

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

FOLK FAE LITHGAE P11.



THE MARCHES 'SPECIAL'
STARTS P10.

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LINLITHGOW'S NEWS BY LINLITHGOW'S PEOPLE

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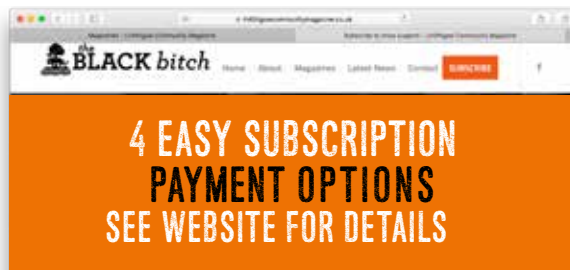
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This issue is our last before the annual celebration of Linlithgow's history and heritage when The Riding of the Marches takes place as always on the first Tuesday after the second Thursday in June – this year on the 13th of June.

Linlithgow's Black Bitches will of course know the story well but for those arrived more recently it can be a bit of a mystery – just what is it all about?

The place now known as Linlithgow has attracted residents since long before there were written records as evidenced by the crannogs on the loch and the dug-out canoe lying buried under what is now the Court Residence, on the High Street.

Linlithgow was granted a Royal Charter in 1389 which required its boundaries to be defined and, in those more unsettled times, defended and those defences checked regularly to ensure they were fit for purpose. In those days boundaries were "Marches" and were usually inspected on horseback hence the origin of the term "Riding of the Marches". And so the inspections carry on to this day in June every year.

In this issue we hope to make a contribution to the understanding and appreciation of the town's history and heritage to encourage more of the current residents who are the inheritors and guardians of that history and heritage to take part in the events held in celebration.

In all we have six Marches related articles, including an article on the Crying of the Marches, in times past a hugely enjoyable treat for youngsters of the town when they were allowed out of school for a short time to take part; then two articles by Bruce Jamieson, a history of the Dyers, the only surviving trade fraternity, and

a history of the Marches Magazine; then there is a **Folk Fae Lithgae special** featuring the first female Halberdier who will accompany the walkers on the Perambulation of the Marches, a pleasant stroll around the 1832 Linlithgow Parliamentary Boundary – hopefully on a beautiful sunny evening with a stop for refreshments at the Canal Basin. Finally on the Marches topic is the **Public Notice** confirming details of all the formal activities on the day.

So, what does all that leave space for?

Quite a lot, and not least the success of **Linlithgow Rose** in winning the Premier Division of the East of Scotland League and gaining promotion to the Lowland League. Promotion from there to the SPFL will be a stiff challenge but the club is now built on a solid base of ambition, commitment and ability both on and off the pitch. Scottish Cup matches draw an impressive crowd and the club aims to attract more of that crowd to Prestonfield on a regular basis.

We also have a highly entertaining and inspirational article from **Linlithgow Cricket Club** which is in process of a remarkable revival. Cricket in Scotland? Surely not! Whether you are an avid player or watcher, reading this article will pay dividends to anyone struggling to improve the prospects of their club or organisation against what feels like a background of constant negativity on many fronts. Read the article and take encouragement.

Aspire Linlithgow has been set a new challenge as a result of rising costs and uncertainty in material supply. Successful fund raising had raised hopes of a start this summer to restore the Crown of Thorns.

This may need to be reviewed but fundraising goes on apace with an 'Evening with Graham Spiers and Friends' at the Rose Club.

Linlithgow Bridge Primary School celebrates its 20th year helped by primary 6 interviews with the school's first Headteacher, Mrs Corr, and her successor Mrs Webster – each now having served 10 years in post.

On the artistic side, Linlithgow artists will be taking part in this year's **Forth Valley Art Beat's Open Studios** event with their work on show in Linlithgow and Three Mile Town between 10th and 18th June. You will be able to see artists at work and there will be examples of their art to buy.

Business, property, gardening, health and pets advice round off this issue of the Black Bitch Magazine. We hope you will find something that interests you and maybe learn something you did not know before about your home town.

Magazine Subscription

As readers will be aware the magazine is run as a not for profit Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) by volunteers with outlays for design and print services only. All funds raised go towards improving and growing the magazine content. As the cost of living continues to rise not everyone is in a position to subscribe but we ask that those who miss local news coverage and can manage a small subscription check the options available at www.linlithgowcommunitymagazine.co.uk. Subscriptions and donations of any amount help to support the magazine. Thank you.



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CONGRATULATIONS...

Congratulations to **Linlithgow Community Development Trust** and **West Lothian Clarion** on the opening of the new traffic free cycle circuit on 27th May. As we work towards making Linlithgow even more of a destination town, and easier to get around with less traffic and pollution in time, then this is an important part of the jigsaw for all of us.



There is an ambition to bring cyclists to the town for events at the circuit, giving opportunities for our various food and drink venues and our accommodation providers. Moreover this brings a fantastic focus on our local businesses and projects that are focused on cycling. You may have heard about Cycling Without Age, and their work getting people who have limited mobility to all parts of the town, and 1st Step Development, who are working with those affected by addiction and poor mental health to live happy and fulfilling lives, those objectives in part happening through reconditioning and selling pre-loved bikes.

We have two fantastic cycling businesses with premises in the town, as well as the mobile services of Andy's Bike Clinic. This week I have met with Elevation Cycles and EasyGo Electric Bikes to hear the latest from the industry.

ELEVATION CYCLES:

Fraser at Elevation Cycles has been on the High Street in Linlithgow for a number of years, and has made a great name for himself keeping our bikes roadworthy; whilst bringing expert knowledge for anyone wanting to get their latest bike – for clients wanting their best mode of transport as well as those keen cyclists who feel they need their latest addition to their bike collection, for a specialised purpose.



Elevation Cycles have supported the West Lothian Cycle Circuit from very early in its development, the owner Fraser is keen to make cycling as accessible as possible. Chatting to him, he was talking about the interest in bikes of all kinds, including the rise in interest in e-bikes. A fit guy, Fraser spoke of the fact that

e-bikes provide a different style of riding for mountain bikers, that doesn't take away from any fitness benefits, but makes the ride more enjoyable. He himself rides both a traditional mountain bike and an e-mountain bike.

Always busy, the greatest demand is for servicing of bikes at the moment – keeping our trusty vehicles mobile, for many of us preferring to save money rather than having the extra cash to buy new. To avoid disappointment, people should contact Fraser at the shop ahead of time to arrange a date for a bike service. He is getting booked well in advance just now, and is keen to ensure he gives the best service and avoids any customer frustration.

