

BITZACK



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AUG 2022



**BRITAIN
IN BLOOM
BURGH BEAUTIFUL P.6**



**BURGH BEAUTIFUL
VOLUNTEERS
AND JUDGES**

**LOCAL PLACE PLAN
NEWS UPDATE P.4**

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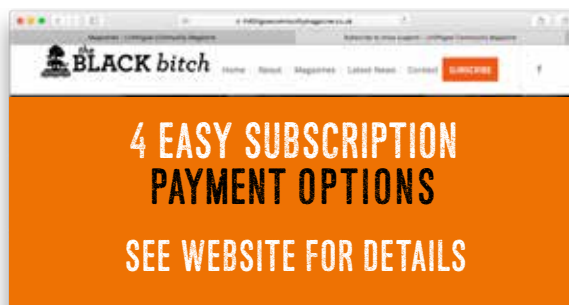
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**DAVID TAIT,
EDITOR**

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THE BLACK BITCH
MAGAZINE**



Our front cover reflects the work done by Burgh Beautiful's small army of dedicated scrapers, weeders, planters and trimmers in preparation for the visit of the Britain in Bloom judges at the end of July. They have done the town proud ensuring Linlithgow has the best chance of winning this national competition whilst promoting the town across the whole UK. This is an important contribution towards Linlithgow fulfilling its obvious potential to become a thriving visitor destination for "staycationers" and overseas visitors.

On a day of glorious sunshine the judges enjoyed Linlithgow looking at its best and were generous in their praise of all those from across the community whose work combined to produce a superb show - from the high-profile frontline volunteers with dirt under their fingernails to the largely unseen backroom admin team whose contribution makes the whole thing possible.

It's a long anxious wait until decision day on 10th October but, whatever the outcome, everyone associated with Burgh Beautiful can be well content with what they have achieved for the town especially against a background of testing times when everyone is in need of a bit of cheering up.

Discussion of the Local Development Plan does not always set the blood racing but communities are being given an opportunity to participate in the next one and it is critical to the town's future that a clear and well-argued Local Place Plan is delivered when called for.

While the timing of the Local Place Plan process has not yet been announced

by the Scottish Government, the Planning Forum subgroup of the Community Council is pressing ahead with the community consultation exercise which when completed will be submitted to the Planning Authority for consideration as part of the new process of preparing the next Local Development Plan.

The public consultation will remain open until late September with paper forms available from the reception area of the Burgh Halls and online at www.llbcc.org.uk/planning. The Local Place Plan provides an opportunity for communities to let their Planning Authority know their development priorities. Many have already made their views known and once the consultation closes towards the end of September an analysis of responses will be included in our next issues before the end of the year.

Meantime in this issue, on pages 4 & 5, the Planning Forum provides an update on a sample of the public comments analysed to date - the need for the implementation of an "infrastructure first" policy, need for affordable housing to allow the younger generation to remain in their home town - and specific concerns about inadequate public transport for the many staff travelling to work from outwith Linlithgow.

Elsewhere in the magazine we cover the return of two major musical events - Party at the Palace and Linlithgow Folk Festival - and the 29th running of the Linlithgow 10K which attracts entrants from a wide area outwith the town - another event that promotes Linlithgow itself and brings potential trade to local

businesses with upwards of 1,000 runners taking part. Also coming back from a forced Covid break is the Linlithgow Rugby Club Male Voice Choir which is announcing the restart of rehearsals and is keen to hear from potential new members.

There'll be those who react grumpily to the early mention of Christmas but not Rowen Events whose plans are well advanced to lighten up the "Festive Forest" at Beecraigs from 2nd to 23rd December for what has proved to be an extremely popular event for all the family.

On heritage, Bruce Jamieson has been digging around investigating some of the nefarious activities of past years carried out in the name of advancing anatomical knowledge, requiring the deployment of mortsafes and grave-watchers' huts. An interesting insight as always.

And finally, our request to our readers to consider supporting the magazine by subscribing. We hope everyone finds something to enjoy or inform in the magazine. We have no Head Office to consult or individual financial backers to dictate content. It is produced and delivered by dedicated individuals supported by generous subscribers and local businesses and groups.

So whether you are a Black Bitch with deep family roots in Linlithgow or one of the many more recently arrived please give some consideration to subscribing in support of our independent efforts to tell the Linlithgow story.

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



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OH NO! NOT ANOTHER QUESTIONNAIRE – LINLITHGOW’S PLAN FOR THE FUTURE



How times have changed on the High Street.

In the last edition of the Black Bitch the Planning Forum reported on the exhibition held in the Burgh Halls during June promoting Linlithgow’s Plan for the Future. The planning articles in the previous three editions of the Black Bitch introduced the launch of Local Place Plans in West Lothian, the objective of which is to encourage an interest in those planning issues that have a significant impact on individual towns and local communities.

The exhibition was well attended with many people studying the exhibition displays and sitting at tables working their way through the plans for the future of Linlithgow prior to completing a detailed questionnaire. To date 114 completed questionnaires have been received. A smaller exhibition will remain in the reception area of the Burgh Halls for the next few weeks with questionnaires to complete. The draft Linlithgow: Plan for the Future together with an online questionnaire is available at www.llbcc.org.uk/planning. The Planning Forum will be gathering information through the questionnaires at least until the end of September. The end date will be triggered by the invitation by West Lothian Council to submit a Local Place Plan; an invitation which has yet to be received. The submission of a Local Place Plan starts a new process which is described in Scottish Government legislation and guidance, and which will lead to a new West Lothian Local Development Plan.

Planning Forum members have previous experience with questionnaire development and processing. The aim is to keep the questions clear and referenced back to the Plan for the Future document. There are four possible options in answering the questions: yes-no-indifferent and of course not answering the question. The intention of the indifferent option was to indicate acceptance of a yes or no option by going with the majority.

Blank we are interpreting as having insufficient knowledge to answer the question and/or having no opinion. However, several comments on the subject indifferent may mean we have to rethink the term. This is summarised by one respondent who stated *“I don’t like indifferent, it has connotations of “don’t care” and I do care but I have not had occasion to thoroughly think through at this moment. I will probably end up supporting everything suggested and thank you to everyone for all the effort”*. It is however the spreadsheet ranking indifferent which gives the best clue as to those proposals which people consider to be of most importance.

Plan for the Future Proposal	Yes	No	Indiff	Blank
Four-way motorway interchange at Burghmuir	91%	9%	2%	7%
Dealing with loch and watercourse pollution	100%	0%	3%	6%
Retention of Low Port Centre for community/recreational use	97%	3%	3%	4%
Development of a plan for the town which encourages and enables reducing waste, reusing, and recycling items and materials, and creates green jobs and reduces carbon footprint	100%	0%	4%	13%
Infrastructure to support housing development	84%	16%	4%	11%
Traffic management to ‘reclaim’ the High Street	75%	25%	4%	10%
Mixed housing at Wilcoxholm Farm and between Clarendon/Edinburgh Road	57%	43%	7%	11%

The four-way motorway interchange at Burghmuir has a high level of support combined with a low level of indifference putting it at the head of the table. Infrastructure caused the highest level of debate with many stating no further development in Linlithgow should be given planning permission without infrastructure improvement. In this context responses to the proposed development at Wilcoxholm Farm was heavily caveated as being too large, adding to High St congestion, failing to address the urgent need for affordable, appropriately sized family housing, facilitating downsizing, and a plea for small bungalows/cottages *“not all elderly people want to live in sheltered housing”*.

Many of the housing statements can be represented by this comment *“I feel strongly that there should be more social housing and affordable housing built, as we are driving away young people from the town as they cannot afford to buy/rent houses here, even if they are available.”*

A small Linlithgow enterprise commented *“encouraging local employment to cut down the dependence on commuting is a laudable aim. The majority of our staff can’t afford to live in Linlithgow – this has been the case for much of the past 20 years but has grown particularly acute now. Most of the services one can access in Linlithgow are provided by workers who commute into these jobs from Bo’ness, the Braes, Bathgate and Broxburn. I strongly suggest that you conduct a survey, if one has not already been commissioned, of where service sector workers in town centre business come from and how they get there. Or, in fact, struggle to get here because of the poor bus links”*.

The questionnaire results give a lot for the Planning Forum to think about in compiling the Linlithgow Local Place Plan which hopefully will be taken on board by West Lothian Council. At least the new Scottish Government legislation and guidance states that if proposals in a Local Place Plan are rejected then reasons must be given together with an opportunity to resubmit.

Please keep sending in the questionnaires – on paper at the Burgh Halls or online at www.llbcc.org.uk/planning.



The following issue of the magazine will have a more detailed analysis of the many consultation questionnaires received.

Planning Forum



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Are you a local community group/nursery/care home/charity or school in need of some extra help with your small projects?

Maybe we can help? We're looking for small projects where we can make items such as bird boxes or windows boxes, planters or 'A' frames for community use.

Our time is given freely, and if you have the raw materials, we can make it work. If you don't have material, we may be able to help source some for a donation to cover our costs.

Interested?

Contact: tools@trust-linlithgow.org.uk,
or call The Hub on 01506 846991
for an informal chat!

BRITAIN IN BLOOM Linlithgow judged for UK's biggest gardening competition

Linlithgow has been judged for the finals of Britain in Bloom.

Burgh Beautiful Linlithgow volunteers and many others worked hard to prepare the town for the UK's biggest gardening competition.

And on 29 July judges **Mary Bagley** and **Richard Budge** took in the horticultural and environmental highlights of the Royal Burgh - including hanging baskets and planters, floral displays at the canal basin and Learmonth Gardens, the railway station, Low Port, the Vennel and the Serpentine Bed behind the Black Bitch statue.

They admired the town's public art, its heritage features such as the Carmelite Friary, tree planting and community gardens, the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Tree, the children's climate change mosaics and the wider community's involvement in making the town as clean as it could be.

Three small orchards were visited, as well as bloom-related shop window displays, a revamped former phone box at The Vennel and several beautifully decorated bicycles produced by Linlithgow Floral Art Club.

After an overview of the landscape and wildlife management around Linlithgow Palace and Peel from Historic Environment Scotland Ranger Gordon Smith, judging ended at The Cross with a recital from Linlithgow Reed Band.

Burgh Beautiful Convenor **Ron Smith**, who played host to the judges together with Chair of Linlithgow Burgh Trust **John Mason**, said: *"Making it to the finals of the UK's biggest gardening competition is testament to the hard work and dedication of everyone who comes together to take pride in Linlithgow."*

"We hope the judges enjoyed our town, and I want to thank all the volunteers and the wider community who put in so much effort to keep Linlithgow looking its very best."

At a post-judging lunch, Mary explained her relief at having an 'uneventful' judging visit to Linlithgow, since at other locations on her Britain in Bloom itinerary she had been mugged and was even knocked unconscious when a car boot was closed on her head!

She paid tribute to the "tremendous commitment of the community" and said *"You really have done yourselves and your town proud."*

Richard compared judging day to a wedding and said Linlithgow had enjoyed the very best weather for its special day with everything running perfectly. He added: *"You've really put on quite a show. All the volunteer hours put in are just incredible."*

Linlithgow Burgh Beautiful is one of 46 community gardening groups presenting its work to Bloom judges, who are marking on horticulture, environment and community involvement, considering strengthened environmental criteria including planet-friendly gardening techniques.

