition with me in 2018 he told me that it was the Arctic Monkeys material that got him into the indie-rock style he now adores. Catfish & The Bottlemen, The Libertines and The Strokes, plus the genre's leaders Oasis & Blur, now very much shape Adam's writing style and I'm also pleased to report Adam enjoys the heavier side of music like Bring Me The Horizon & Iron Maiden. Adam of course deserves all the credit as he would have discovered these groups himself, and also turned out every bit the accomplished musician he is without my help; but it's a nice element of tutoring guitar that you are subtly in the background of a student's musical journey.

From West Lothian's YAP to STV

Adam's musical journey is already pretty impressive and it's just at the beginning. As a very young lad he attended the West Lothian 'Youth Action Project' (YAP) music get-togethers before heading to open mic nights at King Tuts in Glasgow, performing his favourite songs with other upcoming musicians. He then began performing covers in pubs all over the central belt where he stumbled



Adam Frame

the resulting video notched up over half a million views on Twitter. Adam wound up with coverage on STV which was incredible exposure for him as a solo act however he ultimately decided not to go it alone.

The Katuns

Adam currently fronts 'The Katuns' (kah-toons) who released their third single 'The Holiday' on 17th September via Spotify and all major platforms.

It is a fantastic tune that you could easily imagine a young festival crowd bouncing and singing along to as they have the time of their lives, in a beer and sun-soaked field somewhere in the countryside. During a recent chat with Adam I also found out the song is about having an argument with a girlfriend on a holiday after too much booze – something perhaps we can all relate to!

The single has been aired by new-music guru Jim Gellatly on Amazing Radio which means The Katuns are very much following in the footsteps of West Lothian's very own, now super-indie band, The Snuts, whom Jim of course arrived early for and supported. The Katuns got their first taste of festival action at The Isle Of Wight Festival on 18th September and then followed this up with a short UK tour involving a trip to Newcastle. Here they supported another upcoming indie group, Manchester's Garden Party, at a sold out gig at Think Tank (23rd September) before playing shows at Glasgow's Broadcast & Edinburgh's Sneaky Petes.

In terms of the future Adam told me the band plan to continue releasing singles which will ultimately result in a debut EP next spring/summer and I have no doubt more live shows, radio play and sessions will follow – so one thing is for

sure – a huge amount of hard work is still to be done by Adam and The Katuns. Their positive attitude and enthusiasm however augers well for them as they steadily raise their profile all over the country. So perhaps now is a good time to catch Adam playing some of his live cover sets at local pubs and maybe even book him for some guitar lessons before he is on a world tour!

Live Sets & Guitar Tuition

Adam's live cover sets are excellent and I highly recommend him to any Linlithgow venue - in fact he was live at The Linlithgow Tap on 1st October and on top this essential 'earner' as a musician, he's getting into teaching, which is a very sensible move. It's how many professional touring and session musicians who were unsupported by the government made it through lockdown.

Adam studied an HND in music at Edinburgh College and then went on to complete an honours degree through a collaboration with Kingston University (London) and whilst rock music is his main passion he is more than able to teach all styles, levels and ages. Lessons can happen at Adam's home in Livingston or he can also travel within the local area.

Adam has his career in front of him however he is already testament to the fact that with the right attitude, determination and lots of practice, a career in music is achievable – it's just not easy. As I always say to my students who aspire to be in a band - if you want to be the next Oasis then 100% go for it – someone has to do it! It's great fun being in a band and if it doesn't pan out then hopefully what you're left with is knowledge and experience that allows you to carve out a living in music

If you'd like to book Adam for live music in your venue or to arrange a guitar lesson, you can get him via adamframemusic@gmail.com or via his socials: [facebook/adamframemusic](#) & [@adamframe1601](#) on Twitter.

Upcoming Katuns Dates:

October 22nd - Dundee

October 23rd - Kilmarnock

November 27th - EH6 Festival

More details and news on Twitter @thekatuns

You can keep up to date with Gary's tuition business through social media

Twitter: @GaryGuitar4

Facebook:

[garyclintonguitartutor](#)



SPORTSCOTLAND AWARD TO WEST LOTHIAN CYCLE CIRCUIT

Linlithgow Community Development Trust has secured a further £636,000 grant from sportscotland to realise the vision of a 1km traffic-free cycle circuit for everyone to enjoy. Over £1.2m has now been raised for this community-led project, which means the project is now working towards construction next year.

The Trust would like to say a huge **THANK YOU** to the many many volunteers, supporters and donors who have helped the project reach this milestone.

Fraser Falconer, Chair of LCDT says:

"The new facilities being built will represent a tremendous achievement for our community, creating a wonderful place to nurture a love of cycling for people of all ages and inclusive for all. After years of hard work from local volunteers and supporters, the recognition by the sportscotland and West Lothian Council gives great inspiration to us as we link the delivery of the cycle circuit to active travel, healthy living, social inclusion and improving health and well-being across our community."

Check out our website or follow us on social media to find out more about this project and to keep up to date with the latest news:
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LINLITHGOW HIGH STREET – 400 YEARS OF CHANGE,