In a spare moment, you can ask Fraser for his recommendations on good riding routes. Very experienced, he can be found in his time off somewhere in the Borders or the Highlands peddling hard and encouraging his family to join him.

EASYGO ELECTRIC BIKES:

EasyGo have been established for 10 years. The founder, Gordon, is an enthusiast for all things 'electric motor' on bikes, and understands well the differing riding experiences of the various frames and motors. Another supporter of the new bike circuit, Gordon comments about the opportunity for a safe environment for people to get back into cycling before venturing on greater adventures.

Taking a very personalised approach to his service, when a customer books an appointment with EasyGo they will talk about their cycling needs, what they are hoping to get out of the bike they purchase and any limitations they may have. Gordon will then tailor the options to suit what the customer needs, and ensure that the bike that is purchased matches the individual needs. Convinced this service provides much better outcomes than purchasing a bike online or through a non specialist dealer, EasyGo focus on ensuring that the after-care is also delivered well. With a well equipped workshop, servicing is provided for bikes purchased from his business.

You will find well known brands such as Raleigh available, but also specialist electric bike manufacturers such as Haibike and BatriBike. Should you be thinking of moving to an electric bike, having keenly ridden traditional bikes for many years or should you be returning to cycling after a long break, you will find that Gordon and EasyGo can guide you through the purchase process confidently.

ONE LINLITHGOW BID NEWS:

The latest edition of the ever popular **Linlithgow Visitor Guide** will be available shortly. Coming in paper and electronic format it will guide you through the local attractions. Even as a resident of many years, I have learned some things about local landmarks, and it is a helpful guide to show friends and relatives from out of town around. Please do share the guide with your friends and contacts who might be thinking of visiting the town.



Chatty Benches have been launched in Linlithgow. You may have spotted Chatty Tables before in some of our local cafes, and this inspired a joint project with Linlithgow Community Development Trust and Burgh Beautiful, and funded by West Lothian Council. These benches have the simple message that a person sitting on them is 'Happy to Chat'. The idea is to ensure someone who perhaps is

lonely can have some simple human interaction at the moment they sit there.

You may walk past our town noticeboards and pay little attention to them much of the time. Watch this space, as shortly One Linlithgow will be revamping the current boards to make them more attractive and pleasant to use.

Fencing has been installed in Mill Road Enterprise Park in a bid to make it more difficult to access the park from the rear off the M9. It is believed that this has been a previous route for criminal activity and it is hoped that the fence will, as a minimum, act as a deterrent.

Landscapers will be arriving soon in Mill Road to revamp the entrance to the Mill Road Enterprise Park and update the signage. Currently talking to potential suppliers it is expected this work will be carried out early in the summer.

We were devastated to see the recent damage to Linlithgow Palace by vandals, and saddened too about the resultant delay in reopening. At the time of magazine publication we know

the opening is close and hope for no further delays. Whatever happens, please keep reminding your friends that Linlithgow is still open for business with plenty of history to see, and Linlithgow Museum, based in the Tam Dalzell House, has great details of the colourful history of the town.



1ST STEPS & NEW CYCLE CIRCUIT



It's been a long process requiring dedication and commitment longer than 1st Step Bikes, have been around but it is great to be involved in the exciting opening day event of the all new West Lothian Cycle Circuit on Saturday 27th May! 1st Step Bikes had the joyous opportunity to test drive the track on our fully serviced and refurbished bikes on Thursday afternoon.

We used a mix of road bikes and mountain bikes and enjoyed every moment and every completed 1km circuit along with a roll over the cobbled area! Although we work on

bikes each day of the week, not all the team are keen cyclists, but the delight of the staff team & volunteers was clear.

1st Step Bikes seeks to help others through refurbishment of donated bikes and now we have the opportunity to extend that help in a very physical way by providing bikes and bike mechanics on a regular basis to those experienced cyclists or the novice cyclists starting out on a return to fitness and health. The 1st Step Bikes Team are looking forward to working with the West Lothian Cycle Circuit Team!



Brilliant fun & looking forward to bringing the entire 1st Steps Team down to join in and get the kilometres in!





Images: Andrew Rose



HAIL THE GALLANT!! THE ROSE ARE CHAMPIONS!!

Linlithgow Rose Football Club will be making the leap to the Lowland League next season after winning the East of Scotland Premier League in style, as they finished nine points clear of their nearest rivals, Sauchie. Coupled with a terrific run in this season's senior Scottish Cup, where they lost out narrowly to Championship side Raith Rovers in Round 4, it's been a brilliant season for the club's players, officials, and supporters.

In an exclusive interview for the Black Bitch Magazine, Club president **Jon Mahoney** explained what the title win means for the Rose –

"Firstly, it's a fantastic achievement for the players and management team. Gordon Herd, John Millar, Eamon Fullerton, and Paul Cairney have done a wonderful job recruiting and moulding this group. The players have bought into everything that has been asked of them and they've developed a terrific team spirit and bond which is obvious to anyone who has had the opportunity to see them together on or off the pitch. The management team don't just sign footballers, they spend time ensuring that they will be a good fit for the team and the philosophy that has been built at Prestonfield."

"The club now has a platform in place to make a serious challenge in the Lowland League and push for promotion to the SPFL. It will be difficult – there are some very strong sides in the Lowland League – but this club has always had an ambition to be the

best it can be, so we'll do everything we can to support them from behind the scenes in taking the club to the next levels of the game in Scotland."

Jonathan had a special word for those who have helped re-establish the club as one to be reckoned with on the pitch once more.

"Our sponsors have been fantastic – we've seen a growth in support from businesses in the community, whether through match sponsorship, pitch-side advertising or more. I don't have the space here to thank everyone individually but Alan Steel Asset Management, Halliday Homes, Pacitti Jones and Cala Homes have been brilliant in the way that they've got behind Linlithgow Rose over the last couple of seasons. Our stadium sponsors MV Commercial have been part of our journey for several years now and we're very grateful to them for their continued support. And our main shirt sponsors, Billy and Jim Harris, have been phenomenal with the support they've given us. We are really fortunate to have these lads at the club – they're brilliant cheerleaders for Linlithgow Rose and I'm delighted that they're able to share in the success that we've enjoyed over the last couple of seasons."