Run by the Royal Horticultural Society, Britain in Bloom is a symbol of excellence in community gardening, strong community spirit and pride of place. The competition has returned after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic.

Linlithgow is one of five finalists in the Town category. The only other Scottish finalist is North Berwick in Bloom, in the Coastal category. Winners will be announced in October.

Burgh Beautiful Linlithgow has around 100 volunteers who give up to 16,000 hours annually, working with partners to make the town look its best.

Established in 2004, members tend to approximately 124 hanging baskets, 95 planters/barrels and 35 flowerbeds. They plant up to 20,000 plants over the Summer, and a further 8,400 plants in the Winter and Spring.

The group's many awards include taking Gold and winning the Town category in Britain in Bloom 2018. In 2021 Burgh Beautiful won Gold in the Beautiful Scotland competition, and the Visit Scotland Award for Tourism and a discretionary award for excellence in community horticulture.

Donna White





BEFORE



DURING



AFTER



THE TEAM

EYESORE TELEPHONE BOX TRANSFORMED

One of the displays which hopefully impressed the judges was put together at the last minute to make good use of the disused telephone box at The Vennel.

Burgh Beautiful convenor Ron Smith said: *“The former phone box was one of those eyesores locals might have learned to ignore – but a judge who is new to the town would spot it immediately.*

“We asked various people if they could help, and the Ex-Tinguishers were approached - a group of former firefighters who are well known for their wonderful and inventive floats at the Marches.”

Ten days before judging a plan was formed to remove the upper side panels, install a soil container obscured by new lower metal side panels and install a reflective surface behind the soil container to reflect the plants.

The Ex-Tinguishers fabricated the components and on 25 July everything was assembled and plants were added – a large cordyline donated by Audrey Simpson, begonias donated by Ian Gibson, and trailing rhodochiton ‘Purple Bells’ supplied by the Mill Garden Centre in Armadale.

A great example of the community working together - and on Burgh Beautiful’s Facebook page local residents expressed their appreciation with around 600 comments.

“Wonderful, what a great idea. Our wee town has never looked better,” said Grace Monteith.

Annette Murdoch added: *“This looks amazing. Top marks for creativity.”*

“Perfect conversion of what used to be an eyesore. Well done!” said Margaret Morrice.

Mark Stewart said:

“Looks great. A lot of hours went into turning a dire eyesore into a well thought gem of plants. I hope it blooms.”

Donna White



DRAWING CLUB

DRAWING CLUB STARTS ON TUESDAY 16TH AT 6PM IN THE STAR AND GARTER. it will be a weekly drink and draw meet up where adults of any ability can come along with their own projects to practice drawing and meet other like minded people.



ONE LINLITHGOW is working on several projects including the introduction of a small number of Chatty Benches around town. Linked to the Chatty Tables initiative run by The New Well and local cafes, the Chatty Benches are there to help improve community health and wellbeing and help break down the barriers of social isolation and get people talking, whether it's about the weather, the town or your pet goldfish!

By sitting on the bench, people will know that you are open to a friendly talk. If you see someone sitting on one, why not consider approaching them and having a chat. You might learn something new, make a new friend, or simply brighten someone's day.

Look out for the Chatty Benches arriving in August/September. The Chatty Benches are possible thanks to funding from the West Lothian Council Town Centre Capital Fund.

LINLITHGOW COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARDS

In partnership with Linlithgow Community Development Trust, One Linlithgow has obtained funding to refurbish the community noticeboards – one of which is located at The Vennel with the other outside Low Port Primary School. This will see a safer opening system and replacement boards making it easier to put up posters and information.

If you have information to post on the noticeboards, please hand them into the Linlithgow Community Development Trust at the EH49 Hub (the old library) or into the One Linlithgow offices, just opposite (28 The Vennel).

LINLITHGOW LOYALTY LOTTERY

The monthly Linlithgow Loyalty Lottery helps the community support their local businesses with a chance to enter a prize draw to win a top prize of £50 in vouchers to spend in town.

Simply collect a Lottery Stamp Card from one of the businesses below and each time you purchase an item in a

participating business, they will stamp your card. Collect 10 stamps and hand it in to the One Linlithgow office (or our post box outside), Lilypond Crafts and Gifts or Play Bugs at Mill Road Industrial Estate to enter the prize draw. The top prize is £50 in vouchers, second is £30 and the third prize is £20. You can spend



these vouchers in any of the businesses listed below.



If you are a business and want to take part in the scheme or already participating and need more cards or stampers, let us know at office@onelinlithgow.com.

Happy shopping! 2 Feet 1st | Ander Tax | A Wee Mindin' | Beautique Beauty Salon | Bright Star Toys | Cafebar 1807 | Centre Stage Dancewear | Chest, Heart & Stroke Shop | Complete Health at the Millstone | Crannog Café | Elevation Cycles | Fair Tradewinds | Far from the Madding Crowd | Flowers by Carolyn | The Granary Café | Il Fruttivendolo | J Walker Carpets & Gifts | Linlithgow Distillery | Lilypond Crafts & Gifts | Linlithgow DIY | Linlithgow Stoves & Gifts | Mackie & Brechin | Mac's of Linlithgow | Maisie Gray Paint Your Own Pottery & Crafts | Mason Belle's Kitchen | mid-C-mod | Platform 3 | Playbugs | Purely Patchwork | So Strawberry Caffè | Skin Happy | Specsavers | Sweet Little Cheesecake Café | TD Anderson | Thread Counter | Tracey Victoria Interiors | Tranquil Room

TOURISM STRATEGY

One Linlithgow like many other organisations is returning to its non-COVID programme. Our team are glad to be out meeting local businesses again, working on ideas to help Linlithgow traders be successful, whether that be a home-grown business, a Mill Road hidden gem like Easygo Electric Bikes, a long-established business like The Line Gallery or a new business like Styled by Macs.



A top priority is our Tourism Strategy as we see many visitors coming back to our town, tour buses coming through, and events like Party at the Palace returning. We have many great attractions, and our ambition is to have visitors staying longer and using more of our great businesses and services.

The One Linlithgow team this autumn will be working hard to talk to all interested people and organisations in the town, to gather feedback and bring that together into a strategy and supporting plan. We know others also want our town's tourism to grow, and we hope we can draw on this knowledge along with what we draw from places like Stirling to help us be an even better visit.

This can all sound like a load of talking, but instead we expect it to focus our work so that visitors stay longer, spend more with our local traders and recommend their friends come to Linlithgow first. For residents who have been around for some time you may remember a tagline **'Linlithgow – A Great Visit.'** We agree, and we hope tourists will believe Linlithgow is an essential visit.



HEAD AND TAIL BOOKS AT MID-C-MOD

Jim Brown's popular mid-C-mod on Linlithgow High Street is often described as an "Aladdin's Cave" - stacked high with 50s and 60s memorabilia, ranging from Tupperware to Babycham glasses, from rock 'n' roll memories to a huge array of lamps from the period.

Now Jim has added a totally different range - handcrafted books made by his partner Martin MacKinnon, who has long been fascinated by bookbinding, but only really began to master the art during the restrictions imposed by the pandemic lockdown.

Martin is back working four days a week as a digital services manager, but has become more and more involved in bookbinding, which he described as "a great stress reliever" after work, and a craft to which he was committing an increasing amount of time.

Martin explained that his abiding interest in books, and particularly the huge skill involved in the more intricate bookbinding, began at an early age.

"My first job after leaving school was in an academic library which had a special collection of older books of historic interest. I was completely awestruck by the beautiful bindings many of these books had - some dating back to the 16 century - and the intricate patterns and designs displayed on their covers."

Martin said that the library also had a bindery, where books were made, repaired and restored. He had been fascinated by the techniques employed by the binder, and this had planted the seed for what was to germinate into an obsession for the craft of bookbinding many years later.

He had begun in recent years to read books by acknowledged experts in the field, and lockdown had afforded him a lot more time to learn much more about the craft, focusing on it to the exclusion of everything else.

"From a mental health perspective it was the perfect antidote to everything that was going on in the world - I got completely lost in it when I was making books. I made many books, and that was when Head and Tail Books was born. I have a lot to thank lockdown for!"

Martin said that he had been somewhat overwhelmed by the amount of information and described techniques, and had, after some research, located a bookbinder in the Borders who taught bookbinding in the traditional manner.

"Mark Ramsden is a master of all things bookbinding, and he teaches both traditional bookbinding and conservation.. He is now my tutor, mentor and guide, and I meet with him on a regular basis to advance my skills and knowledge."

Martin said that he made a range of different books, from notebooks, photo albums and project books, right through to art books. Covers included leather, paper, and fabric made into "book cloth". He had even downloaded royalty-free book texts, and printed and handbound them - the latest being "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens.

Martin added that his books were only available at mid-C-mod. He didn't as yet have an online presence, although he was hoping to change that shortly. But he could be contacted, including for commissions, at headandtailbooks@gmail.com





LINLITHGOW FOLK FESTIVAL 2022

This year's Linlithgow Folk Festival will take place from the 15th to the 18th of September.

First held in 1999, the annual celebration of traditional music, dance and song in the Royal Burgh is now firmly established on the traditional music scene throughout the UK and it attracts visitors from far and wide.

Pre-pandemic, the festival had built a fearsome reputation for attracting some of the biggest names on the traditional music scene and had also become well-known as a place where emerging talent would be given the opportunity to perform.

The festival was cancelled in 2020, although online events took place, including the wonderful 'Linlithgow Folk Festival in miniature' which, through wooden figures, toys, and sound recordings, managed to capture the spirit of the event in a brilliantly imaginative way.

Last year, a highly successful mini festival took place in the garden of the Burgh Halls. This year's festival will build on that success and re-introduce concert events and sessions.

Most of the sessions will take place inside the Black Bitch pub and, weather permitting, outside in the impressive beer garden. The pub has always been the spiritual home of the festival and the organisers are delighted that, once again, Linlithgow's famous watering hole – and its iconic name – will be centre stage during this year's proceedings. Twice-monthly sessions are organised in the pub throughout the year.

The festival gets underway on Thursday September 15th with a 'Stramash' at the Black Bitch and sessions will take place there throughout the weekend.

Concert events will be back this year, and these will take place at Linlithgow Rose Social Club. Friday September 16th will see a welcome return to the town for 'The Sorries', fresh from another record-breaking run at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. On Saturday September 17th, there will be a performance by popular Falkirk group, 'The Tonkerers', who are an experienced six-piece band, playing a wide range of music, including their own energetic arrangements of folk and country songs. They deliver music and fun to audiences of all ages and are very popular throughout central Scotland.

This year will also see the re-establishment of the **Nora Devine Stage**, which allows performers the opportunity to appear at the very heart of the festival. Traditionally held at the Cross on the Saturday and Sunday, the stage will take place in the **Burgh Halls Garden in 2022** and the



organisers are promising a wide array of music from performers of all ages.

Other events in the programme include a **Ceilidh in the Burgh Halls** and a **'Singaround' in the Masonic Hall**.

Full details of the Linlithgow Folk Festival can be seen on the website www.linlithgowfolk.com and on Facebook and other social media platforms.

Tickets for the two concerts at the Rose Club can be bought at Far From The Madding Crowd and Wilsons Newsagents (Cash Only).

Murdoch Kennedy





Eye health: What you need to know



A trip to the opticians can tell you if you need to wear glasses or if your prescription has changed, but did you know that there's a lot more an eye examination can tell you about your health?