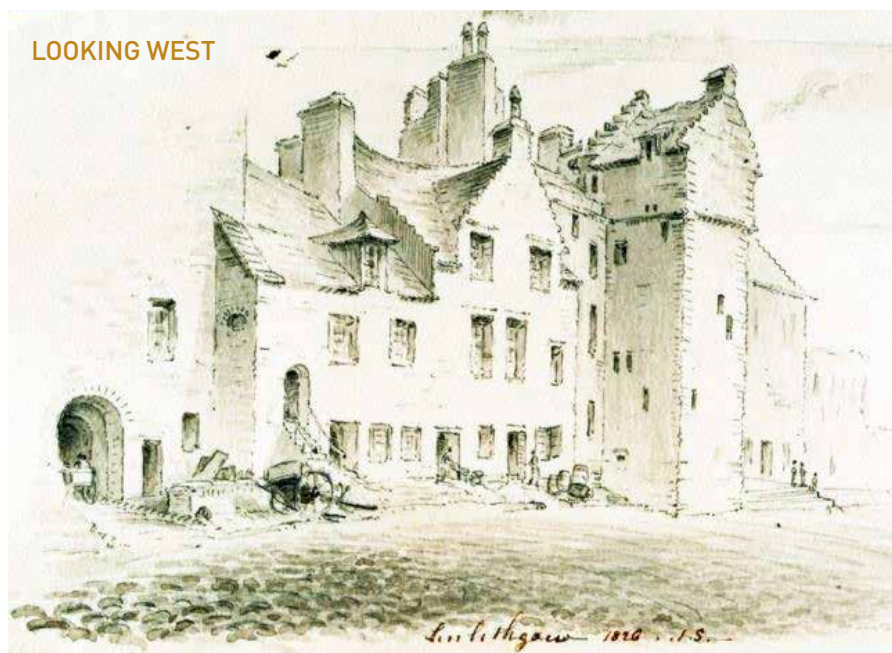
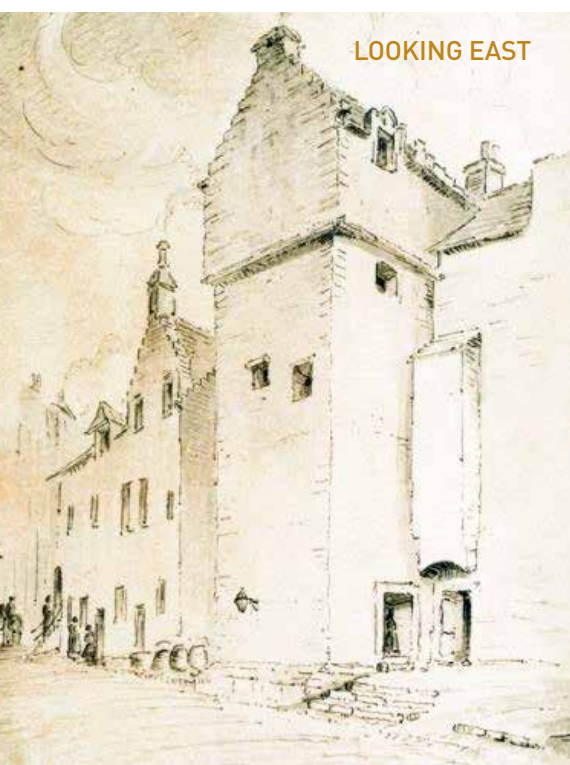
PART 4 (FINAL PART) : WIDER THAN NORMAL SITES Laurie Alexander

There were two historic sites within the Ports which deserve special mention. In the 17th century the largest plot belonged to Provost Robert Stewart. It was 5 roods wide, 107 feet 11 inches (32.89m) and was located on the south side of the street between Shoemakers Land and Annet House. The other plot which was 3.25 roods, 70 feet 1 inch (21.38m) was, prior to the Reformation, the site of the Knights Hospitaller's of St John. It was also on the south side between the railway station and St Michael's Wynd.

PROVOST STEWART'S HOUSE, 129 HIGH STREET

A lawyer called James Skene*, who was also an extremely talented amateur artist, visited the town in 1826, and made two drawings of the deceased Provost Stewart's house - these are shown above and below. This is the best impression (I'm aware of) that illustrates a typical, pre Victorian, Linlithgow street scene.

**He was a descendent of the Aberdeen family who owned the famous Rubislaw granite quarry from which much of that city was built. He was also a friend of Sir Walter Scott for whom he provided book illustrations.*



The image above looks westwards and the other looks back from the opposite side. The building on the left of the projecting stair tower belonged to the Shoe-makers' Guild - it was rebuilt c.1829. In the view from the west, it can be seen that the projection of the stair tower into the street, creates a semi private space from which to enter the house. The steps also add to the feeling of isolation from the street in much the same way as the front garden and steps still do at 129 High Street.

Skene's drawings were done shortly before demolition of Provost Stewart's house and the shoemakers' building which is on the left of the stair tower. The view on the left indicates that part of the frontage beyond the stair tower was already in a ruinous condition.

Skene's drawings demonstrate that the stair tower made a strong visual statement which announced the owner's importance. When James Henderson (on the provosts east side) sought permission in 1666 to advance his property in line with the front of the provost's stair, his application was refused. Provost Stewart had great influence in the town and he clearly had no intention of losing his dominant view of the street. This is the only example I found of a building where only a small part (the stair) was in front of what was (and remains) the main building line.

When the final part of the provost's house was demolished c.1866, the removal of the plaster ceiling in two first floor rooms

exposed the oak floor beams (joists) and the underside of the flooring above. These were decorated with tempora (powder colours bound with egg yolk) foliage designs and many heraldic escutcheons*.

**See Cooke, T. (1867). Notice of the Heraldic Painted Ceilings in a House at Linlithgow, now destroyed.*

Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Volume 7, 409-413

The larger ceiling (on the east) was 19 feet x 14 feet. It had the heraldic blazons of 15 barons (including Lords Drummond and Levyingstoun) and also 22 earls. My drawing top of p.23 shows the smaller ceiling and is based on a watercolour drawing which was done in 1867 by the artist T Etherington Cooke. The ceiling was 14 feet square and also had heraldic shields, viz: from the left, an incomplete lion rampant* followed by the emblems of Lord Lyndzay, Eril of Ergyle, Lord Setoun and Lord Levyingstoun. (The original watercolour drawing can be viewed on the Canmore website.)