Jonathan was very keen to offer special thanks to the community of Linlithgow:

"Linlithgow Rose is rooted in its community and it's fantastic to have their support. Our Under 20's squad has created a pathway into the Rose first team from the Community Club, and we've seen a couple of the squad training with the first team and getting a

little bit of game time. I hope we can strengthen that pathway in the years ahead, because the Community Club does an amazing job for people of all ages in the town. If you've managed to get along to any of our matches this season, you'll see that we have an increasing number of young people coming along with parents or guardians which is fantastic for us in terms of encouraging the next generation of supporters within the town."

Jonathan made a heartfelt plea for greater support from local politicians:

"Speaking of young people, I'd like to call on all our elected representatives to come and sit down with the Community Club and ourselves and re-visit the whole question of football facilities in the town. The demand is so much greater than supply at the moment and the facilities available are not comparable with other towns of similar size – or smaller – around the county. It would be brilliant to see increased opportunity for everyone in Linlithgow that would drive up participation in sport within the town."

Murdoch Kennedy





It has been another fun and rewarding session for the members of the Linlithgow Ladies Choir. Our choir, numbering about 80, meets on Monday evenings in St Michael's Church where we sing under the expert direction of Kirsty Ball. We have been learning to sing songs in a variety of musical styles from popular classics and folk songs to classical pieces, sung mostly in English but sometimes in other languages.

This session has been a particularly busy one for the choir. In September, we were asked if we could sing at the Joe Lavery Memorial Concert. Mr Lavery was the founder and first conductor of our choir, as well as being the father of Heather, one of our current members. It was a real pleasure to play our part in honouring his memory.

In October, a group of choir ladies joined the twinning committee for an amazing trip to Linlithgow's twin town, Guyancourt near Versailles in France. There we were welcomed into the homes of the ladies of Guyancourt's Choir, **Les Falbalas**, entertained richly and made new friends. On Saturday, some of us rambled, and some explored the beautiful nearby city of Chartres, before the evening entertainment of a medieval banquet. Sunday included a trip to Versailles Palace Grounds for those who wished, and in the evening a concert was held with the choirs singing both separately and together. This was followed by an amazing potluck supper and community singing. The highlight of the

night was when both choirs sang Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" together, being guided by the two conductors conducting in perfect harmony. We left with promises to keep in touch and are looking forward to the reciprocal visit to Linlithgow of Choir Les Falbalas in October



The Christmas season is always a busy time for the choir. Once again we took part in the annual Linlithgow Day Hospital Carol concert. We were delighted to have been invited to sing a selection of carols on the Royal Yacht Britannia. This was a new experience for us and one we thoroughly enjoyed. We sang in a lovely sitting room surrounded by photos of the Royal Family. Our accompanist, Hilary, played the piano which had previously been played by Noel Coward, Elton John, Diana Princess of Wales, among others. The visiting tourists appreciated our festive tunes. Our final event of the season was our annual Christmas Concert in St Michaels, where we sang a mixture of Christmas Carols, some well known and some new to us. The church

was full and we hope everyone felt the festive cheer.

January started on a sad note for the choir due to the death of one of our members, **Hazel Britton**. She was an excellent singer and musician. It was an honour to be asked to sing at her funeral.

Later in the month, we were asked to take part in the Twinning Committee's Burns supper, which connected Guyancourt and Linlithgow, via the medium of Zoom. After we had our haggis, neeps and tatties we listened to some excellent speeches before we sang three Burns songs.

To celebrate the coronation of King Charles III, the Linlithgow Ladies Choir were delighted to be invited by **Bill Jones** to join the Linlithgow Reed Band, String Orchestra and Rugby Club Choir to sing the coronation anthem, Handel's 'Zadok the Priest'. In total there were 200 singers and musicians performing. The church was full, and it was an experience we will all remember for a long time.

We are now practising hard for our summer concert which is to be held at St Michael's Church on Saturday 24th June at 7pm. The concert is entitled - Celebrate la Musique - Eurovision and Beyond. This concert is celebrating Eurovision, so please come along and hear the choir sing a variety of catchy songs in a variety of languages, as usual, entry is by donation.

SAT
24
JUNE

FROM BIKE SCEPTIC TO LYCRA-CLAD CONVERT:

HOW GERMANY CONVINCED ME TO LOVE CYCLING



Bikes were for kids. Unless, that is, you were a hardy athlete, content with what Scottish weather, or worse, Scottish hills, threw at you. Five years living in Germany, however, and I've gone from turning up my nose at life in the saddle, to a proud owner of padded bike shorts.

When I tell people in Germany that I'm from Scotland, it's not uncommon for them to wax lyrical about biking in the scenic Highlands. On the occasions I'm asked for bike-packing tips, however, I'm forced to disappoint them. I'm woefully lacking in experience when it comes to cycling in Scotland. And I'd be willing to bet that many of my compatriots are in the same boat.

The stats confirm my hunches. 57% of households in Scotland don't own an adult bike, while in Germany, household ownership is at 80%. Only 10% of bike owners in Scotland cycle at least once a week, versus a figure of 38% in Germany.

Why the disparity? Thinking back to my office working days in Edinburgh, I remember the handful of cyclists who'd trail in, skin rosy from the wind, and trade battle stories about near misses with impatient drivers. Add our notoriously long winter nights and steep hills into the mix, and it's probably understandable why cycling was so unappealing to me at that point.

That said, bike-crazy Scandinavia isn't exactly known for its sunny climes, nor is it completely flat. It is, however, famous for having fabulous bike infrastructure. This is encapsulated by its "Copenhagenize Index" (a holistic ranking of the most bicycle-friendly cities on planet earth). Three German cities managed to snag a place in the index's top 20. By contrast, no Scottish or UK cities made the cut.

My first experience of a German bike lane was on foot, and I'd made the classic tourist error of unknowingly straying into one, earning a cry of "Watch it!" from a disgruntled cyclist. It wouldn't be the last time I'd get short shrift for failing to notice one, which I think demonstrates how well cyclists are separated from vehicles. Perhaps being able to escape the bustle of the roads is one of the reasons why Germany's 2021 Cycling Monitor found that 63% of respondents felt 'very' or 'mostly safe' while cycling.

After seeing so many people easily navigating Ulm on two wheels, I decided I wanted a slice of the action and treated myself to my very first adult bike. Asked by German friends which one I'd chosen, I quickly found out that 'a red one' wasn't a satisfactory response. 'A city bike? A mountain bike? A trail bike?' they asked. Swept up by beginners' enthusiasm, I'd skipped some basic questions in order

to hit the ground pedalling.

Ultimately, my Ciclista Ponte Vecchio (city bike) became a bit of a God-sent allrounder, and my key to discovering Southern Germany's beauty spots. Each week, I'd choose a route on Komoot, and swap the city for the winding rock faces of the Swabian Alps, towering fields of sunflowers and the distant tinkle of Allgäu cow bells.