Ahead of **National Eye Health Week** (19-25 September) Diana Kelly, store director and optometrist at Specsavers in Linlithgow, highlights why regular eye exams are important.

How often should you have an eye examination?

Diana says: 'We typically recommend having an eye examination every two years, unless you are advised to have one more frequently by your optometrist.'

'If you experience any problems with your eyes, you can visit your opticians sooner.'

At what age should you start having eye exams?

'There are tests that can be used on infants and preschool children who cannot read if you have concerns about their sight but in general, it is fine to wait until they are of school age.'

'An eye exam should be an important part of your back-to-school routine to make sure your child doesn't have any problems with their sight that might affect their early school years.'

'We recommend their first eye exam is before the age of eight as problems with sight in childhood can often be corrected if caught before they reach this age.'

What health conditions can an eye exam detect?

'Eye examinations can help to diagnose a wide range of eye conditions including glaucoma, macular degeneration and cataracts.'

'But there's so much more it can also indicate about your wider health. Eye exams can help to diagnose high blood pressure, strokes, diabetes and in rare occasions, even brain tumours.'

What eye problems can an optician help with?

'Your opticians should be your first port of call for any problems with your eyes, whether you have a foreign object stuck in your eye or you are experiencing flashes or floaters in your field of vision.'

To find out more or book your next appointment visit www.specsavers.co.uk/stores/linlithgow.



FOLK FAE LITHGAE
CLAIRE WITHNELL

Like so many other local organisations, the members of the Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions (LAMP) are pleased to be back again doing what they love, following the COVID pandemic. First established in 1985, the group are really looking forward to treading the boards again at their traditional October show.

Photo credits: Rebecca Holmes



Claire Withnell took over as President of LAMP in February of this year and is delighted that the cast is now all in place for their next production - ‘Elf – The Musical,’ - based on the film of the same name - which will run from the 11th to the 15th of October at the Academy Theatre.

As the choreographer, a role she has undertaken since 2017, Claire is already putting the company through their paces at the weekly rehearsals. ‘Elf – The Musical’ has never been done by LAMP

members before and Claire is promising something different for the audiences. She told me:

“It’s brand new for us. It’s a new style, a more modern musical, rather than the traditional, but we’re hoping that ‘Elf’ will bring in a good audience, who will get to see that LAMP can put on a big experience. It’s a great cast and the songs are quite catchy. Our last show in 2019 – ‘Betty Blue Eyes’ – was also unknown, but the people who came along loved it and we are hoping for something similar this time.”

Some of the current members of the highly acclaimed LAMP Children’s Theatre will also be taking part and anyone who saw their wonderful “Re-Ignite” concert earlier this year will know that the talented youngsters will have no problem rising to the challenge.

Claire’s Mum, **Valerie**, was in the first LAMP production in 1985 and three years later, Claire made her debut as an eight-year-old when she played one of the children in ‘The King and I’. She was involved with the first three productions of the Children’s Theatre from 1995 onwards and returned to the company after her university studies. A speech and language therapist by profession – like her dad **Gary** - Claire had a change of career during lockdown and now works as a Patient Experience Officer with NHS Lothian.

LAMP enjoys close links with the Barony Theatre in Bo’ness and Claire explained her own involvement:

“In 2016, I had heard they were doing ‘Dads’ Army’ and I really wanted to go down to the Barony and learn a bit more about the acting side of things. I auditioned and got the part of Mrs Fox, the 60-year-old buxom widow. That was one of the best laughs I’ve had on stage. It was absolutely brilliant. Since then, I have been involved in twelve productions. I am directing ‘Ladies Day’, at the Barony in September and will also be appearing in a play at the end of November.”

To say that Claire is a busy person is an understatement. She has a full-time job. A typical week sees her at LAMP rehearsals on a Tuesday and Thursday and Barony rehearsals on a Wednesday and Sunday evening. In the run up to the show, she also has LAMP rehearsals on a Sunday afternoon.

During the playing season, Claire is involved at the rugby club on a Saturday, where she is on the rota for duty manager at home games and travels to away fixtures with her group of rugby girls. Monday is her night off, when she gets time to draw breath and plan for the week ahead, as well as spending time with her partner **Guy** and the two dogs she acquired during lockdown.

Claire will be even busier in the coming months as productions with the Barony and LAMP approach. Further details can be found on the respective websites and Facebook pages.



Murdoch Kennedy



BEECRAIGS COUNTRY PARK FESTIVE FOREST

Beechraigs Country Park Festive Forest, now firmly established as a "must" for thousands of families at Christmas, is returning even brighter and bolder in December, with every ingredient needed to make a special time of the year even more special.

Expect a spectacular illumination trail through stunning woodland featuring state-of-the-art lighting, amazing visual installations, and dazzling projections - an experience made even more special by a sound track laid down by one of the top specialists in the UK.

This winter's event near Linlithgow will again feature the longest light tunnel in Scotland, at 75 metres, and, as a centrepiece, a Santa's Grotto that has everything to enchant the little - and not so little! - visitors.

Last year 6,500 entered the Grotto to meet Santa and his elves, receive a gift, and be engrossed by a wonderful Storytelling Experience - not forgetting to post their Christmas wish list in the North Pole post box.

Next door you will find Santa's village, with market stalls selling delicious Scottish street food, drink, festive treats and novelties.

Adjacent to all this there will be a children's funfair, featuring a traditional helter skelter, crazy elf cars, a mini Polar Express, candy cane bungees, and a silent disco run by Radio Forth.

Roy Snedden, from organisers Rowen Events, said Cala Homes would have their live stage featuring fantastic local talent, with DJs, vocalists, musicians, choirs, and carol singers. In addition, the whole area would be given a real fun feel, with street performers featuring fire acts, stilt walkers, jugglers and magicians.

His fellow director, Ewen McMartin, said that they had wanted to ensure elements of surprise along the length of the trail.

"There will be some favourite festive movie characters hiding in the forest, we'll have 12 secret "Elfies" to have photographs taken with, a magical Festive Fairy house hunt.....and lots more!"

Said Roy, *"Last year we attracted 25,000 visitors, and our hope, and expectation, is that we will top that this year. Ticket sales are already going well for the event, which starts on December 2 and runs till 23 December. Tickets can be ordered on beecraigsfestiveforest.com"*

Both Roy and Ewen added that they were grateful to Alan Steel Asset Management of Linlithgow for again sponsoring the Festive Forest in continuation of the generosity of their late founder Alan Steel.

Order your tickets at www.beecraigsfestiveforest.com

2ND - 23RD DECEMBER 2022

This winter, Beechraigs Country Park, West Lothian will once again be transformed into a magical Christmas wonderland, creating a unique, mesmerising winter experience for all the family.

THIS YEARS BEECRAIGS FESTIVE FOREST RETURNS BRIGHTER AND BOLDER THAN BEFORE FEATURING...

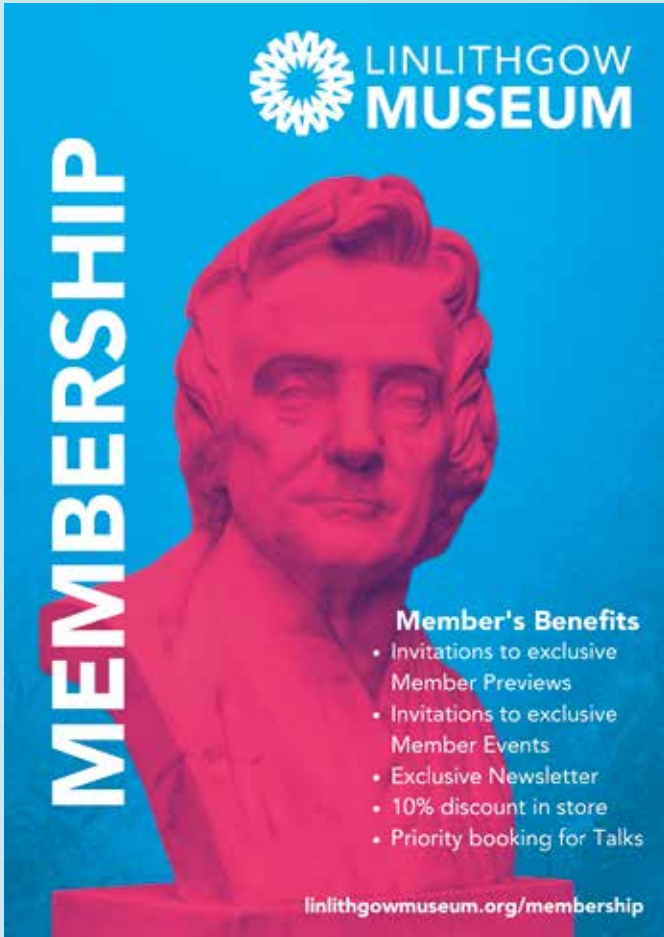
- * A spectacular 1.8km night time illumination trail of stunning woodland featuring state of the art lighting design, installations, projections and sound by one of the UKs leading production companies
- * Santa's Grotto and Storytelling Experience with his cheeky Elves, toys, sweets and North Pole post box
- * Traditional Christmas market stalls selling delicious festive street food and drink
- * Traditional Christmas market village selling festive sweets, treats and novelties
- * Childrens funfair rides featuring Carousel, Helter Skelter, Candy Cane Bungees and Crazy Elf cars
- * Radio Forth Silent Disco
- * Cala Homes Live stage featuring lots of local talent - DJ, musicians, singers, choirs and carol singers
- * Our amazing Festive street performers featuring fire acts, stilt walkers and jugglers
- * Your favourite festive movie characters hiding in the forest
- * Our 12 secret s'Elfies



For more event information, buying tickets and details on how to get involved please visit our website.

WWW.BEECRAIGSFESTIVEFOREST.COM

ROWEN EVENTS



Summer thank you

We'd like to start by saying thank you to all the visitors who visited during the extended summer opening. We hope you enjoyed the activities and crafts that were going on in the galleries and community space. The explorer packs went down well, and we hope that children enjoyed the activities and that it gave some holiday ideas for parents and carers.

After a busy summer, it's going to be an even busier autumn! Although the museum will revert back to Friday to Sunday opening, we have a lot going on that we hope you will enjoy.

Bottles and Antiques

Firstly, something a bit different for the town - an autumn bottle show and car boot. Taking place on the 24th September at the Queen Margaret Hall, from 8.30am till 1.00pm, this is the first time this event has been held in Linlithgow. Dealers from all over Scotland and the north of England will be buying and selling ginger beer bottles, butter crocks, cream pots, black glass and all manner of advertising paraphernalia. Running alongside will be a car boot sale from 8am till 12 noon. This event will come hot on the heels of our usual autumn "Antique, Vintage and Collectors Fayre," in the same venue on September 10th from 9am till 4pm.

Places of Science project

The museum is excited to be awarded The Royal Society "Places of Science" funding. This funding supports museums to engage local communities through their heritage and science collections. Working with our project partners at Heriot-Watt University, we will deliver activities which explore the museum's science collections and current cutting-edge scientific research. Participants will be taken on a journey from local historical discoveries to present day developments. Activities will include talks, family workshops and an exhibition. Watch our website for details.

To boldly go: James Doohan Exhibition

Coming in September is our exhibition linked to Linlithgow's future heritage. We invite you to explore the life of actor James Doohan who played Scotty in "Star Trek: The Original Series". Celebrate the future birth of Montgomery Scott, Chief Engineer on the USS Enterprise, which will happen in Linlithgow in 2222. See objects relating to Star Trek, science and the actor himself. Opens mid-September; keep an eye on our social media.