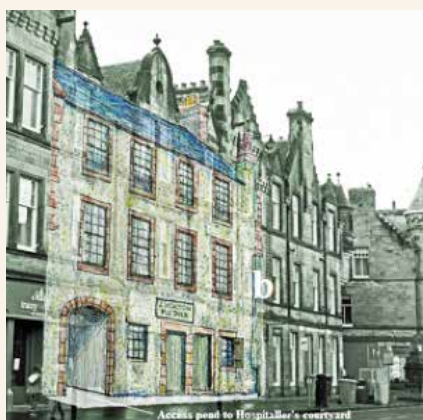
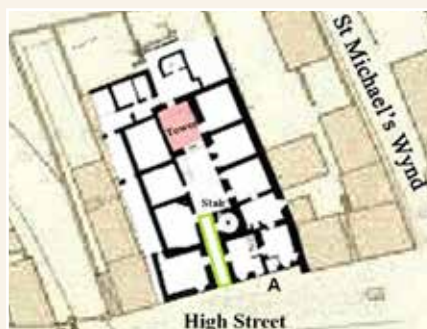
** The floor board above was missing (and with it the details of the owner). The spelling of names is as recorded.*



THE KNIGHTS HOSPITALLERS COMPLEX, 15 HIGH STREET

Indisputably the town's greatest loss of a historic group of buildings was the demolition in 1885-7 of the 'Knights Hospitallers of St John's complex, the layout of which has been added to The pend (shown green) provided access between the street and an internal courtyard which had a turnpike stair, also accessed from the pend.

At the first floor on the west side, there was a superb hall which was fortunately recorded in an interior perspective by the architect Thomas Ross, 1839 – 1930. This can be viewed on the HES Canmore web site and it shows that the interior had an ornately carved fireplace that may well have inspired the one in the Great Hall of the Palace.



The tower at the south end of the group was often referred to as the mint (perhaps erroneously), as this claim has also been made for other buildings in the town.

The elevation of the building on the right of the pend (indicated A on the plan on the left) has been super-imposed on a current street view which is shown inset. This indicates how it relates to the replacement building and the slightly later St Michael's Hotel. Shown below left, is a photograph of my sketch model of the buildings as viewed from the south-east (from the train station platform). This act of vandalism was initially perpetrated by Thomas Morton, flesher (butcher), but it's his widow's initials, CM for Christina Morton, that are on the plaque on the buildings east pediment (Thomas died prior to construction). Their new building was designed by Edinburgh architect John Russell Walker who also designed the St Michael's Hotel and Hames Best which complete the range of buildings shown in the photograph above which has my drawing of the former building superimposed. Russell is best known for his outrageously out-of-scale (and character) Victoria Hall which has now been added to the town's growing list of gap sites.

An unsuccessful attempt was made in 1885 by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, in London, to persuade the town council to intervene and save the buildings from demolition. In their letter they described the buildings as 'this really priceless relic of history' and implored them 'to save this ancient building from the hands of the Destroyer'. The magistrates predicament was that Mrs Morton claimed she could not afford the upkeep of the property nor were council funds available. In a last minute attempt to forestall the matter, the Society sent a telegram urging them to delay the demolition and offered a donation of £30, £3,880 in today's value. It was agreed that the provost should approach Mrs Morton and offer an additional £100, £12,935 today, or other moderate sum to enable her to alter her plans so that the ancient buildings could be kept. Within days the council reported that regrettably the buildings had already been demolished. It could be construed that the council's attempt to prevent the demolition was, at best, half hearted.

The new building was built in two phases, starting in 1865, between point 'a' marked in the street view and the west jamb of the pend. This allowed the old butcher's shop, shown between the pend and point 'b', to stay in use until its replacement was ready*. The final phase of construction is marked by a date stone for 1886 which can be seen in the west pediment – remarkably all of the work was done in just two years.

**Confirmed in an 1887 photograph (on which my drawing is based) which shows the remains of Morton's old shop set further back from the street.*

LINLITHGOW SPORTS CLUB TO GET NEW TENNIS COURTS



Here's a good-news lockdown story.

For many people lockdown was a difficult time, with activities and social contacts put on hold. But for most of that time, Linlithgow Sports Club was able to remain open for tennis. Apart from a few weeks at the height of lockdown, we in Scotland were able to play outdoor tennis albeit under social distance rules. As a result, the club has seen a significant rise in member numbers as local residents took advantage of the physical and mental health benefits of outdoor sports. The club is now almost back to normal, running a plethora of activities including senior and junior club sessions, junior and adult coaching sessions, and annual club championships. Club teams have once again participated in Tennis Central Scotland league matches, and the club is about to launch a pay

and play scheme. The Linlithgow Sports Club was founded in 1982 and includes squash, and bowling in addition to the Tennis section. There are four all-weather, floodlit tennis courts which are open 365 days a year.

All of this use has its downsides however, and the courts are now in desperate need of a reconstruction. So, after years of accumulating funds from membership fees, the club has launched a project to replace the sub-base, playing surface and fencing during the spring of 2022.

Most of the funds are in place, although there's a significant financial shortfall. The club is applying for various grants and a loan but none of this is guaranteed. Hence there's a major fundraising campaign underway to get all members involved in the project. There will be various initiatives launched by the tennis club committee, starting with a Big Tennis



Ball Keepy Uppy Challenge, where members are being sponsored to do as many keepy uppies of a tennis ball on a tennis racquet in 60 seconds as they can. The world record is 220 so it will be interesting to see how close players come to beating this!

The club is awarding prizes to the top fundraisers and many local businesses have kindly given donations including Bright Star Toys, Far From the Madding Crowd, The Dollhouse and Brunsfield Sports in Corstorphine. Linlithgow's tennis pro, Colin Fleming, is a past club member and Colin has also kindly offered his time to do a coach and play session for the top fundraisers.

Club secretary Diane Mackie, said *"This is such an exciting project for the club and it will be fantastic to have four brand new courts to play on. Tennis has seen a rise in popularity recently following the lockdown and the success of home-grown players, so we're hoping that many local people will be able to enjoy the new courts. I can't wait to get out there and play on them."*

Linlithgow Tennis Club is open to new members and details can be found on the website at www.linlithgowsportsclub.com. There is a Just Giving page set up for crowdfunding for the court replacement project – just search Linlithgow Tennis Club on www.justgiving.com and scroll to the crowdfunders section.