Random mini adventures took place in towns I'd never intended to visit. Accidentally pitching up at a nudist lake. Joining in with a music festival in Blaubeuren. A spontaneous trip to a bee museum (!?) in Illertissen. An otter popping up in front of my partner and me, as we split a pretzel on the bank of the River Danube.

What each outing had in common was the wind roaring in our ears, conversation giving way to cursing as the last kilometres trickled in. Thighs aching, skin chafed, we'd roll towards the final stop on the trail and slump onto a bench in the nearest beer garden. There's nothing quite like the rewarding tang of that beer, or even the sweet relief of sliding into bed after a long cycle, fresh from the shower, limbs poised for what the Germans call a 'muscle hangover'.

Learnings along the way include remembering to take a spare tyre tube and mini bike pump on long rides, investing in a bike bag to spare myself some backache, and travelling light.

The most important thing, however, has been the simple realisation that cycling might actually be for everyone.

Before moving to Germany, I would've been one of the 55% of people in Scotland to say they're not a "biker". With the sense of safety that accompanies good cycling infrastructure and a bit of experience, I can now say I've ditched that attitude.

But see those hills.....

Kate Martin

An early days' contributor to The Black Bitch, Springfield Primary and Linlithgow Academy FP, Kate Martin graduated from Strathclyde University. After stints post-graduation as a local journalist and Audit Scotland press officer, Kate left her homeland in 2017. She has lived in Germany working first in Ulm, Baden Württemberg as an English language teacher, then in the city of Hamburg for the Swiss Company Galaxus' German office as an English translator; navigating the linguistic challenges and cultural faux pas that inevitably come with living permanently in another European country. The above article is an edited extract from the Galaxus in house journal.

O-YEZ! O-YEZ! O-YEZ!

At this time of year, the streets of our town are filled with much excitement and tradition in the weeks preceding the Marches Day. One such event, **The Crying of the Marches**, takes place each year on the Friday before the big day, this year the 9th June. During **The Crying**,

participate in the **Riding of the town's Marches**. In his **mock-Mediaeval garb**, the **Town Crier** also stresses the **importance of the occasion by announcing that everyone must attend in their best "carriage and equipage, apparel and array"** - under a **non-attendance penalty of one hundred pounds Scots!**

The **Town Crier**, escorted by **Halberdiers** and the **flutes and drums**, are followed by the people of **Linlithgow**, young and old, in this duty that has been taking place for hundreds of years. Those who have attended previously, will know that the **Crier's proclamations of "O-yez! O-yez! O-yez!"**, is excitedly heckled by shouts

the children welcome the procession and provide entertainment.

The **Crying of the Marches** has always been an opportunity for the children of **Linlithgow** to get involved and be part of their town's heritage. Unfortunately, over the last number of years the amount of children and families attending the **Crying of the Marches** has decreased. A far cry from the mobbed streets witnessed in year's gone by. Therefore, this year the **Deacons Court** has made the decision to move the time of the **Crying of the Marches** to 11am, from its previous 1pm start.

This trial has come about through conversations with local primary schools, in an effort to engage more of **Linlithgow** and **Linlithgow Bridge's** children in this historic event. **Linlithgow, Linlithgow Bridge, Low Port, St Joseph's, Springfield and Donaldson's Primary Schools** will all be attending the **Crying of the Marches** with their primary 6 classes.

While the timing of **The Cryin' of our town's annual Ridings** has, in recent memory, taken place at 1pm, this has not always been the case. The 1966 **Marches Souvenir Programme** states: "The **Marches proceedings** commence nowadays at 1pm on the Friday before the appointed day." The word "nowadays" suggests that this procession was not always at 1pm. And while older programmes (dating back to the 1800s) do not show a timed programme of proceedings the point of the declaration - going back many centuries - was a legal one. It would be announced by the **Town Drummer** (later the **Town Crier**) whenever that official was available or when he was ordered to do so by the **Council** - maybe even in the early morning!

While the small aspects of our celebrations may change, as they have done so in years gone by, the heart of the **Marches** will always stay the same. The people of **Linlithgow** are fiercely proud of the history and heritage that is celebrated on the first Tuesday after the second Thursday in June. The **Deacons Court** is hopeful that this experience of history in action will be a big part of the children catching a love for **Linlithgow's** traditions, and annual **Riding of the Marches**.

Provost Liz Park, the Bailies and members of the Deacons Court look forward to joining the school children and members of the public at this year's **Crying of the Marches, Friday 9th June, 11am**, beginning outside the **Star and Garter Hotel**.

For information on this, or other **Marches** events, please look to the **Deacons Court social media pages and website**.

Long live the **Marches!**

Ashley Johnston



David Duncan



Harry Cockburn

the **Town Crier, David Duncan**, parades the **High Street from the Low Port to the West Port**, the ancient gateways into the burgh, and stops along the way to duly inform the townsfolk that their presence is required the following Tuesday to

from the crowds of "half a pound of rotten cheese!" Which, while not an original feature of the procession, has become its own tradition. In recent years the parade has carried on to the grounds of **Linlithgow Bridge Primary School** where

Image: Andrew West



FOLK FAE LITHGAE PAMELA BANKS & DUNCAN STEVEN

Last year, history was made when Liz Park, in her capacity as Provost of the Deacons’ Court, became the first woman to lead the time-honoured Riding of the Marches celebrations. As the town gears up for this year’s festivities on Tuesday June 13th, Pamela Banks will break an old tradition and make a new tradition when she takes on the ceremonial role of Halberdier, a post which has previously always been held by men.

Traditionally, the Halberdiers were only ever seen at the Marches time, where their main duty was to protect the Provost and Magistrates, but nowadays they also accompany the Town Crier at all the other major civic occasions, such as the Gala Day and the Advent torchlight procession.

For Pamela, assuming this historic position will be tinged with great sadness, as she will be following in the footsteps of her dad, Tom Grant, who held the position for 15 years from 1983 onwards. Tom was a huge enthusiast for the Marches and was installed as the Deacon for the Aitken’s Coachworks in 1966, an occasion he never forgot, as Tom and his workmates won the coveted ‘Gazette’ trophy for the best decorated vehicle, and he met his wife Doris on the Marches night.

Tom was struck down by illness early in 1998 and passed away just days before that year’s Marches at the age of only fifty-two. Pamela will be fifty-two later this year and she is very much aware of picking up where her dad left off.