"Year of Stories" project and our talks series

Later this year, we will be launching

'Listening to Linlithgow' in partnership with Museum Galleries Scotland to celebrate the Year of Stories. This is a chance to share your stories and memories about pubs, sports and the Union Canal and become part of Linlithgow History. Your story may also feature in future exhibitions. Watch our Facebook page for updates. We have some great things planned.

Our popular talks series will also kick back off in September, so keep an eye on our Social Media and website for more details. Plans are still being made, but we hope to be holding these in person again, with perhaps an option still to login remotely for those who prefer. We are looking forward to sharing some good tales and, as always, some good biscuits.

Membership

If all this whets your appetite, then you might be interested to hear that we're relaunching our membership scheme.

By becoming a member, you help us to care for the collection housed in Linlithgow Museum, and the history, treasures, memories, traditions, and stories of the Royal & Ancient Burgh of Linlithgow.

Your generosity plays a valuable part in securing the future of the museum for the benefit of the town and surrounding communities.

Membership costs as little as £10 per year and comes with some amazing benefits, including:

- > Invitations to exclusive member previews
- > Invitations to exclusive member events
- > Exclusive newsletter
- > 10% discount in store
- > Priority booking for talks



If you'd like to become a member, then head to our website for more information @ www.linlithgowmuseum.org/membership.

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JAZZERCISE LINLITHGOW - FITNESS AND FUN!!



It's hard to believe that we have been Jazzercising in Linlithgow for one whole year now - and we're going from strength to strength, quite literally!! My name is **Karen MacLennan** and I am your local Jazzercise Instructor. I took my first Jazzercise class in 2002, in Banchory, Aberdeenshire. I was introduced by a friend, 4 months pregnant at the time with my second child, very uncoordinated and probably very unfit. From that first class I was hooked! The music, the moves, and the welcoming community vibe,.... no one seemed to mind if I went the

wrong way or made a wrong move - accidental solos we call them - everyone was just having the best time. Fast forward 2 years, I trained as an instructor and have been teaching Jazzercise ever since.

I moved from Aberdeenshire to Linlithgow in November 2020 during the pandemic. In late August 2021, when restrictions were lifted and I was allowed to teach in-person classes again, I started Jazzercise Linlithgow. Over the last year we have created a great community of local people, all ages and fitness levels from teenagers and students to mums and retired ladies. My customers always inspire me with their dedication and commitment to fitness and to one another, so many new friendships have been formed. As we know, exercise is so much more than just "getting fit". Many of my customers comment on how they have made new friends, have widened their social circle, have improved their coordination and flexibility, as well as their mental health and wellbeing, by having a little "me-time" to get out of the house, dance, get stronger and feel better about themselves overall.

Jazzercise is a franchise from the US and has been going strong since 1969. A dance party workout that fuses

cardio, resistance training, Pilates, yoga, kickboxing in one 55-minute session, you can expect to burn up to 800 calories while having the most fun ever! With constantly changing moves, new music, a variety of workouts and calorie-crushing intensity, customers can expect to feel results after three classes and expect to stick with it. Our Lo-impact offering means that we appeal to all ages and levels of fitness, from beginners and those who've never taken a class before to fitness enthusiasts who want to try something new - Jazzercise is a challenging and fun workout.

Jazzercise Linlithgow runs 5 classes a week at Queen Margaret Hall and Longcroft Hall. We offer morning and evening classes with high-impact and low-impact moves suitable for all levels of fitness. Why not come along, join the dance party and start your fitness journey with Jazzercise today?! Check out our full class schedule and booking at <https://jazzerciselinlithgow.punchpass.com/> Or via Facebook/ Instagram @jazzerciselinlithgow.



Karen MacLennan
Jazzercise Linlithgow

SAT
17
SEP
10:00-16:00

BEECRAIGS COUNTRY PARK SUMMER ENERGY EVENT

Featuring Home Energy Scotland, Linlithgow Community Development Trust, West Lothian Council Ranger Service and 1st Step.

Join us at this free event to learn about sustainable travel, energy efficiency and nature conservation.



Home Energy Scotland: Participate in free ebike trials, learn about energy saving tips and be in with a chance of winning a £100 voucher in a free prize draw!

Linlithgow Community Development Trust: Advice around renewable technologies, learn about home visits (including thermal imagery), e-bike trials and access information about upcoming Linlithgow-Go-Solar project, as well as the community tool library and community hub events.

West Lothian Rangers: Scottish Outdoor Access Code information boards, nature resources and a game for kids.

1st Step FREE Dr Bikes Workshop: A skilled bike mechanic will be on-site to provide on-the-spot bike checks and minor repairs. Most minor problems can be fixed on the day, including part replacements, however we can also offer advice for further repairs where needed.





THE WJM LINLITHGOW 10K AND JUNIOR FUN RUN

The WJM Linlithgow 10k and junior fun run will return to the town on Sunday the 25th of September. This event is organised by Linlithgow Athletic Club and is expected to sell out again this year.

Approximately 400 runners from outside Linlithgow will journey to the town, where they will join 600 locals. Some runners will journey from Aberdeenshire and even England to participate this year. The event is always a great advert for the town, as well as providing additional custom for local businesses on a quiet Sunday afternoon.

Temporary road closures are necessary to allow the event to proceed safely, and the organising committee appreciate the patience of residents (more details of traffic restrictions below).

As with previous years, the adult's race will be followed by the 2-kilometre Junior Fun Run. These twin events transform the town: bringing a buzz of energy and celebration. Once again, Historic Environment Scotland (HES) have been accommodating, allowing both events to reach their finish line in the dramatic setting of the palace peel.

The event organisers are also grateful for the support of West Lothian Council, and headline sponsors: Wright, Johnston and MacKenzie LLP, Express Micro Science and Tesco.

Linlithgow Athletic Club is a registered charity and raises a modest amount of money from this event. The proceeds are used to help fund the work the club does - promoting and providing opportunities for athletics in our community. No individuals from the club gain financially in any way from the event.

The History

The adult's race has been in existence since 1992. Linlithgow 10k is always an interesting route: undulating and scenic - from town centre, to farmland, and back again. The early years involved a slightly different course, starting at the Swan Tavern, and finishing at The Cross. The fastest times ever recorded were on this 'old' route... lending credence to the suggestion that it may have been slightly on the short side.



The course now holds a certificate of course accuracy so it's bang on 10K!

The number of runners has fluctuated over the years. During the 1990s, entry numbers were relatively low: just 217 runners in 1998. This picked up to around 500-600 runners in the early 2000s and has been getting bigger and better ever since. Much of this success was due to the dedication and drive of the late Graeme 'Spikey' Lawson, who served as Race Director for most of this period but sadly passed away in 2020.

The finish line shifted to the peel in 1998, a move which proved popular with runners. This also allowed the event to grow, providing space for finishers to congregate and congratulate each other. During three consecutive years (2002, '03 and '04) the fastest time was exactly the same! (32mins and 10 seconds).

There was huge disappointment in 2011 when the club could not contend with delays and uncertainty over costs, leading to cancellation of the event. Aside from 2011, the only other missed year was 2020 (coronavirus). This year will therefore be the 29th running of the Linlithgow 10k.

The junior race was created a few years after the 10k, and is 2 kilometres in distance. This is well within the capabilities of most, but long enough to make it feel like an achievement. Previous winners include Alister Marshall and Andrew McGill, who now represent Scotland in cross-country and on the athletics track.

Tempted to take up the challenge?

This year's event is expected to be a sell-out, with entries to the 10k race closing at 23:00 on 3rd September. Depending

on when you read this article, you may find entries are still available at www.entrycentral.com. The adult race costs £24, and is open to all those aged 16 years and over.

The junior fun run is £5 and entries for this will close on 18th Sept (also available at the [entrycentral](http://www.entrycentral.com) website).

The 10k race will have official pacers, running from 40mins to 65mins. So, if you fancy setting a new personal best, these experienced runners will lead you to the finish line on time. The 10k has always been an inclusive event, attracting a wide range of runners. Everyone is welcome - as long as you can complete within 1 hour and 40 minutes (when the finish area needs to be dismantled).

WJM 10K is a Scottish Athletics sanctioned event, and we have a variety of prizes on offer ranging from seniors, V40, V50 and V60 male and female and the junior fun run.

Each year, some budding runners will use the 10k as a springboard - towards becoming more committed to their running. If this sounds like you, then perhaps consider coming for a social run with Linlithgow Athletic Club? or joining in with our Jog Scotland group: Let's Go Linlithgow? Details of how to get involved can be found at www.linlithgowathletics.org (did you know: the club now has approximately 140 senior members).

Detail of expected road closures

Residents can expect the following:

>> **Mill Road (B8029)** - closed between A706 (Mains Rd) and A803 (Main St) - between 14:00 and 15:15

>> **St Ninian's Rd (A706)** - closed between A803 (High St) and B8029 (Mill Rd) - between 14:00 and 17:00*

>> **Bonnyton Rd** - closed between 14:00 and 17:30*

>> **High Street (A803)** - closed between Blackness Road and St Ninian's Road - between 14:15 and 14:45

*Note - these times are the maximum periods of restriction. The organisers hope that the actual period of closure will be less than this stated maximum. Please always follow the advice of marshals on the day.

Linlithgow Athletic Club

RUGBY CLUB CHOIR RISES FROM THE ASHES OF THE PANDEMIC AND PREPARES TO SING AGAIN

One of the most difficult questions that members of the choir are asked is "What is your favourite song?"

The reason being that we have such a wide range to choose from.

Over the years we have managed to master some choral classics like Morte Criste and the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah. We have enjoyed singing songs from the musicals including I Dreamed a Dream from Les Misérables and The Impossible Dream from Man of La Mancha as well as picking up some golden oldies from the back catalogues of the Beatles, Simon and Garfunkel and The Hollies.

wherever they may be. Already we have plans for concerts later this year and into 2023 which will include us singing with a world-famous Welsh choir and possibly hosting a community choir from Denmark.

"In the past we have spread our international wings and have travelled to a number of overseas events which have included reciprocal visits to our good friends in Langon in France, choral festivals in Ireland, Belgium and Holland as well as tours to China and Canada.

"When we think of quality venues, we have sung twice in London's Royal Albert Hall in support of Cancer Research and

needed finances for the national children's hospice group, CHAS. In the past we have supported St Michael's Hospital by entertaining their patients and by raising funds through a joint Christmas concert.



One other person who has been frustrated by the long break caused by the pandemic has been our musical director **Jim McGuigan** who said: "After such a long time without a live public performance I am sure that the members of our choir are keen to return to our regular practice sessions and get back on stage.

"For me, one of the major pleasures is seeing our members undertake a new piece of music, spend the time learning their individual parts and then coming together to build the piece to a standard that will entertain our knowledgeable and appreciative audiences.

"From the start of our new season we will be working on a group of songs which, hopefully, will form the basis of our next few concerts. That in itself can be a challenge as there has to be a balance of musical styles and tempo. Fortunately, we have a comprehensive range of music which allows me and our accompanist, Pamela Amattler to pick and mix a selection of tunes until we achieve the desired balance.

"As Peter pointed out, we would be delighted to welcome and support any local singers into our friendly club. If you are new to Linlithgow then we offer a great way of meeting like-minded people in a comfortable atmosphere. Give it a try and come along to our open night at the Rugby Club on September 12."