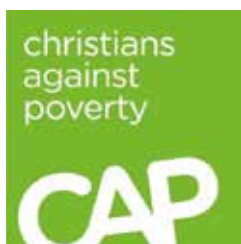
Tracy Hill

Linlithgow Tennis Club

JOB CLUB



St Michael is Kind to Strangers and each other as has been shown during the recent pandemic. Many people reached out to help their neighbour get through the past year or so and we are seeing things return a little back to normal. But are they ever going to be normal again? What is life going to be like Post-Covid, if there is such a thing?



Challenge Poverty Week is 4th-10th October. The Churches and The New Well charity in Linlithgow will be highlighting this week during services and other activities. One of the routes into poverty and indeed homelessness is unemployment, and the corresponding exit is finding a job. In response, some people from St John's church and St Michael's parish church are working together locally to provide a **Job Club** as part of The New Well charity.

The team trained with an award-winning charity called **Christians Against Poverty (CAP)** to become Job Coaches. CAP is an organisation founded 25 years ago by a Bradford businessman called **John Kirkby** in response to the poverty and homelessness he saw in his hometown. His own road to success was pretty rocky it is fair to say, as he had been unemployed and homeless himself.

The aim of CAP is *"the relief of poverty for persons who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress by reason of their social and/or economic circumstances, by providing and promoting the provision of advice and other services."* In the UK, CAP has 303 Debt centres (including one in West Lothian), 149 Job Clubs, 75 Life Skills groups and 118 Fresh Start groups. All of these are recognised by the DWP and the debt centres are authorised by the FCA.

Our local group of volunteers delivers the eight-week course which provides jobseekers with essential skills, such as CV writing, interview technique and understanding the value of volunteering. At the heart of the course is a supportive peer-to-peer group where course members can share their experiences, struggles and advice. In addition, each is given one-to-one coaching to develop their strengths and identify other opportunities, such as volunteering or additional training.

The group have already run a pilot course and are now ready to start a new Job Club on Thursday 21st October. It will run in Linlithgow from 10.45 until 2pm and includes lunch. The aim is to make the club welcoming and friendly and encourage a sense of community as well as to support people into employment.

If you would like to find out more or know of someone who might benefit from attending Job Club, then email heatherbegarnie@capjobclubs.org or contact us via our website www.thenewwell.org

Ken MacKenzie and Heather Begarnie



Ask the expert: Linlithgow can be beautiful in winter but it isn't always easy on the eyes

Specsavers



With the clocks set to go back at the end of the month, now is the perfect time to make sure you are road ready as the nights get longer.

You might initially think that means servicing your car or putting a few winter driving essentials such as screen wash and a shovel in the boot, but it's important to think about your eyesight too.

Ophthalmic store director and independent prescribing optometrist at Specsavers in Linlithgow, Diana Kelly, answers frequently asked questions regarding winter driving and your sight.

Q. Does the end of summer mean the end of sunglasses?

Diana says: ***'This is a common misconception. In fact, the low winter sun and the reflection from the wet road or ice can be particularly dazzling on a sunny winter's day, therefore it is important to still have your sunglasses to hand in case you need them. Polarising lenses are designed to completely eliminate glare.'***

Q. What type of glasses are best for driving?

'It is so important that you have your eyes tested regularly (at least every two years) so that your vision is the best it can be when you're on the roads. Your glasses need to have the right prescription to maintain your vision and to keep you and other road-users safe.'

'Anti-reflective coatings can also be added to lenses which help to combat the glare from artificial light sources such as bright headlights. In addition, SuperDrive varifocals are specially designed to allow the widest viewing angle.'

Q. What else can I do to make sure my eyes are in top condition for winter driving?

'Making sure that your specs are clean and that there are no other visual distractions in the car is really important – so ditch those furry dice and keep a cloth and lens cleaning spray handy. If you do a lot of driving, consider the style of glasses you choose – thin rims and high sides improve all-round vision.'

Top tip: To avoid dry eye, direct the heating vents away from your face and make an effort to blink frequently! Lubricants can be prescribed if your eyes become gritty or irritated.

To book an appointment at Specsavers Linlithgow, call 01506 534 484 or visit www.specsavers.co.uk/stores/linlithgow.



HOW TO REDUCE ACNE BREAKOUTS

WHAT IS ACNE?

Acne is a common skin condition caused by inflammation of the pilosebaceous unit. (This unit is comprised of a follicle, sebaceous gland, a hair and arrector pili muscle). Acne is commonly found on the face but can also occur on the neck, chest and back.

Acne can occur at any age, but most typically occurs in the teenage years. It can also occur during the menopause phase and is known to run in families.

WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF ACNE?

The cause of acne is the excess production of sebum which is a naturally occurring oily substance produced by sebaceous glands in the skin.

THE OILY STUFF!

The oil on our skin is called sebum. It flows out of the follicles (aka. pores) onto the skin surface.

We need sebum, because during this process it carries dead skin cells (that we are continually shedding/sloughing off) from within the follicles up to the skin surface as well as providing a waterproof barrier to the skin and keeping the skin and hair nicely moisturised.

It is not just the amount of sebum that is responsible for acne but also the type of sebum.