“There’s an emotional attachment to the Halberdier job because of my dad”, she told me, “So I didn’t take

long to say yes when I was approached by Provost Liz. My Dad won’t just be on my mind on Marches Day, he will be in my heart. It feels like things have come full circle.”

A systems analyst in the finance industry, Pamela will be joined at the various ceremonies by local tradesman and old school pal, Duncan Steven, who deputised for one of the Halberdiers at last year’s Gala Day and is now delighted to have the post in his own right.

Pamela and Duncan both grew up in Linlithgow and have been steeped in the Marches traditions all their lives. They have particularly fond memories of the Crying of the Marches on the Friday before the big day itself, when they would parade with all their Primary school classmates along the High Street behind the flutes and drum, Town Crier, and Halberdiers, and hear the proclamation summoning the townspeople to turn out on Marches Day.

“I was at Low Port Primary, so we were just over the road from the ‘Star and Garter’ where it started”, Duncan told me. “We would follow it along the Street to the middle of the town and then have to rush back for the school going back in. It was always really exciting.”

In more recent years, the number of children taking part in the Crying of the Marches has dwindled to only a handful and, in a trial move to encourage greater participation, the starting time will be shifted forwards to 11am and local schools are being encouraged to bring children along as part of their morning activities. Pamela and Duncan are really looking forward to the Crying and hope the new move will result in the kind of numbers they remember as youngsters.

Murdoch Kennedy



ARE WE NEARLY THERE?





An Evening with Graham Spiers and Friends






Gavin Hastings

Stephen Gallacher

Tom English

Craig Levein

**The Rose Club
Linlithgow**

16th June 2023
7.00 for 7.30pm



Tickets £25

Includes 'a pie & a pint'
(or equivalent)

Available from Eventbrite or
Far From the Madding Crowd

All proceeds go to **Aspire Linlithgow**, the capital fundraising campaign of
St Michael's Parish Church, Linlithgow (Scottish charity no SC016185).
Patron: The Earl of Hopetoun

Have you ever climbed a hill and found yourself saying: *"I can see the summit! Just up there... we're nearly there... oh... where did that extra bit come from?!"* Raising funds for major building works can be like that, as we're discovering in the Aspire Linlithgow campaign. The good news is that thanks to your help we have already come a very long way, and we are now regrouping and cracking on to the true summit up ahead.

For the last 12 months, our fundraising target to refurbish the iconic **Crown of Thorns spire** on St Michael's Parish Church has been £300k plus VAT. Our fundraising total has now passed £220k; we have 3 further significant grants in the pipeline, and more events and fun to come. The VAT will be recoverable. What's the difficulty, then? Well, it turns out there is one major problem, and an equally major uncertainty.

Here's the problem: construction costs have shot up in the wake of the pandemic, war in Ukraine and general inflation. We had a generous contingency built into the £300k target. But after a rigorous tendering process, with a contractor now identified the revised target is £395k+ VAT. The summit that was almost within reach just moved higher.

The uncertainty is about timing: can the work be done this summer? That depends on materials and money. The new bronze alloy cladding - extremely durable and colour-fast - is currently in very short supply as one of the 2 specialist

manufacturers in Europe has just bought the other out. While we hope that our contractor can secure what we need from existing stocks, that's far from certain.



Our search for grant funding has now stepped up a gear. We are in ongoing discussion with Historic Environment Scotland: we hope they can offer a grant large enough to propel us most of the way up towards that revised target, quickly enough to start the work very soon. We have a provisional offer from another funder and active interest from a third. Their decisions are awaited.

The community has already shown amazing support for Aspire Linlithgow, so we feel it's over to us now to do the heavy lifting (or climbing). But you can still cheer us up the extra slopes by joining the fun at our upcoming **'Evening with Graham Spiers and Friends'**. And whether the work proceeds this summer or next, we are absolutely determined that we will reach the hilltop, and will see the spire gleam proud again over the ancient burgh.

FRI
16
JUNE

A Sporting Night to Remember

#Sport, #Scotland, #GreatChatand Stories: if any of these appeal to you, then the place to be is Linlithgow Rose Social Club on Friday 16th June at 7pm for 7:30. 'An Evening with Graham Spiers and Friends' brings together the renowned Scottish sporting journalist with an expert panel for an evening of wit and wisdom, insight and inspiration, conversation and maybe controversy!

Joining Graham are rugby legend Gavin Hastings, football authority Craig Levein, West Lothian's own champion golfer Stephen Gallacher and writer Tom English. The £25 ticket includes a free 'pie and a pint' (or equivalent drink). The bar will be open, Sally Pattle of Far From the Madding Crowd will be running a sports-themed bookstall, and we will also have a very select auction of sporting items and experiences for you to bid on!

Tickets are now sold out in Far From the Madding Crowd. If you're lucky, there may be a handful left from Margaret Henderson via Facebook or on Eventbrite at:

<https://Aspire-Sports-Evening.eventbrite.co.uk>



Don't delay!
Alan Miller



PROTECTING INHERITANCE



- 1 Do you know the current value of your estate?
- 2 Have you factored in the value of the family home?
- 3 Is it likely your estate will be subject to Inheritance Tax?

YES
Prudent financial planning could help minimise your liability.



- 1 Have you made adequate provision should you require residential care in retirement?
- 2 Do you know if you are eligible for financial assistance towards the cost of residential care?
- 3 Would you be willing to have care costs recovered from your estate, thereby reducing the inheritance you planned to leave to loved ones?

NO
Creating a financial safety net could help cover care costs.

Taking the time to discuss your personal situation with your adviser today could help to protect your inheritance from both family disputes and potential costs.



- 1 Are you married or in a long-term relationship?
- 2 Are you concerned about the financial impact divorce could have on you and your partner?
- 3 In the event of a divorce, would you prefer to know your assets will be inherited by those you've chosen?

YES
Speak to an adviser about ring-fencing all or part of your assets.



- 1 Do you and/or your partner have children from a previous marriage?
- 2 Would you like to ensure your assets are distributed according to your wishes once you're gone?
- 3 Are you willing to distribute funds to your identified beneficiaries prior to your death?

YES
A professional adviser could help put the necessary measures in place.



- 1 Are your children married or in a long-term relationship?
- 2 Would a divorce negatively impact your child's financial situation?
- 3 Would you be uncomfortable with a son-in-law or daughter-in-law benefiting from your estate?

YES
An adviser could protect your legacy and ensure it follows your bloodline.

To learn more about how we can help please contact us on:

E: enquiries@morrisonpwm.com

W: <http://www.morrisonpwm.com>

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MILES OF SMILES

CWAS LINLITHGOW



After a successful first year, we are delighted to be back between May and October this year offering rides on our two Trishaws.