If you would like to know more about the Choir, please feel free to contact:

Peter Russell (07812 575717) or Gerry McLean (07722 107067)

or visit our Website and Facebook pages:

www.linlithgowrfcmalevoicechoir.co.uk

www.facebook.com/linlithgowrfcmalevoicechoir/



After what seems like an age, Linlithgow RFC Male Voice Choir is about to restart normal rehearsals now that we believe the worst of the covid epidemic is over. As you will appreciate, we have not been idle in the last two years and are preparing to pick up somewhere close to where we left off.

also in Edinburgh's Usher Hall. Each time well supported by our travelling fans, also known as our wives and families. Because this is one of the social sides of the choir. It's not just the members turning up on a Monday evening to practise, it's our families getting to know each other and enjoying the social interaction.

"As we are planning to continue with our programme both at home and abroad, we are looking to grow our numbers to be confident that we can fulfil these commitments. To that end we are planning to have an open evening in Linlithgow Rugby Club at 7.30pm on Monday September 12.

"So, if you like singing and feel you could join our group, we would love to see you and promise that you will be made most welcome. There is no official audition. Our existing members will be only too pleased to give you advice and all the support you would need to be part of the choir."

The choir has an enviable reputation locally for supporting good causes and charities as well as providing much



Our chairman, **Peter Russell** explained: "Our members are keen to once again take to the stage and entertain audiences





OPEN EVENING INVITATION

**If you enjoy singing,
supporting good causes
and great company...**

Come and join us!

Linlithgow RFC Male Voice Choir

(We're a friendly bunch & no audition is required!)

OPEN EVENING

Monday 12th, September, 7:30pm
Linlithgow Rugby Club
Mains Road, Linlithgow

Contact us:

Peter Russell: 07812 575717

Gerry McLean: 07722 107067

www.linlithgowrfcmalevoicechoir.co.uk

www.facebook.com/linlithgowrfcmalevoicechoir



ANATOMY: A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

Bruce Jamieson

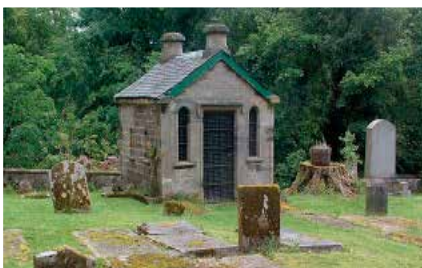
An exhibition entitled “Anatomy: a Matter of Life and Death” is presently on at the National Museum of Scotland. It is a fascinating look at the history of anatomical study, and it put me in mind of several local stories concerning the supply of bodies for anatomical purposes.

On top of the entrance to the Livingston tomb in St Michael’s Kirkyard is a metal, coffin shaped object.



The Mortsafe in St Michael’s Graveyard.

The object is a mortsafe - used to prevent robbers from digging up a newly buried body. When it was placed over a burial, a heavy iron collar was put around it, through which strong spikes were driven into the ground. It bears the letters LMS, standing for “Linlithgow Mortsafe Society” - an organisation set up in February 1819. The members of this group could hire out the mortsafe to cover a relative’s grave, as long as they took their turn keeping watch over the graveyard at night. To make their task easier, a watchman’s hut was erected against the south wall of the churchyard



The grave-watchers’ hut in Cadder Churchyard, Bishopriggs.

within which a watch of three men was appointed to keep guard for seven nights following an interment, in order to prevent any “nocturnal activities”.

Grave-robbing was a problem throughout Lowland Scotland in the early 19th century. The existing law stated that the only bodies legally available to be dissected by medical students were the corpses of hanged criminals - and there were never enough of those. Other sources of cadavers had to be found and so desperate were the medical schools that few questions were asked when unscrupulous men turned up with the required goods - usually disinterred from recently dug graves.

The first recorded instance of grave-robbing in Linlithgow was in 1818 when two “Resurrectionists” were spotted making their way from St Michael’s Kirkyard across the Peel. They carried with them the recently buried body of **Benjamin Jamieson** and before they could be apprehended, they loaded it on to a cart at the Duke’s Entry and made off.

In March 1823, another grave-robbing incident took place when a cart travelling along Linlithgow High Street was intercepted and examined. It had been followed from Polmont by a **Mr Scott of Gilston Farm** who had been herding sheep when he saw two men remove objects from a “midden” at the rear of Parkside Cottages (later called Resurrection Row!) As he watched, the items were loaded onto an open wagon and to Mr Scott’s horror he saw that they were shrouded corpses. He ran for his horse, and, pursuing the cart, rode bare-saddle to Linlithgow where he alerted the townspeople. A group of Linlithgow locals intervened - as a ballad written at the time reported.



The broadsheet entitled “Seizure Extraordinary”, published by R. Taylor of Falkirk in 1823.

“*Brave Scott! who wins the words of praise,
Pursues the ruffians through their ways,
Nor stops until he overtakes,
And lo! demands he boldly makes,
“Where is your warrant?
My warrant’s here;”
Secures his horse, the Crowd then cheer,
And while they send for legal measures,
Some near espy the Monsters’ treasures:
Three naked corpses: Shocking sight!
Indignant feelings burst outright,
And, without warrant, judge or jury,
Did beat and bruise them in their fury.”*

The robbers were duly apprehended, and the grim contents of the cart fully revealed-as the naked bodies of a child and two women, one of whom was **Janet Moir** who had been buried in Larbert Churchyard two days previously.

While the robbers were marched off to the Burgh Halls jail, and the cart set ablaze, Mr Scott was carried shoulder high to the West Port where, in a hostelry there he was feted with praise - and alcohol.



The West Port hostleries in the 19th century.

The body of Janet Moir was reinterred in Larbert Churchyard and shortly afterwards the trial of one of the body snatchers took place.



Larbert Old Parish Kirkyard where Janet Moir was reburied.

One of the resurrectionists had such a record of similar nefarious activities

that the book was thrown at him - as recorded in a contemporary report which begins:

“On Monday the 2nd June, 1823, at Edinburgh, before the High Court of Justiciary, the trial of THOMAS STEVENSON, alias THOMAS HODGE who pled Not Guilty.

Several witnesses were brought forward whose evidence clearly brought home the offence charged. The Jury found the accused Guilty of the Crime. Lawyer, Mr Wilson, in extenuation of punishment, requested the Court to take into consideration the time which the prisoner had already been confined, and also his ill treatment by the populace of Linlithgow.”

The judge, **Lord Pitmilley**, reprimanded the Linlithgow mob saying that it was not for them to take the law into their own hands but went on to say that the repeated offence was so grave that the full punishment of the law was required. Stevenson was sentenced to transportation to Australia for seven years.



Convicts like Stevenson were transported on a 12-week voyage in the most awful conditions.

I used to ask those attending one of my ghost walks “Who are the most famous grave-robbers in history?” The usual reply I received was “Burke and Hare” – but of course there is no evidence that these two gentlemen ever obtained their bodies by stealing from graves. They murdered their victims – although they may have got inspiration for their deeds while working as navvies on the Union Canal and hearing tales of how extra cash could be obtained from selling bodies to the medical profession.

When they were found out, William Hare confessed and said that although he had helped carry the bodies and sell them, it was William Burke who had done the killing. He was hanged in Edinburgh in January 1829. To make the punishment fit the crime, his body was then dissected and bits of him sold off. Burke’s death mask and his preserved skeleton form part of the exhibition at the Chambers Street Museum until the end of October.

Burke’s skeleton – along with a bookbinding made from his skin.





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WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO BURY YOUR TREASURES THIS AUTUMN?

Lesley always refers to spring flowering bulbs like crocus, daffodils and tulips as 'buried treasure'. You bury them in September and then in the spring up pop your little treasures to delight and surprise you with their flowers!

Lesley has a large bed full of picking flowers in the potager and this display of tulips was planted five years ago and reliably reappears each spring. The great thing about the picking bed is it isn't part of the garden display so we can pick as much as we like without spoiling the displays in our borders. 'life' back now!



Tulips in the picking garden

Many varieties of tulip don't reliably flower again year after year but there are some tall ones that are great for picking and come back every year. The orange Ballerina is very striking, also try the green/white Spring Green, the purple Queen of the Night and Black Parrot with feathery edges to the dark petals, only showing green buds in the main picture.



Tulip ballerina in vase

If you are going to bury your bulbs in a border why not try some Spring flowering bulbs to brighten up the border before later plants take over the starring role. Here in the St John's Avenue bed tulips Spring Green and Queen of the Night are taking over from the Winter Flowering Heather before the Catmint

stars. There is a good late white daffodil performing as well, all providing nectar and pollen for wildlife visitors.



Bulbs in St John's Avenue bed

You can't beat the surprise of your buried treasure performing in pots on your patio or on the steps to the front door for every visitor to enjoy. Use a container compost and plant in different layers with the biggest bulbs lowest down. Here we have an early white Chionodoxa, Pink Hyacinths performing now, white Daffodil Thalia coming along and a pink Tulip to come later. Move your pots around as the flowers fade and new treasures appear in another pot.



Tulip pots on steps & Recipe of bulbs

Where are you going to bury your choice of Treasures this autumn?



Dougal Philip and Lesley Watson
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AUTUMN IS NATURE'S TIME FOR PLANTING AND BURYING NEXT SPRING'S TREASURES
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CAN YOU SPOT THE DIFFERENCE?

Q: Can you spot the difference between a non-cancerous lesion, precancerous lesion and a cancerous lesion?

A: To be blunt, probably not unless you are an expert in the field of dermatology.

Skin Happy is an advocate of sun safety, raising awareness on how to prevent and spot skin cancer.

I get a lot of clients asking me to take a quick look or to give them a second opinion on all sorts of skin lesions, from flat, raised, rough and itchy lesions to weird and wonderful coloured marks, lumps and bumps.

Just to clarify: 'A skin lesion is a part of the skin that has an abnormal growth or appearance compared to the skin around it.' (Referenced from healthline.com)

Skin Happy Screening Service

To establish if your moles or skin lesions are OK or not, I teamed up with Screen Cancer UK to provide a mole and skin lesion screening service. I conduct a brief consultation and take images using their dermatoscope I then send this digitally using their secure system. Their dermatology specialists analyse the images and report the results directly back to you in a matter of 3-4 working days. Its quick, easy, completely pain free and gives you peace of mind.



Above: In clinic image of me carrying out a screening on a gentleman.

Top image: Types of cancer image.



Why should I be checking my skin lesions?

Simply put, prevention is better than cure! It is quite a worrying fact that since the early 1990s, according to Cancer Research UK, melanoma skin cancer incidence rates have more than doubled (140%) in the UK. Also 86% of melanoma skin cancers are preventable.

Prevention is better than cure

To enjoy the sun safely follow the five s's of sun safety:

- 1. SLIP on a t-shirt to keep shoulders covered as they can easily burn.
- 2. SLOP on a quality, broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF 30 or above) to exposed skin. (e.g Lynton Light Protect SPF 50 or Alumier SPF 40-42. Can be purchased within Skin Happy.)
- 3. SLAP on a wide brimmed hat to shade the face, neck and ears.
- 4. SLIDE on quality sunglasses to protect the eyes.
- 5. SHADE - seek shade when possible, particularly during peak UV hours (11am-3pm).

My advice is, get it checked!