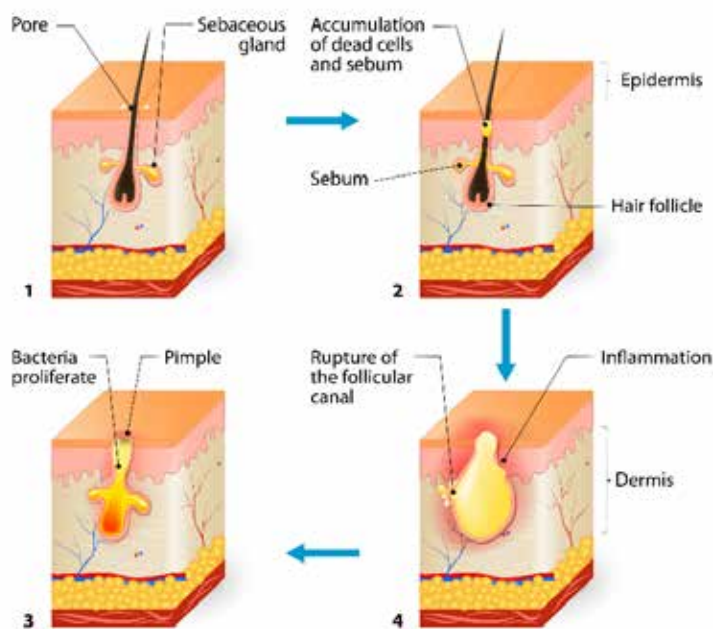
Unlike thinner sebum oil, the thicker and stickier the sebum is, the harder it is to move up and out, onto the skin surface making it far easier for the sebaceous glands and follicles to become blocked.

When the sebum is thick and sticky it blocks the follicles, and this along with the dead skin cells becomes a feast for a type of bacteria that lives on the skin. This bacterium is called *Propionibacterium acnes*. (*P. acnes*).

***P. acnes* bacterium, like people, is harmless, but put in the wrong crowd/environment it will readily start misbehaving.**

The *P. Acnes* bacterium misbehaves when the follicles become blocked. The lack of oxygen enables the bacterium to grow and uses the blocked sebum as an energy source. It turns the sebum into fatty acids, and it is the fatty acids which triggers inflammation, giving you those sore spots.

Acne Formation



HOW TO STOP SPOTS!

1. **Wash your face!** Morning and night. (Sounds obvious but it's surprising how many people only do it once a day, or not at all!).
2. **Do not use wipes to wash your face (unless you don't have access to water and a sink).** Apart from being bad for the environment, wipes are well known to dehydrate the skin and are often the wrong pH for our skin.
3. **Do not pick or poke spots.** Resist the temptation to keep squeezing them if they don't pop on the first attempt, especially those cystic/hard spots, you will do more harm than good, and this can lead to acne scarring.
4. **Keep your hair clean.** Especially if it hangs onto the face.
5. **Do not over-exfoliate.** A good gentle home exfoliation is only required once a week or an in-clinic exfoliation/chemical peel once a month.
6. **Consider medical grade products, such as targeted acne products with active ingredients or retinoids** but, talk to a professional (aka. Tina) first. Getting the right products for your skin will make an enormous difference. It's no good spending money on various products and not really knowing or understanding how best to use them. (It's a lot like buying cheap= buying twice).
7. **Wear a daily 'physical' sunscreen SPF 30+.** Even an oily skin needs to be kept moisturised as well as protected from damaging daily UV rays! Protecting your skin all year-round aids skin health and prevents premature ageing. (You can read more on physical sunscreens in issue 83/July Black Bitch Magazine page 29, or can be found on the Skin Happy website – blog, titled 'What is a good sunscreen?')
8. **Talk to Tina at Skin Happy.** A simple but good home care regime goes a long way in keeping those spots at bay but choosing the right products, knowing when and how to use them can be a mind field. Getting expert advice on a good homecare regime, and/or in-clinic treatments can help bring the best out of your skin, helping you to feel confident, carefree, and skin happy. Minimum treatment age 14+ years. (Under 18's require additional parental consent).

Over exfoliating = over production of sebum = oily skin
= increased acne breakouts.

Chemical peel exfoliation = cleared/unclogged follicles
= reduced production of sebum = reduced acne breakouts.



TO EXFOLIATE OR NOT TO EXFOLIATE!

Most acne sufferers over wash and over exfoliate, in an attempt to reduce the amount of sebum on their skin.

It is common for acne sufferers to wash their face 3+ times a day, exfoliate several times a week, use various face scrubs, masks, and to jump on any new product they see advertised as the next new skin miracle worker.

Over washing and over exfoliating strips too much sebum from the skin, it triggers the sebaceous glands to produce more sebum, and so a vicious cycle begins.

Over exfoliating can also cause the skin barrier to become broken, inflamed, sensitive, and reactive.

Over exfoliating = over production of sebum = oily skin = increased acne breakouts.

Getting the right balance of exfoliation and looking after your skin can be tricky, because of the temptation to do it frequently, but getting the right balance of knowing what, when and how to do it, and your skin will thank you for it.

A good gentle exfoliation can be done at home weekly, or for the best results a mild chemical peel exfoliation can be done every 4, 6 or 8 weeks, is great for skin health and cell turnover, giving you clearer, brighter, fresher, and smoother skin making you and your skin happy.

Chemical peel exfoliation = cleared/unclogged follicles = reduced production of sebum = reduced acne breakouts.

Chemical peel exfoliations are popular on the face, neck, chest, and back. They are not only great for acne skins but are also great for other skin conditions too, such as rosacea, hyperpigmentation, and ageing skin.

SKIN CARE STARTER KIT – 23% OFF

Skin Happy has put together a starter kit for anyone needing a kick start with looking after their skin presented in a nice white magnetic lid gift box (Typical 2 x daily use of this kit will last 3 months).

Skin Care Starter kits consists of:

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Skin Care Starter kit is £61 whilst stock lasts. (RRP is £79.50).

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f SkinHappy i skinhappyme

LINLITHGOW POLICE NEWS



Constables **Chris Ashley** and **Peter Robertson** are the Community Police Officers based at Linlithgow Police Station, which is now located within the newly refurbished Tam Dalyell House at Linlithgow Partnership Centre, High Street, Linlithgow.

During the last month, Constable Ashley has been out on the high street with the Police Scotland Youth Volunteers educating drivers regarding irresponsible parking. Unfortunately, this issue is still causing problems for the high street and 11 fixed penalty notices were issued in the month of June. Please be mindful of local restrictions and signage to avoid falling foul! 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.

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 or through Contact us Service

Your Local Community Police – Linlithgow
 Website: www.scotland.police.uk
 Twitter: @policescotland
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Hopefully when we are through the pandemic the Linlithgow Community Police Surgeries will resume. We shall keep you posted.