We currently have a wheelchair accessible Trishaw on loan which will give further opportunities for Trishaw outings.

Q. Who can go out on the bikes?

A. Everyone is welcome, our aim is always the same: to enhance and enrich lives by giving elderly and people with disabilities of any age access to the beautiful outdoors, access which is denied to so many people simply because of age or limited mobility.

We would be delighted to speak to individuals or care facilities who could make use of this great asset in the town.

Q. Do I need to live in Linlithgow?

A. No, anyone is welcome to enjoy a Trishaw journey. Just get in touch and arrange a suitable date and time.

Q. How do I get in touch and book?

A. Message via our Facebook page [cyclingwithoutagescotlandlinlithgow](https://www.facebook.com/cyclingwithoutagescotlandlinlithgow) or email CWASLinlithgow@gmail.com or phone **07835 938469** with days and times that suit you and we'll get arrangements made to suit.

Q. How much does it cost?

A. All rides are free made possible by the kind donations from local community.

Q. Who cycles the Trishaw

A. The Trishaws are cycled by volunteer pilots who have been specially trained and have all the relevant disclosures. They are accompanied by 1 or 2 friendly companions who are there to make you feel as comfortable as possible.

Q. Can I bring someone with me?

A. Yes, we have 2 Trishaws so 4 people can have a go whilst others can walk beside them.

Q. When do you go out?

A. We have Pilots (qualified cyclists) available every day. Dates and times can be arranged to suit.

Q. How long is a ride?

A. Usually about an hour, but they can be much shorter, anyone wishing to just try the Trishaw for 10 minutes would be very welcome. The Trishaw fits round the back of the Burgh Halls so a coffee stop is also an option.

Q. Where do you go?

A. Our routes generally go from Linlithgow High Steet along the South side of the Loch, an extended route goes through the Rose garden and round the Peel. We also go around the Burgh Beautiful guided tour. We are currently working on a guided tour along the Union Canal from the Canal Basin to the Avon Aqueduct designed by Bruce Jamieson. Other routes can be done by arrangement.

Q. Can you come and pick me up?

A. We can do pick-ups from the Doctors Surgery car park, Linlithgow Cross and anywhere along the High Street.



Still got questions? email CWASLinlithgow@gmail.com or phone **07835 938469**





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FUNDRAISING APLENTY AS LBPS TURNS 20!

Celebrating an anniversary is always an opportunity for reflection, a time for us to look back over the years and take pleasure in the memories which have shaped who we are today. This academic year, **Linlithgow Bridge Primary School** is celebrating the 20th Anniversary of its opening. In honour of this, the current Parent Council Committee would like to take this opportunity to share with you how we will be celebrating this important milestone, and how you can be involved in supporting the future of our pupils with our iPad and laptop fundraiser.

School Memories

Anne Corr, headmistress when the school opened in 2002 shared some of her memories of those early days with us. *"Myself and my secretary worked from an office in the then West Port Annex of Linlithgow Primary School, ordering resources in preparation for the school opening. We had nothing and had to order it all; from pencils to pianos. We even had to choose the name of the road leading up to the school! Shortly after opening, we held a competition to design a school badge and the one you see now was the final result...I began my teaching career in 1972 at Linlithgow Primary School and forty years later, I ended it at Linlithgow Bridge Primary School. What a wonderful way to end my career. I loved working with the children, staff and parents/carers and I so enjoy meeting past pupils and parents around the town and hearing what they have achieved and what they are now doing. Best wishes to everyone at Linlithgow Bridge Primary School on your 20th anniversary."*

Former pupil, Sally Bell, who went into P2 when the school opened also shared with us some of her first memories of the school. *"I remember sitting in the assembly hall in Linlithgow Primary with all the other kids who were moving to Linlithgow Bridge. We got to vote between whether the uniform should be burgundy or purple and it felt like the most important decision in the world. My friends and I all voted for purple and it was so exciting to get to put on the uniform on the first day knowing that this school had been built just for us! I was in primary 2 when the school*

opened, and I still have memories of doing the wake-up dance in Mrs Alsopp's classroom, playing on the hop scotch in the playground, and being able to cycle or scoot all way to school with my friends."

Over the last twenty years, the school has been instrumental in laying the social, academic and emotional foundations for adulthood; preparing hundreds of local children for life outside the classroom and equipping them with the skills they need to secure fulfilling careers. We all have a responsibility to educate the next generation, and to give our children the best opportunities that we can to help them thrive and succeed in a modern world. As technology becomes more sophisticated and continues to develop rapidly, we want to make sure that our children are not being left behind. Which is why this fundraiser is so important.

Importance of Technology in Schools

As the veil between the physical world and digital world falls away, it is our children at the heart of this dynamic change. Children need to be confident with technology but also understand the safety aspects and responsibilities that come with digital communication. We want them to be able to develop that digital awareness in a safe learning environment.

Dermot Murray (Chair of ScotlandIS, the trade body for Scotland's Tech Sector and VP Technology at Inoapps, both based in Linlithgow) explains the importance of having access to technology at primary school level. *"In an ever-evolving digital world, it is key that we invest in providing children with access to technology. It is vital to spark their imagination about technology, and make sure that they feel excited about how it could be part of their future (even though a long way away) careers. The next generation of engineers, developers, AI experts and cyber specialists are in primary school right now, and we need to be encouraging and enabling their interest. As a parent of three daughters who previously attended Linlithgow Bridge Primary School, I admire the efforts of the Parents Council and know that all money raised will be going to positively investing in the*

children's future."

Advancements in technology are accelerating at a rate faster than many of us can imagine. More student access to iPads will not only support the new digital fields such as coding and AI, but it can also be a great tool to support less able students in the more traditional learning subjects. Current headmistress **Susan Webster** says *"At Linlithgow Bridge Primary School we are fully committed to the use of digital learning and technologies to develop, support, supplement and enhance the learning and teaching experiences for all our pupils. We are grateful to the Parent Council for all their efforts to raise funds for us to purchase additional devices."*

Lack of public funding in schools has led to less investment in IT equipment and services. The Parent Council works hard to support the school with money for trips, supplies and sporting goods for the children. This will be our biggest fundraiser yet; iPad's and laptops are expensive, and we need to ask you: the wider Linlithgow community to help us achieve our target! We want to celebrate this 20th anniversary year with a great gift that current and future students can benefit from. We want to set our children up for success with the skills to confidently navigate the digital future that is coming; and to empower our children to become the great leaders of tomorrow.