- If your mole or skin lesion is not symmetrical, get it checked.
- If your mole or skin lesion has irregular, ragged or a blurred border to it, get it checked.
- If your mole or skin lesion has different colours or shades within it, such as brown, black, blue, white, or red, get it checked.
- If your mole or skin lesion has a diameter greater than 6mm, get it checked.
- If you notice that your mole or skin lesion is evolving, growing, or changing shape recently, get it checked.
- If your mole or skin lesion causes you any symptoms or sensations get it checked.

Signs and symptoms of cancer image

Abnormal

1. Asymmetry
2. Uneven borders
3. Color variation
4. Diameter (greater than 6 mm)
5. Evolving (change in size, shape and color)



Normal

1. Symmetry
2. Even borders
3. Color uniform
4. Diameter (smaller than 10 mm)
5. Normal

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SEVEN RETIREMENT QUESTIONS YOUR FINANCIAL ADVISER CAN HELP YOU ANSWER

With so much to think about, planning for your retirement can be a confusing time. Understanding the level of income you need, the best way to achieve it and how to make it last is not easy. However by seeking the help of a financial adviser you will be able to find answers to the most common questions and challenges you will face in retirement and ensure you have a financial plan in place to make the most of your retirement income.

Here are seven of the most common questions your financial adviser can help you to answer.

1

When can I afford to retire?

Your adviser can help you understand your current pensions and investments and how they can be used in the most efficient way to generate an income for you. You can also use the [online BR19 form](#) to get a state pension forecast.

2

How much income will I need in retirement?

How much income you need is not only dependant on your essential expenditure but also what kind of retirement you are hoping for. Whatever you want for your retirement, whether this includes travel, home improvements or spending more time doing the things you love, your adviser will be able to pull this together into a financial plan to help you arrive at a sustainable figure.

3

What assets should I draw down first?

Drawing down your assets in the most tax efficient way can save you money and make your income stretch further. If you have other assets such as ISAs, Collectives or shares, your adviser can help determine the most tax efficient way to draw your income. Even if your only asset is your pension, you may be able to benefit from phasing your withdrawals to save tax.

4

How should I invest?

Financial planning starts not with 'which fund?' but with 'what's my objective?' Your adviser will help you be clear about what you want from your money and when. Then they'll discuss how much investment risk you can stomach and what that might mean in different market conditions. Only then will they talk about investments. For most people the right answer is a professionally managed diversified portfolio using many different holdings. Your adviser has access to a curated range of these to suit all different types of people.

5

What additional risks will I face?

Even if you are an experienced investor once you enter the decumulation phase (the process of converting pension savings to retirement income) you will be faced with additional risks.

The main risks:

- **Longevity** - how long you are likely to live and making sure you don't run out of money
- **Inflation** - ensuring your income retains its buying power
- **Market fluctuations** - minimising the impact on your pension savings.

Your adviser can help you to both understand and mitigate these risks.

6

How often should I review my plans?

Not only are your retirement needs likely to change over time due to your personal circumstances but the constantly changing environment we live in means it is important to review your plans at least annually to ensure they stay on track.

7

What are my other financial planning needs?

Your adviser will also be able to identify and discuss any other financial planning needs you may have such as long-term care or inheritance tax planning.



The value of pensions and investments can fall as well as rise and you can get back less than you invested.

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LINLITHGOW PARTIED LIKE IT WAS 2020

PARTY AT THE PALACE ///

This year's Party At The Palace was extra special because it was the first time our local festival happened since it was sadly cancelled due to the pandemic in 2020, and then again 2021. So no pressure on the artists to make an extra special event. Well, at the time of writing, the festival hasn't happened yet so I'm going out on a limb and guessing they didn't disappoint!

It doesn't seem like 8 years ago I enjoyed Deacon Blue & Simple Minds at the inaugural festival and since then it's gone from strength to strength. It's a family friendly festival, in a safe environment, at arguably one of the most picturesque locations for a festival in the world and we've seen some of Scotland's biggest musical exports play on our doorstep. **Travis, The Proclaimers, Texas, Amy Macdonald, KT Tunstall, and Wet Wet Wet** have all graced the Palace's main stage. I spoke to organiser John Richardson a couple of weeks prior to the festival and he informed me along with the Main Stage and the Purple Orange Stage was a new comedy stage, however this year was mostly about getting the event back on its feet. And the good news for new local bands was The Breakthrough Stage was still there giving them a platform.

Local Bands

"Showcasing as many local bands as we can has been a mainstay for the last few years. There is a bit of a natural progression between stages for local bands which is great to see. Both Luke La Volpe and Mark Sharp appeared on the Purple Orange Stage before progressing to the second stage and then on to the main stage."

It's great to see this sort of pathway existing for emerging bands and it certainly makes for a great festival when it's combined with the bigger acts too. John also gave me a rundown of the local acts who played this year:

"Christie Oliver, Echo Machine, Jennifer Ewan Band, Freya Nicoll all from in and around the town and lots more from just over the hill in Bathgate and Livingston. There is a real thriving scene in West Lothian spearheaded by Lewis Capaldi and The Snuts and PATP is a great place to discover the next big thing."

Stephanie Cheape

Talking of the next big thing pop singer/songwriter **Stephanie Cheape**, who was scheduled to play in 2020 & 2021, would be a fantastic addition to the 2023 line-up so I caught up with her esteemed manager, Linlithgow's very own power-promoter and nightclub

industry guru, Donald MacLeod.

"Stephanie has been writing with Richard Archer from Hard-Fi and is planning to release some new singles between now and Christmas under the new name 'Cheape'."

About the festival, Donald went on to say: *"It's great for the area, for local businesses and I'm glad to see the festival back especially because it gives*

emerging bands a chance to show what they can do to a big audience."



Stephanie played at the festival back in 2018 and her career has been steadily developing since Donald signed her and now with over 100k TikTok followers (@cheapeofficial) and featuring on George Bowie's (GBX) cover of 'Heroes' for the NHS, which reached #2 in the Apple Music charts, she could be a lot further up the bill in 2023. And this got me thinking... who else on the local front might potentially join her next year?.

Gary's Pick For PATP 2023... The Katuns

I'd definitely recommend The Katuns from Livingston. Fronted by a graduate of my very own school of rock, **Adam Frame**



is propelling his band to new heights all the time and they very recently played their first headline show at King Tuts in Glasgow. The Katuns, who recently signed with 7 West Management, have had support slots at Barrowlands, were recently played on BBC Introducing and have a new single coming soon called 'Comedown'. @thekatuns on socials.

Coda

Another emerging local act to keep an eye on, and whom I think would go down a storm at Party At The Palace, are West Lothian 5 piece Coda who formed during lockdown. Their melodic synth and guitar driven music is both anthemic and uplifting and they are fronted by vocalist and songwriter **Gordon Irvine**. Expect big choruses and wall-of-sound guitar! Find them on Facebook via #codabandscotland

Charley Bell

From Falkirk, S6 Braes High School student **Charley Bell** (17) has been wowing audiences with her fantastic voice singing soul, motown, country and pop classics across the central belt and has a regular booking at The Black Bitch in Linlithgow. Gigging every weekend since October 2021, she is working very hard and whilst no original material is on the table yet, it is something Charley is working on.

Special mentions go to two very young acts indeed who are still learning their trade but have enormous talent and if the 'Battle Of The Bands' is brought back to earn a spot at the festival I see no reason why these two couldn't give it a bash...

Ultra-Lex

Ultra-Lex are a very intriguing, funky blues-jazz 2 piece featuring Linlithgow Academy student **Nathan Campbell** (17) on guitar / drums; and **Stuart Jones** (25) on keyboard / drums. Nathan is one of my guitar students and if two instruments isn't enough he is also finding out how to record and produce music himself, learning music technology at home, at school and with me. Ultra-Lex traverse genres such as funk, jazz, rock and blues and went down a storm at their first gig at the Tally Ho in Winchburgh. I'll need to see them play live soon so I can decide if it's funky blues-jazz, or rocky jazz-blues...



Ben Goldfinch

Another one of my guitar students who also seems to be performing instruments other than guitar, is Lowport Primary student **Ben Goldfinch** (12) who recently played bass in a band alongside his school compadre's **Jake Sinicki** (drums, taught by **Martin Wardlaw**) and **Seb Price** (guitar, taught by **Colin Macintosh**). The trio played at their primary school leavers' ceremony and I was very lucky to see a video of the performance where they melted faces with an instrumental version of Nirvana's biggest single, Smells Like Teen Spirit. All the Party At The Palace artists had to start somewhere, they all played their first gig at one point and I hope Nathan and Ben can look to our local festival for inspiration and who knows, maybe set their sights on one day performing there.



Gary Clinton

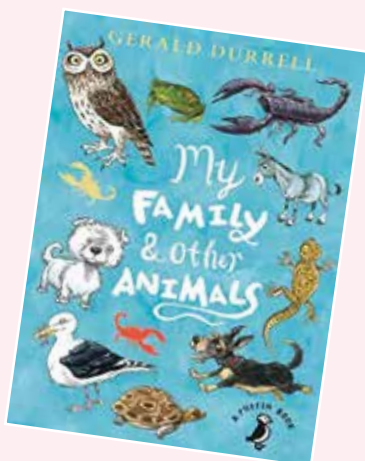


You can keep up to date with Gary's tuition business through social media
Twitter: @GaryGuitar4 Facebook: garyclintonguitartutor



MY FAMILY AND OTHER ANIMALS

GERALD DURRELL



This is a delightful, autobiographical tale of one boy's passion for natural history, paralleled only by his skill in observation of all creatures great and small. Durrell is a renowned British naturalist who spent some of his formative years living on the Greek island of Corfu with his family. Of writing this novel, some of his own reflections include that he had three key "ingredients"; namely the unspoiled Greek landscape, his flourishing new friendships that spanned generations and animal kingdom classifications, and the eccentric conduct of all members of his family.

"It's all your fault, Mother," said Larry austere; 'you shouldn't have brought us up to be so selfish.' 'I like that!' exclaimed Mother. 'I never did anything of the sort!' 'Well, we didn't get as selfish as this without some guidance,' said Larry."

The novel is written in a humorous and, in places, exaggerated way – one hopes! – providing excellent descriptions of the exotic creatures, interesting people, and beautiful vistas that Durrell encounters during his island adventures.

"For some time the Rose-beetle Man would turn up at the villa fairly regularly with some new addition to my menagerie: a frog, perhaps, or a sparrow with a broken leg. On one afternoon Mother and I, in a fit of extravagant sentimentalism, bought up his entire stock of rose-beetles and, when he had

left, let them all go in the garden."

This novel reads in some places like a love letter to Corfu as it speaks so warmly and enchantingly of the animals, environment and people. The readers can understand that he feels his childhood was magical and charmed, and has shaped the path of his future.

"Gradually the magic of the island settled over us as gently and clingingly as pollen. Each day had a tranquility, a timelessness, about it, so that you wished it would never end."

Durrell has a gift for ensuring that no word is wasted – each is a gem, poised, polished and perfectly placed to provide maximum meaning and sentiment for the imaginative senses of the reader.

"Roses dropped petals that seemed as big and smooth as saucers, flame-red, moon-white, glossy, and unwrinkled; marigolds like broods of shaggy suns stood watching their parent's progress through the sky. [...] The bougainvillea that sprawled luxuriously over the tiny front balcony was hung, as though for a carnival, with its lantern-shaped magenta flowers."