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Martin Godley BSc, MSCh

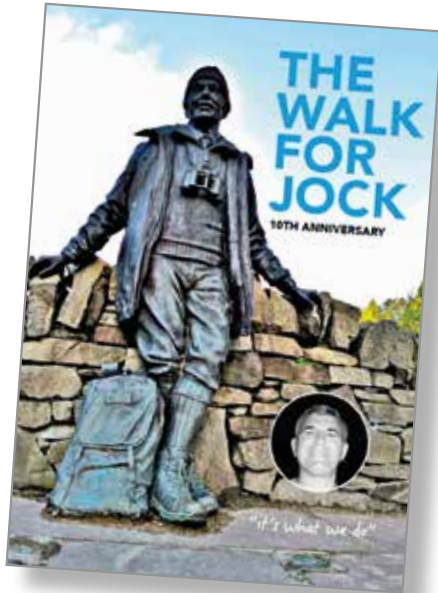
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 Email: m.g.podiatry@gmail.com

Following guidelines from College of Podiatry the clinic is open to patients with Emergencies or in pain and discomfort.
Full safety measures in place.
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Thank you for all your support.



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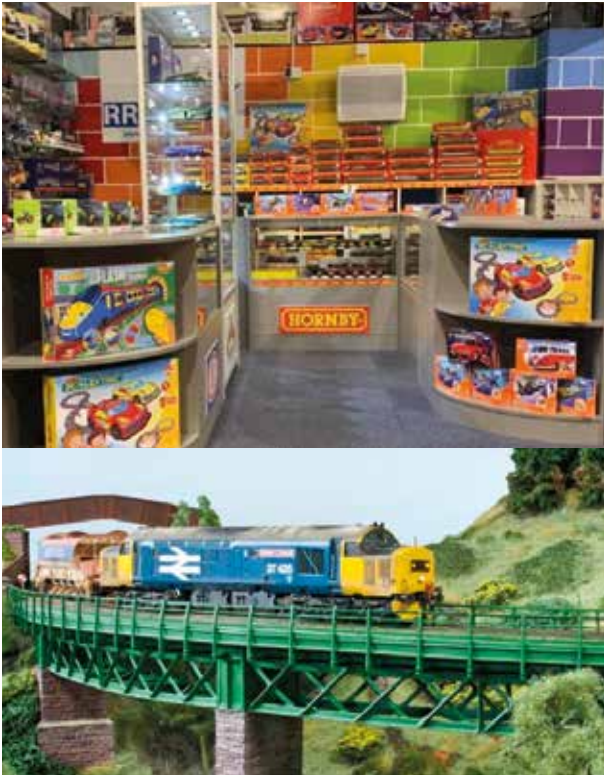


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RAINBOW RAILWAYS



Like a lot of youngsters, Mark Darragh took an early interest in train sets after discovering his dad's old layout at the age of four. Nor was he unusual in pursuing this hobby into adulthood.

But it's fair to say few have developed a consuming passion for model railways to the extent that Mark has. With a wide experience acquired through his involvement with large model railway exhibitions throughout the UK - and a "successful" appearance on Channel 5's "The Great Model Railway Challenge" under his belt - Mark has now embarked on a new challenge.

He's set up a model railway shop, Rainbow Railways, within his popular Playbugs indoor soft play area at Mill Road Business Estate at Linlithgow Bridge along with two friends and fellow enthusiasts, Michael Evans and Colin Rae, who have been operating a successful online business of that name for some time.

Mark said that one positive aspect that had arisen from the lockdown had been the uptake in hobbies, and there had been a really positive growth in interest in model railways, both from people returning to the hobby, and many more trying it for the first time.

"Hornby, the hobby's best known brand, returned to profit, and when it announced

a limited run of the NHS-branded Class 66 Sir Tom Moore, it's website crashed due to the demand. The original planned run of 500, with the aim of raising £20,000, ended up growing to 3,500 models, with an incredible £140,000 donated to NHS charities."

Mark said his first serious train set layout had been in 2009 of Rannoch on the West Highland Line, and it had featured in several modelling magazines, and had gone on display in exhibitions in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK. Since then he has continued to exhibit at leading model railway exhibitions in many locations.

"In 2019 Channel 5 created a TV series entitled "The Great Model Railway Challenge," and I decided to take part as it was a fun way to show the hobby to a wider audience. The show gained over a million viewers, and our episode was the first to be filmed at Fawley Hill Estate, near Henley-on-Thames.

"It aired as episode four, with a theme of Fire and Ice. Everything went to plan in the 24 hours we were given to prepare, but, as we discovered, good TV is when things go wrong at the critical point - and we didn't disappoint!"

Mark said that after computer control problems, and with the cameras rolling, the magnet on the model lorry on their working roadway lost contact with a hidden guide wire on a hill, did a U-turn,

and crashed onto the ice factory below!

It was during lockdown, Mark continued, that he'd started helping his friends Colin and Mike with their online business specialising in the repainting of models. The business grew to the point they decided to open a model shop within Playbugs, which was only allowed to re-open recently for soft play after a prolonged lockdown closure.

"It's already been really popular with our central location and parking, combined with so many model shops closing over the last few years. We are getting people from all over Scotland come and visit and online across the whole of the UK. We stock all the major ranges, along with all the new manufacturers.

"With all three of us interested in the hobby, we are happy to offer advice and tips to help anybody with layout and modelling projects. We aim to stock a wide range of products for the younger generation to get involved, right up to the highest detail models currently available."

Mark added that Rainbow Railways was not just about trains, and they also stock Airfix kits, Scalextric, and Tamiya radio-controlled cars as well.

John Smith

Find us within Playbugs
Unit 24
Little Mill Business Park
Linlithgow
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LADAS - AUTUMN AT OAKWELL ALLOTMENTS



Here at Oakwell allotments we are harvesting the last of the summer fruit and vegetables. It has been a bumper year for many fruits and vegetables, The Pumpkins are already a huge size. I grew some potatoes for baking in 30 litre tubs and was amazed by how big they were. I will tell you how to grow big potatoes in a later edition.