The Parent Council, on behalf of Linlithgow Bridge Primary School is inviting you to 'Buy our school a birthday present!' with our £20 for twenty fundraiser. 100% of the money we raise from now until the end of summer will go towards purchasing iPads and laptops for the school. Please scan the QR code to donate today or visit <https://linlithgow-bridge-primary-school-parent-council.sumupstore.com/>. We thank you in advance for your support and all donations are greatly appreciated.

Kerry Schumacher
Chair Parent Council



Interview for Black Bitch Jane Peters, P6 Class Teacher

Linlithgow Bridge Primary School
20 Years of Questions and Answers!
Primary 6 interviewed Mrs Corr our former
Headteacher. Here are the Q&A's.



1. What was your vision for the school when it first opened?

I wanted Linlithgow Bridge PS to be a place, where each boy and girl would be encouraged to achieve their best, in a happy and supportive environment and every member of staff felt valued for the amazing contribution they made towards this.

2. What were the challenges of opening a brand new school?

We had nothing. We had to order everything from pencils to pianos. I was very lucky in that I had lots of support from others such as newly appointed staff and West Lothian's Science Development Officers, who ensured I didn't forget a single thing. It was also a challenge, albeit a great fun one, choosing colour schemes for all the classrooms. I still remember that day sitting in a portacabin on top of the hill above the car park, looking at paint charts and choosing bright colours for each classroom!

3. During your time as LBPS's first headteacher, what were some of your most memorable moments?

I loved seeing our children perform in Nativity plays and school shows and taking part in sporting competitions such as the George Allan Memorial Football event. The sense of achievement and enjoyment these events brought was clear to see. I also remember visiting Holland to speak about our school, and the ways in which we were developing a positive learning environment for every pupil, and it was such a privilege to host the Dutch educationalists during a return visit, and to hear how wonderful they thought LBPS was.

I drove a group of young children in a minibus to the Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh for a field

trip and for a long time after, they called me Edie McCreadie from Balamory!

4. What would you say were some of the school's most impressive achievements during your time at the school?

With the support of dedicated staff, our children left to go to the Academy with confidence in themselves and I hope pride in what they had achieved during their time with us. I also vividly remember when we were inspected by Education Scotland after only having been open a couple of years. Every single one of us, staff and children, had such pride in our school and wanted to achieve our best and that was reflected in an excellent report. I couldn't have done it without them and I will always remember the support they gave me.

5. What does the school's 20th anniversary mean to you?

In many ways it seems just like yesterday since we opened in 2002, but meeting some of our former pupils around the town and hearing what they have achieved in life gives me such a sense of pride in the part I played in this. I loved working with children, staff and parents/carers at LBPS and seeing our school going from strength to strength.

6. What message would you like to send current and former staff and students?

The pupils and staff are what make a good school great and LBPS is no exception. Both former and current staff and children are a credit to the school. Life has not been easy for any of you of late but you have all got through it and ensured LBPS continues to provide a happy learning environment for everyone! Well done and happy anniversary LBPS!

Linlithgow Bridge Primary School
Primary 6 interviewed Mrs Webster
our current Headteacher.
Here are the Q&A's.



1. What does it mean to you to be a Headteacher of LBPS?

It means a great deal to me! I feel privileged to be Headteacher of LBPS, and so very proud of our school community and all we have achieved.

I have been Headteacher here for 10 years and each year has been so special in a different way!

2. What do you believe are the most important achievements during your time as LBPS's Headteacher?

We have achieved so much!

I am proud of all our achievements – sporting successes, national recognition, competition winners, our most recent achievement – gaining our Gold award as a Right Respecting School, recognition as a Reading School.

I also feel really proud when someone makes a positive comment to me about our school and the ethos we have. This is also an achievement.

3. Can you tell us about some of the more challenging moments, you have dealt with during your time as Headteacher?

Maybe you can guess? I have to say it was during the Covid pandemic when we had to put

lots of measures in place to keep everyone safe.

4. What do you enjoy most about being the Headteacher of LBPS?

I enjoy the energy and variety of life in our school! No two days are ever the same. I love our children's enthusiasm for learning and willingness to try new things. I am never short of helpers or volunteers!

I love when I meet children from our school outwith school and they say "hello" to me or stop to chat. It makes me feel very important!

I enjoy the family ethos of our school – the older children look out for the younger ones. I have been here for over 10 years now so it's lovely for me to get to know extended families – brothers, sisters, cousins and parents of many of our families.

5. What message would you like to send to current and former students and staff, as the school celebrates its 20th anniversary?

Thank you for all you have given to our school – you have been part of our school's history and left your own unique mark. LBPS will always be part of you and you will also always be part of LBPS!



SAVE OUR ST. MICHAEL'S HOSPITAL

FRIENDS OF ST MICHAEL'S HOSPITAL - CHARITY NO: SC028536



The process which will lead to the decision on the future of St Michael's Hospital received an airing in the Scottish Parliament on 10th May when a member's cross-party motion proposed by Linlithgow MSP Fiona Hyslop was heard.

Whilst this gave the issue exposure at the national level and was supported by all speakers no questions were allowed which could perhaps have helped clarify the process and instead left engaged listeners with the question... "What happens next?"

The Scottish Government Minister responsible for the issue gave assurances that "we are continuing to engage with the IJB on their strategy" but there is little if anything being done to engage effectively with the community which had turned out in good numbers to express their views and opinions at a February in-person meeting in Linlithgow. Instead a consultation survey is now being circulated which, it is understood, focusses on "strategy" as if the members of the community have ever had enough information provided to them to be able to form an opinion on strategy.

The decision-making body, the Integration Joint Board (IJB), next meets on 27th June when it is quite possible that a decision will be taken on St Michael's future, leaving unanswered questions such as:

>> Is the data on which a bed utilisation review is to be based robust and current?

>> What details will be made available to the community on implementation of any proposed cuts or rearrangement of services?

>> Will there be investment in home care services for respite and palliative care?

>> What options have been discussed for retention of services at St Michael's?

>> Is the intention to outsource all home and community based care services?

These are the kind of day-to-day issues that concern people as they go about their lives. They do not think in terms of strategies but day to day struggles.

Community confidence in the IJB has not been bolstered by its failure to communicate the outcome of the previous survey and the in-person meeting. Now it is proposed to prioritise the results of another survey and perhaps a limited number of in-person engagement events - when nothing has been revealed of the conclusions from the first events.

Why should anyone take the time to complete another survey or attend another meeting to have their views ignored?