My Family and Other Animals is a highly entertaining and beautifully written novel that will appeal to readers of all ages, with plenty of laugh out loud moments. It contains just the right level of facts – admittedly some that lean more towards superstition and myth – balanced with keen observations about Durrell's family and friends that – while aching, acerbically honest – shine a spotlight on the love, trust and respect that underpins all in this unique family.

"I sighed rapturously. It was a wonderful story, and might well be true. Even if it wasn't true, it was the sort of thing that should happen."

Lisa Nettleton

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



THINKING OF VOLUNTEERING?

Whether you have a specific skill or want to learn something new; however much or little time you give, there is a role for you in your local DEBRA shop in the Regent Centre, Blackness Road, Linlithgow.

If you are passionate about helping to make a difference through giving your time, then why not get in touch?

Who are DEBRA?

DEBRA is the national charity that supports people living with the painful genetic skin condition Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB). We fund vital community support, specialist healthcare and pioneering research into treatments and a cure/s.

People with EB have a faulty gene, meaning the skin cannot bind together. This causes the skin to tear and blister at the slightest touch and for this reason it is sometimes called 'butterfly skin'. EB can also affect internal linings and organs, and in the worst cases, can be fatal.

How you can help

The role will involve serving customers and using the computerised till to take payments for purchases, sorting donated stock, using a steaming appliance on donated clothes, and assisting the shop manager with any other task to keep the shop running efficiently.

If you are interested in getting involved, then simply pop into the shop for an informal chat, contact us on 01506 340314, or email volunteering@debra.org.uk, to book in for a taster session.

Also find out more at www.debra.org.uk



LADAS ALLOTMENT HARVEST CELEBRATION



Each year about this time we share what we have been growing on our plot and enjoy a communal BBQ lunch. For the last two years because of COVID restrictions this has been suspended. It was so rewarding to once again meet face-to-face at the end of July, welcoming some new ploholders as well as some of our long-time members, and their children. There were light-hearted competitions from the most unusual shaped vegetable to the pick of the plot and baking, or similar, using produce grown at Oakwell. Once again, the selection of produce was outstanding.

Mulching

In the last edition I wrote about spreading compost over your plot or garden to contribute to producing healthy soil. This practice is called mulching and is very beneficial for allotments and gardens. I mentioned covering with compost but other types of mulch that break down (biodegradable), and contribute to improving the health of the soil, are well-rotted manure, leaf mould (decomposed leaves), seaweed and wood chips. Wood chips are best used when rotted down before putting directly around plants as they can take nitrogen away from the plants as the chips decompose. Adding mulch, for example compost that is well-rotted, can be done before planting fruit, vegetables or flowers to provide an excellent growing medium for plants, and at other times. Mulching reduces water being lost from the surface of the soil, reduces the need to water plants and so saves water. It suppresses weed growth, particularly of annual weeds. Depending on the mulch you use, there is an improvement in soil structure and health because of the nutrients that are put back into the soil. Mulching saves time because of less time needed to water and weed but also it can save money because

of less spent on feeding. Mulch can also protect plants in colder weather as mulch keeps the soil warmer, and in hot weather mulch creates cooler conditions. A useful tip when using biodegradable mulch is to put on a thick enough layer (ideally 75mm/3" thick). A thick layer suppresses weeds better and reduces water loss more effectively. (Fresh wood chips are very useful for paths to suppress weeds.)

The other type of mulch is one that does not break down, for example a membrane that is used to suppress weeds on uncultivated areas. This also reduces watering and warms up the soil in advance of sowing or planting.

If you want to know more about mulching here are two websites for information:

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/soil-composts-mulches/mulch>

<https://diygarden.co.uk/gardening/ultimate-guide-to-mulching>

Watering

The dry, hot weather we have been having can be a problem for garden plants. Keeping them hydrated is important. I have mentioned the use of mulch to retain and reduce water needs. Here are some other tips to reduce wastage, improve the ease of watering and help to boost plant health:

>> Water the base of the plant with a watering can with a rose. Watering close to the soil maximises the spread of water.

>> Water in the morning and evening when it's coolest to reduce water lost to evaporation.

>> Prioritise those plants you water. Browning grass will recover even without water. Grass is hardy. Anything planted in the last year will be more vulnerable and so will need watering. Well-established plants need less attention.

What to do in your fruit and vegetable garden in August

The warm dry weather we have been having has hastened the maturity of crops and harvesting crops will be the main task this month. Some crops can be sown to overwinter. There will also be some pruning to do.

>> Harvest sweetcorn, garlic, onions, shallots, beetroot, celery, french beans, runner beans.

>> Second early potatoes will be ready for lifting this month.

>> Begin lifting maincrop potatoes later this month and into September.

>> Sow spring cabbages for overwintering either in pots or in the ground in the second week of August.

>> Plant brassicas for autumn use or overwintering, such as winter cauliflowers and kale, where peas and beans have been cleared.

>> Begin to earth up strong growing leeks this month to give long white stems.

>> Cut down to ground level the stems of fruited summer raspberries which have borne fruit this year. They will look brown and will show signs of having carried fruit. Leave this year's fresh green shoots, which will fruit next year.

>> Consider growing green manure in bare soil as crops are cleared from beds. Green manure sown now is easy to grow and provides plenty of organic matter when cut down before flowering. This adds organic matter and nutrients to the soil. Here is a website about green manure that you may find helpful. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/soil-composts-mulches/green-manures>

Val Corry,
Chair LADAS



BLACK BITCH PUB NAME – THE FIGHT CONTINUES

The fight to retain the name of Linlithgow's iconic Black Bitch pub continues and campaigners are pledging to redouble their efforts in the coming months.

At the end of November, the pub's owners, brewing giant **Greene King**, who are based in Suffolk, announced that they would change the name of the pub as it was no



longer appropriate and could be construed as having racist connotations. This was despite the fact that the company had been more than happy to pay for expensive new signage at the pub in 2019, including the impressive gable end depiction of the Black Bitch emblem.

Greene King's announcement provoked a howl of protest, which led to a 12,000-strong petition against the move, as well as a series of rallies outside the pub and at the Cross and a high profile campaign in the press and on radio and TV.

Alistair Old emerged as the spokesman for the campaign and he made a memorable appearance on BBC Scotland's 'The Nine' programme, where he effectively demolished the brewers' plans. He argued strongly that the name is part of the historic fabric of the town, relates to an emblem which has been used locally since at least 1296, and has nothing to do with racism.

Greene King has now applied to West Lothian Council for planning permission for new signage, which would include the change of name and the matter was raised on July 6th at the Development Management Committee. Alistair Old took part in the online meeting, as did local Councillor, **Pauline Orr**. She told me:

"Both Alistair and I spoke to the committee, putting forward our objections and recommendation to reject the proposals made by Greene King."

A final decision has been postponed until Historic Environment Scotland (HES), which Alistair alluded to, confirms if the name is included in the listing of the building. It is C listed so confirmation of that is required.

I stated quite clearly that should WLC choose to favour this application, then they are advocating agreement that their Burgh Town is tarnished and that cannot be allowed.

The postponement is for 2/3 cycles to allow HES to respond - 1 cycle is a calendar month so that takes us to September/October.

All is not lost yet. The fight continues."

The strength of feeling in the town at what many people see as an attack on our history and traditions was illustrated graphically on Marches Day by members of the 41 Club, whose award-winning float depicted a black bitch chasing a green king, with the motto "The Black Bitch Bites Back". The vehicle had a tremendous response all along the procession route, with the loudest cheers being heard outside the Black Bitch pub.

Campaigners are making representations to Historic Environment Scotland and are calling on the senior management at Greene King to listen to the Linlithgow community and try to find a compromise which would suit all parties.

Murdoch Kennedy



SPRINGFIELD GOLF SOCIETY

In 1982 four friends got together and founded **Springfield Golf Society**. All four were friends who resided in Springfield Estate. They were **Frank Donnelly, Bill Thomson, Bobby Adair and George Mackellar**. These four made a decision to support the charity, **Children First**, and for the first few years made a few pounds each year by way of donation from the four founder members.

After a few years, more were invited to join. A Constitution was agreed and many golfing get-togethers were held over the years with more asked to join in the fun. The venue for the major competition became **Blairstown Golf Club**, and last year after an enforced break for Covid and this year the main competition will again be held there, early in September. **This is our 40th year and Alan Mitchell has the honour of being chosen as Captain by nomination from Frank Donnelly, the only founder member still involved in the Society.** Frank was captain at our 25th anniversary when all travelled to Spain together with many of our former members and three of the original founder members. Sadly, the missing one, namely



Left: George Mackellar, Bill Thomson, Bobby Adair and Frank Donnelly.

Below: Robert Thomson, first left with Bobby, Frank and George.

Bill Thomson, had passed away but was represented by one of his sons Robert.

Over the 40 years the sum raised by the group is now over £125,000, an amazing achievement for such a small group of golfers. It should be said that the ladies have contributed immensely to this sum in recent years when they set up a Ladies Section of the SGS.

Much of this money is raised from the proceeds of our annual golf Competition held at Linlithgow Golf Club when the support of the LGC committee and golfers is very much appreciated.

To the 2022 challenge... we aim to raise an amazing sum to donate to Children First this year, our 40th, and we seek your support by way of donation for our annual charity day competition or a general donation. Businesses or individuals are

very welcome. Each sponsor will be highlighted at the start of the day on October 1st.

If businesses wish to donate directly to Children First they can do so using Charity Number SC016092. Alternatively, email Mark Donnelly our Treasurer on mark.donnelly73@icloud.com

Today we remain a small group of 22 men this year and our ladies group of 21 members.

Thank you for reading this article and for your support.

Alan Mitchell and Frank Donnelly



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A TRIBUTE TO JOE LAVERY

On 14th July 2021 Joe Lavery passed away aged eighty-nine.

We are celebrating Joe's life through music on **Sunday 4th September at St Michaels Parish Church at 2pm. All who knew Joe are very welcome.**

Joe was a stalwart of the town's musical scene for nearly half a century. After twenty-three years as a military bandsman with the Royal Scots, Joe left the army in 1973 and moved to Linlithgow. He became a brass instrument instructor in West Lothian Schools. As well as serving as the bandmaster of the 152nd Lowland Volunteers Territorial Band, Joe was

the musical director for several amateur operatic and drama groups across West Lothian and was the leader of the Falkirk Orchestra.

Joe was the bandmaster of the Royal Burgh of Linlithgow Reed Band for nineteen years and proudly led the Marches procession every year. He was a kenspeckle figure at the head of the band at Linlithgow Gala Day, Bo'ness Fair, Edinburgh Festival Cavalcade, the Free Colliers' Walk and many other events throughout Scotland. He also took the local musicians to West Lothian's German twin district of Hochsauerlandkreis and really loved every minute of his time with the band. Over the years, Joe also guested as a percussionist with a number of other bands, including Bo'ness & Carriden and Kinneil.

Not content with band music, Joe was asked to set up a Male Voice Choir at the

Rugby club. Under Joe's guidance, the choir performed locally and internationally in China, Canada, France, and Belgium. He was also instrumental in setting up Linlithgow Ladies Choir.

As if that wasn't enough, he took his turn to play the organ at church (St Peter's) on a Sunday, provided music for the local Masonic Lodge and at local undertaker Bobby Bennie's funeral home. Joe would also play the accordion for the 'Old Folk' on the train and canal boat outings organised by the Rotary, as well as at local care homes and sheltered housing developments.