Fruit and vegetable growing in the Linlithgow area

Most gardening books, websites and TV programmes are written or produced in the south of England so do not take account of growing conditions here in the Linlithgow area. The Beechgrove Garden is the only television programme that I know of that deals with fruit and vegetable growing in Scotland. A book that I would highly recommend is "Fruit and vegetables for Scotland" by Kenneth Cox and Caroline Beaton.

A useful website is www.gardenfocused.co.uk; you can easily customise the site for Linlithgow and for the fruit and vegetables that you grow.

Things to do in your fruit and vegetable garden in October

>> Do not make the mistake of thinking that you can leave your vegetable garden alone until the next sowing and growing season starts in the Spring. Now and the next few months is the time to start preparing the soil in your plot for next year. Get rid of any weeds, cover your vegetable plot with compost or well-rotted manure, digging it into the top 8 inches (20 cm) in the Spring

>> Plant Spring Cabbages 6 inches apart. In the Spring pick every other one to use as Spring Greens leaving the remainder 12 inches (30 cm) apart to grow on as Summer Cabbages. Protect the plants over winter from Woodpigeons.

>> Towards the end of the month cut Pumpkins in time for Halloween.

>> Plant Shallot sets spacing them 10 inches apart in rows 16 inches apart. Rake in organic Onion fertiliser or blood, fish and bone fertiliser before planting.

Growing Garlic

Many people think that because Garlic is used extensively in Mediterranean

cooking that it cannot be grown here but that is not true. Towards the end of the month and into November plant Garlic cloves 5 inches (12 cm) deep, 6 inches (15 cm) to 8 inches (20cm) apart in rows 12 inches (30cm) apart. Use only the largest outside cloves for planting as, with Garlic, big is certainly best. Use the small central cloves in the kitchen as they will only produce small bulbs next year. Garlic requires to be planted in fertile but well-drained soil. As with Shallots, rake in organic Onion fertiliser or blood, fish and bone fertiliser before planting along with a little well-rotted compost.

Garlic needs to undergo a period of cold temperatures over the Winter, but a heavy frost will turn the cloves to mush. Garlic will also rot in the ground if the soil becomes water-logged.

You can also plant the Garlic cloves in modules or small pots filled with compost and grow them on in an unheated greenhouse or cold frame. The idea is to let the roots develop over winter and then plant the Garlic outside in the Spring. They should be kept moist but not wet otherwise the cloves will rot.

As we have a long waiting list, we are no longer taking requests for new plots.

Paul Taylor,
Chair LADAS





The Changing Requirements of Home Buyers

According to Rightmove, one of the big impacts on the housing market during the pandemic has been the jump in the number of people buying a detached home with a garden. In fact, they have seen a record number of people searching for homes with gardens on their portal this year. A home set among a small, friendly community is sought after, living in a detached property, so as not to have the neighbours too close. A cottage comes in second.

Tim Bannister of Rightmove said, *"many people looking to move right now are likely to be looking for a smaller home, but some will have their mind set on how they could eventually achieve the four-bedroom detached house with a garden."*

Two living rooms is the most popular request for the number of living rooms, perhaps to have one for guests and one for everyday use. A garage and garden are both high priority, although these days a garage may be used for extra storage rather than actually parking the car inside.

The rise of working from home comes through especially in the younger age groups, with those aged 18-34 saying a home office is their number one priority for an extra room. The conservatory doesn't start to appear as a must-have until we reach the 65+ age group, who would also choose a bungalow over a large house. The youngest age group of 18-24 would really like a dining room, in order to have more room to entertain friends. A third bathroom, maybe for growing families, emerges in the 25-44 age group.

Escape to the coast

It has been well documented over the past year that more people than usual have been considering a move to a coastal location and to smaller towns and villages, although there are now signs that city living is returning. When exploring the life that could be in a dream house, the vast majority say they would like to live in a village by the coast, and first-time buyers are the only group who would rather live in a town.

Tesco triumphs over Waitrose

The motto that 'every little helps' is certainly true for Tesco today, as the chain beats Waitrose by more than one percent, when people were asked which supermarket they would most want to have nearby. Looking at all properties on Rightmove, Tesco is the supermarket that is mentioned most by estate agents in listings, followed by Waitrose. Waitrose does perform exceptionally well when you consider how many more stores Tesco has around Great Britain. However, there are clear regional favourites, with the south favouring Waitrose and Sainsbury's winning in Yorkshire and the Humber.

This survey was conducted by Rightmove between 19-23 August. There were 2,019 respondents.

Latest Opinion on the Housing Market

Despite rapidly-rising house prices across the country, residential property researchers have refuted suggestions that the market is a bubble ready to pop

Researchers at leading estate agents and the Royal Institution of Chartered

Surveyors (RICS) argued instead that the pandemic has accelerated existing lack of supply and increases in demand to drive up valuations. One predicted that the housing market will increase a further 8% by the end of 2021 before beginning to cool off into next year - although he predicts the overall trend will be for a market increase of around 20% during the next five years.

"It's not a bubble - a bubble is what we had in the early to mid-noughties when house prices were going up by double digits each year."

"We've had very strong growth since the pandemic, but I think there are reasons for that and I would expect it to level off in time,"

"What fuelled the bubble in the early to mid-Noughties was very lax lending because of the credit being made available by banks on top of the equity that people were taking out to move on to their next property - that was unsustainable because the banks had really overstretched and people were more or less speculating."

He explained that the pandemic has released pent up demand for bigger properties in suburban, rural or semi-rural areas, as people sought more space and were less reliant on being close to city centre offices due to hybrid and work-from-home changes.

"What Covid-19 did was accelerate trends that were already there: people trying to get more bang for their buck, not having to commute, or not having to worry about commuting to the same extent - therefore looking for bigger properties where they could have a spare room to use as an office, more outside space."