Please join the family to celebrate Joe's life.

Heather Laing
(Joe's daughter)

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SUNDAY LIVE : 21 Aug Linlithgow Folk Festival Association 2-5 pm Charley Bell Vocalist 5-7pm Live from Beer Garden, 28 Aug Pure Malt , 4 Sept Derek McNair, 26 Sept Pure Malt all from 5-8pm.

****Please keep up dated by visiting **Facebook 'The BB Tavern'.**

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Meet GroutGleam

Meet GroutGleam, your Local Grout refresh, recolour and restore professional...

WHO AM I?

I am Louis. A local Linlithgow boy who is passionate about exceeding customer expectations by delivering exceptional TILE makeovers.

I also play semi-pro football locally in the East of Scotland Football League for a West Lothian team, but that's another story for another day.

WHAT IS GroutGleam?

Basically, it is what it says on the tin; a TILE refresh, recolour and restore service.

REFRESH / RECOLOUR / RESTORE /

GROUT - THE PROBLEM

Tiled floors and walls can have their appearance ruined by unsightly grout lines. Grout is naturally porous and absorbs water, soap, urine, oil, body fats and the dirt from our shoes.

This results in discolouration and the formation of dirt, mould, mildew and an all-round grubby/tired look. Whilst you may be able to remove the visible surface mould, it is impossible to restore the original and natural colour/appearance of your grout.

That is, until now.....

WHY TRADITIONAL SOLUTIONS HAVE FAILED

Traditional methods are chemicals, scrubbing brushes and a ton of elbow grease resulting in temporary short-term results. The surface mould may have been temporarily dealt with, but the discolouration and the future problems have not, so the unsightliness remains and the culprit, will definitely re-offend in time.

HOW ABOUT RE-GROUTING?

Alternatively, you could use a tool, remove and replace with new grout whilst facing the hassle, the mess, the time and the expense not to mention the opportunity cost for those economists out there. This method is also fraught with many potential pitfalls and often turns into "the nightmare we wish we had never attempted" and the pressures that go with that. This often leads to abandoning the work and leads to a full and costly and time consuming re-tiling job, assuming you manage to source and then match to older, used tiles which is often problematic and time consuming.

GroutGleam RECOLOURING SOLUTION

GroutGleam has a range of 9 different coloured compounds. Our compounds chemically bond to the existing grout creating a uniform grout colour that not only looks great but also repels dirt, oil, soil, urine and other contaminants. This service is perfect for old, tired and permanently stained grout lines.

THE SERVICE

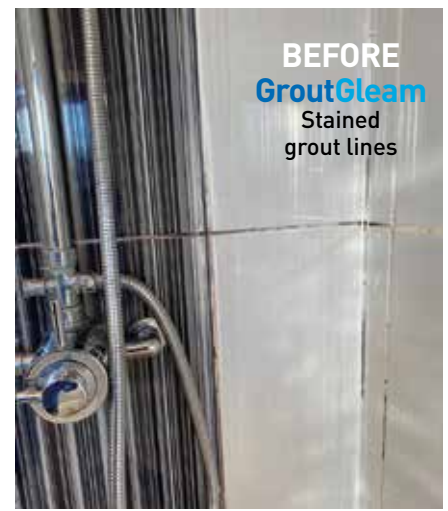
Instant results give a genuine 'wow' factor feeling. It's fast, mess free, everlasting and exceptionally affordable. This new service, introduced to the UK by GroutGleam in 2018, is becoming the new norm for grout rejuvenation.

DOMESTIC / COMMERCIAL APPLICATIONS

GroutGleam gives amazing results on any grout and/or tiled surface and is equally ideal for both domestic and commercial locations. Due to the speed and ease at which our Official Partners (Louis in centralbeltsotland) can perform the restoration, downtime in the area being restored is minimal and is often completed in hours rather than days. We can take on jobs both large and small and always price competitively.

SILICON REMOVAL / REPLACEMENT

This is normally the icing on the cake to finish off the tile grout renovation and all part of the final delivery (if needed).



BEFORE
GroutGleam
Stained
grout lines



AFTER
GroutGleam
A uniform
grout colour

Other GroutGleam Offerings:-

Shower Glass Restoration

Fast And Affordable
A typical shower screen can be restored and brought back to almost new condition. Restoration will normally take no more than an hour. Fast, affordable, no mess with little downtime.

Protective Coating

Fast and Affordable
Uniquely this permanent, non-stick, protective coating is the only all-in-one coating of its kind, working on all 3 substrates; glass, tile and grout.

Utilising state of the art nanotechnology, the coating is applied to a thoroughly cleaned and dried surface and is usually completed in around an hour for a typical wet area. It is fast and affordable.



GroutGleam
Louis Maguire
T: 07470 655 063

www.groutgleam.co.uk/centralbeltsotland



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Solar Energy

The rapidly rising cost of energy to heat and power our homes has increased the focus on greener or low cost ways to meet our domestic energy requirements, and previously on this page we have discussed air source heat pumps. In this article we look at solar energy.

In the past, electricity generated by solar panels on your roof had to be either used as it was generated or sold back to the grid. Of course peak generation often occurred during bright sunshine in the middle of the day, when your usage might be minimal, i.e, no one home and no need for the heating to be on.

There were incentives to sell electricity back to the grid, but new applications to the old (FIT), Feed In Tariff, closed in March 2019. You can now apply for a Smart Export Guarantee Tariff. Under this scheme all licenced energy providers with 150,000 customers or more are obliged to offer one of these tariffs where you can sell electricity to them.

However there is significant variation in the price offered by various companies to buy your excess electricity, presently from as little as 1.5 pence per KWH up to 7.5 pence per KWH. Some of these tariff prices offered

are dependent on you buying the electricity you need when you can't generate enough of your own solar power from that provider, others not, and of course it could be the case that those providers offering the best "buy back" rates per KWH are not offering the most competitive consumption rates.

Battery technology has advanced in recent years and several companies now offer solar panel systems with a battery that can store excess power generated by your solar panels for consumption when the panels are not generating enough power to meet your needs at that point in time.

Outdoor Living

Prices vary of course, but a typical installation for a detached property costs in the region of £10,000. A couple of proposals we have looked at from providers suggest a 10 to 12 year period to achieve payback on such an investment, based on the current price cap rate of 28.34 pence per KWH.

However, many industry experts are predicting a further significant increase in the price cap in September, which may mean a very marked reduction in the payback period. As we write this article, it is in the news that

Russia could be significantly reducing it's supply of gas to western Europe this autumn and winter, and whilst the United Kingdom is not particularly reliant on supplies of Russian gas, it is likely to cause rises in energy prices across the board as supply struggles to meet demand.

In the typical domestic installation, even with battery storage of solar generated power a household is very unlikely to be completely self sufficient when it comes to generating electricity to meet all it's needs. As you can imagine the Scottish climate means you would be generating more electricity when you least need it, on warm sunny summer days, and least when you need it most, on cold rainy autumn and winter days.

There is a lot to consider when looking at a solar electricity installation, the suitability of your home, which way does your roof or garden face, potential shading issues from trees and neighbouring properties, the robustness of the technology on offer, equipment guarantees, where can the battery be located in your home, which energy providers offer the best tariffs both for consumption and selling back to the grid and finally the long term predictions for energy prices going forward.

Ted's owner describes him as enthusiastic! Always happy to have new experiences or meet new people/dogs. He makes his owner smile constantly as there is nothing better than watching him having a great time running at full speed through grass meadows or charging about in the woodlands. Or when he gives other people cuddles and makes them happy too.

Ted absolutely loves running about at full speed, but he's also a huge fan of tearing into cardboard boxes to find treats. On walks, he will frequently be found trying to seek out mice (thankfully unsuccessfully!) Ted also loves bird watching - he's obsessed!

He earned himself the nickname Niffler (mystical animal from Harry Potter that steals shiny things) because he will steal absolutely anything, pens being a favourite, but he always gives himself away by the excited little run he does when he tries to run off with something!

He likes open spaces best, where he can run in circuits, then spends time exploring and sniffing, and will always admire the view. His owner said if we asked Ted his favourite place he would probably say it's in his human's bed. His favourite place to be is anywhere his human is!

He absolutely loves a ball, he'll happily spend ages with one in his mouth whilst practising his pouncing skills trying to jump on another one. He also adores playing with his tug-e-nuff toy when out on walks -

a little bit of tug, or simply charging round proudly with it pretending its prey he's caught!

Being a Whippet, Ted usually likes being nice and toasty, but the heatwave was a little hot for him, and his energy levels were far lower than usual. His owner ensured walks were very early in the morning before it got hot. He spends the rest of the day lazing around in front of the fan, enjoying some frozen lick mats, or having a paddle in his DIY paddling pool (made from an IKEA underbed storage box). A frozen lick mat of tinned salmon and cream cheese is his favourite combo. His Ruffwear swamp cooling neck gaiter is also super handy to help keep him cool.

For maximum cooling Ted discovered the tower fan, positioning himself right in front of it when he got too hot!

Over summer Ted and his owner are most looking forward most to exploring more of the Trossachs National Park together.

In warmer weather, particularly with the heatwave this summer, extra care should be taken to best protect pets. Unless you're able to walk in the early hours like Ted, dogs will cope without walks during a heatwave.

Giving your dog's brain a workout will tire them physically so don't worry about the extra energy they may have staying home. If you have a routine, use their usual walk time to play instead. Your dog's favourite thing is you - they do not miss out if you swap walks for interaction. Building engagement with play actually benefits focus for future walks.

Supply all pets additional water in warmer months, regularly cleaning water bowls/bottles. Keeping water out of direct sunlight reduces risks

and rates of bacteria growth.

Not all animals know to stay out of direct sunlight. Owners are responsible to be mindful of this. Use food and fun to encourage sun baskers to move to the shade or stay indoors with them.

Hutches, cages, tanks, runs etc should also be moved out of direct sunlight.

Water games are great for cooling and entertainment. If your pet doesn't have a pool no problem! - use a bowl, bucket. Raw carrot sinks in water making a fun healthy game whilst chopped apple or kibble floats - low cost and low-cal. Freezing treats like Ted also works well.

Pavement surfaces heat quickly and risk burning paws. Check if it's too hot to walk with 'the 5 second rule' - place the back of your hand on the ground, if you can't leave it there for 5 seconds it's too hot for paws. Grass, sand and particularly artificial grass heats up a lot more. Laying wet towels over garden surfaces makes them safer under paw for toilet trips.

Water activities should be supervised and monitored. Sea water puts pets in danger as the ingestion of salt can dehydrate. Fresh water also risks if too much ingested causing water intoxication - an emergency which can be fatal. Caution with open bodies of water for blue-green algae risks. Local area and council websites are a great source to check if an area is a risk or known algae location. Little and often drinking breaks are ideal.

If pets are safe and kept cool, ice cubes are ok, however if a pet is overheating or suffering heatstroke ice should be avoided - it's too cold



Hello I'M TED CLARKE.

and can risk shock. Never put wet towels on pets - this traps body heat between skin and towel making them hotter. Lying on a wet towel is a safer way to keep cool.

Seek Veterinary help immediately if you suspect your pet has heatstroke or water ingestion concerns - an emergency where time is vital to treatment.



If you have any concerns about your pet contact your vet ASAP.

For emergencies contact Westport Vet 01506 844165

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Paul Rolfe^{*}
LUXE