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GAIL IS FUNDRAISING FOR AMBULANCES FOR AFRICA

Retired police officer **Gail Martin**, from Waukmilton just outside Linlithgow Bridge, has been selected to take part in a charity challenge in March 2022 to drive and deliver one of twenty-five ambulances from Spain, Portugal, France, to Banjul in The Gambia. She has now launched a fundraising drive to help her tackle this challenge of a lifetime.



The intent is to provide functioning ambulance vehicles, radios, equipment, training, and uniforms to this emerging but very poor African nation on the west coast of Africa.

Organised by the **National Police Aid Charities (NPAC)**, working with the International Police Association Section UK, it is proposed to recruit service and retired officers from all over Europe for a once-in-a-lifetime experience – an unforgettable journey across two continents that will help save lives.

The plan is that the group will start in Barcelona and then travel to Algeciras (southern Spain). They will cross over the Straits of Gibraltar to Ceuta in Spanish North Africa before the serious trekking begins via Casablanca, Western Sahara, Mauritania, and Senegal. They will finish in Banjul, the capital of The Gambia, where they will disperse the ambulances to community hospitals across the country.

Gail explained to me what her role will be:

"My involvement means a good amount of fund-raising and then two weeks away from between 14th and 28th March 2022. The publicity will be very positive for the service, and I am proud to be taking part, not only as the only ex Scottish Police officer, but also for humanitarian reasons. We have identified the horrific issues and unnecessary deaths caused by the absence of any form or ambulance service in The Gambia and are resolved to do something about it."

The levels of maternal mortality in the Gambia are unacceptably high and are ranked among the highest in Africa, estimated at 1,050 per 100,000 live births and are higher in rural than in urban areas. The manner of those deaths for mother and child do not bear thinking about."

The number of deaths and amputations through late presentation of infected fractures and wounds is also unbelievably high. Amputations are also convenient because travel to aftercare at hospitals is impossible for complicated injuries."

Participants are being asked to raise £2,500 towards the purchase of the ambulances, and all the associated costs (including flights home), but NPAC will do their best to support this, and any corporate fundraising will hopefully reduce this.

As part of her fundraising effort, Gail has set up a page on www.justgiving.com, under the name **"Gail's Op Zephyr Aid Mission West Mercia Contingent page."** She is organising a fundraising quiz night at the Black Bitch Tavern on Friday October 22nd and would welcome as many teams of four as possible. The quizmaster will be **Davie 'Deep Sea' Paterson**, whose quizzes are the stuff of legend.

Gail is looking for all kinds of support, as she told me:

"The project would also benefit from some corporate sponsorship whether it just be for one ambulance (£10,000 to buy and transport) or the fleet, or perhaps our fuel on a company card (which might be a tax efficient way of supporting us). National publicity is assured for a major sponsor."

Gail can be contacted through her page on Facebook or at : Waukmilton Farm Cottage, Linlithgow Bridge, EH49 7PU

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LIN GIN COMPETITION WINNER AUGUST
SARAH OLIVER

Hamish is an 8-year-old Bengal cat and his family describe him as a little tiger.

Hamish's favourite thing to do is sleep but is at his happiest when out exploring in the garden. His favourite toy is his laser toy and enjoys bringing home a mouse for his owners!

She Hamish recently visited the Westport Vet practice in Linlithgow for dental treatment. His owners say:

"Hamish is much happier since his dental treatment. He is eating better and back to his happy self!"

Dental care is essential to maintain your pet's best health. At Westport Veterinary Clinic we regularly carry out Complete Oral Health Assessments and Dental Treatment procedures on dogs and cats. These include full mouth x-rays, extractions if necessary and a scale & polish. We also do rabbit dental treatments when required.

Dental procedures on cats and dogs are carried out under a full general anaesthetic. This is the only way to properly assess and treat dental issues and minimises distress to animals.

Full mouth x-rays are an essential part of dental work. Often teeth can look healthy on the outside but have significant disease under the gums which would be missed without x-ray views. We use digital x-ray processors so that the procedure can be done as quickly as possible, minimising the time pet is under anaesthetic.

Dental pain in animals is often not obvious as pets may be stoic or will hide the obvious source of any pain. Booking regular dental check-ups by the veterinary team for pets is essential.

The team often receive feedback from owners who haven't noticed their pet having any obvious dental pain but following a dental check-up they need dental work. Owners

report significant changes in their pet after they have had dental work carried out.

Common changes noticed are pets eating more food types, how they eat and general demeanour. Pets clearly feel more comfortable and happier in themselves. For dogs after having dental work done some owners even report their behaviour as becoming puppy like again after treatment!

Signs to look out for in cats are;

- > *hiding more than usual*
- > *preferring soft food only when usually would eat both soft and hard foods*
- > *bad breath*
- > *drooling*
- > *refusing to sleep*
- > *becoming more aggressive*

In dogs the signs are similar and include

- > *change in the types of items they may carry or retrieve*
- > *change in the chews they eat*
- > *blood spotting or smell on any items after play,*
- > *becoming head shy or grumpy or unhappy with contact to their facial area*

Please note these signs can be linked to many other attributes however can also signify dental issues.

Genetic conditions, such as a Lingually Displaced Mandibular Canines is an increasingly common issue we see frequently in puppies. This condition is related to the alignment on the dogs' canines. Where alignment and position are incorrect, this causes pain and a host of issues as they



develop. This is a condition which commonly requires surgical intervention from as young as 8 weeks old.

Pets can develop gum disease, tartar and plaque build-up, foul breath and abscesses, all of which can develop into infection and tooth loss. Infections in the mouth can also affect the body organs. Bacteria from plaque accumulation can also cause an infection in the lungs, liver, kidney and heart.

Brushing your pet's teeth regularly is an essential component to maintaining your pet's best health. The Westport Team can help owners on how to do this using a simple steps method and have a video for owners to do this at home on our You Tube Channel.

For enquires contact the Westport Team by email surgery@westportvets.com

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