To whom in authority can a concerned community turn for a common sense discussion and hopefully a meeting of minds to use community resources in conjunction with national resources to deal with a problem which seems to be heading out of control and purely driven by budgetary considerations?

Simply using such sums purely to meet the IJB's savings targets would surely be totally unacceptable in the current service crisis within community healthcare, and signally fail to meet the healthcare needs of the local population in Linlithgow and the north of the county.

The Friends of St Michael's Hospital encourage everyone with concerns to contact one of the Councillor members of the IJB to make their views known. The Councillor members of the IJB are:

Cllr Tom Conn, Cllr Anne McMillan, Cllr Damien Doran-Timson, Cllr Andrew Maguire

They can be contacted via the West Lothian Council website: <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/>

**TUES
6
JUNE**

There is also an online survey at: <https://westlothianhsc.org.uk/article/78055/west-lothian-integration-joint-board-s-community-health-and-social-care-bed-based-review> to be returned by 5pm on Tuesday June 6th

Details of further meetings and information on the Bed-Based Review can also be found at the above website.

The Friends of St Michael's Hospital



THE ARTS

“FORTH VALLEY ART BEAT 2023”

Pat Swan patswan@virginmedia.com.



The local annual Open Studio event returns for a 9-day run from 10th to 18th June. Forth Valley Art Beat (FVAB) will showcase the work of 58 different studios, artist collectives, and creative organisations.

You will see artists at work and they will also have art for sale - you can expect to see everything from textiles, printmaking, ceramics, painting, photography, sculpture, jewellery to woodwork and more. There's lots of information on the website - forthvalleyartbeat.com - and there are glossy brochures available in The Line Gallery, the Library, the Burgh Halls and in some of the arty shops in town.

Locally, two studios will be open and the five artists involved look forward to meeting you.

Jane Charlton, Hilary Brown, Pat Swan and Anne Nicholson Venue 57

Textiles, Mixed Media, Painting, Drawing, Artist Books

Four artists will gather in Jane's lovely garden cabin at 26 Highfield Crescent, EH49 7BG. The studio will be open 10-5 at the weekends and on Thursday and Friday. Turn right at the end of Highfield Avenue and number 26 is a few houses along on the right. Go round the side of the house to the back garden, which I'm sure will be looking splendid once again.

Jane is a textile artist and tutor whose work is mainly inspired by architecture, both old and new, roads, bridges, signage and industrial landscapes. She loves the shapes, patterns and textures found in the man-made built environment. Her main medium is printed or painted fabric with added stitch but also works in mixed media on board. She will be showing her framed textile artwork, smaller pieces both framed and unframed, and other small items. Jane has exhibited in the past in the Tolbooth in Lanark.

Hilary is a self-taught artist working mainly with oils and acrylics. Her inspiration comes from the stunning land and seascapes of Scotland and she works from sketches and photographs taken while enjoying the great outdoors. She will have a variety of paintings on show in acrylic, pen, watercolour and soft pastel. She has had work from time to time in Firefly in Bo'ness, Mannerstons and in The Line Gallery.

Pat works with textiles, paper, stitch and occasionally brings ceramics into her work. This year she is hoping to bring some wire into her open studios display if her experiments work. Travel experiences are often her inspiration as well as her love of flowers and gardens. The Artist Book has become one of Pat's favourite methods of expressing her creative thoughts. Her textile background however always means stitch and often fabric make an appearance in books. Pat took part in the 100 Days Project Scotland in 2020 and 2021 and is planning to display her first project titled #astitchadaybunting for the first time if she can find all 100 pieces! She has exhibited in the annual Artist Book exhibition at the Upright Gallery in Edinburgh for a few years.

Anne's main inspiration is the surrounding countryside with its ever-changing moods, colours and textures. These appear in her colourful and textured landscapes, often with the addition of oak gall and copper oxide inks. She also incorporates her artwork into small notebooks and concertina artist books. Anne recently spent three months in New Zealand where the flora, especially the ferns, were the inspiration for new work.

She has had work recently in The Line Gallery and the Green Gallery in Stirlingshire.

Jane and Pat are members of Indigo Tracks, a group of contemporary textile and mixed media artists, and Jane has recently joined Edge Textile Artists Scotland, a group dedicated to promoting excellence in contemporary textile art.

Lorraine Robson Venue 58, Ceramics



Lorraine's studio will be open once again to enable visitors to see her method of working and purchase one off works direct from her.

The studio will be open 12-7 at the weekends, 5-7 on Wednesday and 12-5 on Friday or by appointment. Turn right at Threemiletown heading south to Ecclesmachan/Uphall. The studio is on the left as you leave Threemiletown and parking is available at the play park opposite.

Lorraine is an established professional artist. She has exhibited for over 30 years, as well as undertaking arts residencies and tutoring. She employs traditional ceramic methods of production such as coiling, pinching, slab construction, slump moulding and altering. Recent work relies on multiples, using silicon moulds produced from her originals.

Her sculptural wall relief panels and ceramic vessels are deliberately abstract, but reference the objects and ideas that inform the work, usually observations from life and nature. She said **“I strive to balance recognisable imagery in the abstraction to suggest a mood or themes. It's important to allow the viewer to 'read' and relate to the ideas”**.

Her most recent exhibition at &gallery in Edinburgh finishes on 31st May.

Some development and experimental pieces from this new body of work specifically referencing shells and direct casts will be available during the Open Studio event. Visitors to her studio will also have the unique opportunity to learn about the ideas and techniques she employs and can also discuss one to one or small group ceramic or casting workshops.

All the artists love to talk about their inspiration and their work and look forward to seeing many visitors over the 9 days. Please come along – there is no pressure to buy but you may find a unique piece of Art, or perhaps simply a hand made card.



HOW ABOUT SOME PURPLE PIGLET PROJECTS IN THE GARDEN THIS SUMMER?



Purple piglet projects are so called because they are lovely small (piglet) gardening projects that you undertake in just a day and purple because those are our house colours. They each have a free recipe leaflet explaining what you will need to achieve them and how to go about it. Ideal projects if you are staying at home this summer.

Training a climbing Rose up a post
Create some instant

height and a beautiful focal point in your garden. Sink a 2.4m (8ft) wooden post 60cm (18") into the ground. Start training a climbing rose gently around the post and you will get flowers all the way up.



Arrange an Alpine Trough Create a safe home for wee alpine plants that could get overrun by more vigorous neighbours. Most of them enjoy a sunny position and really well drained soil, incorporating lots of alpine grit. Create a miniature landscape with some bits of stone and let your imagination run free!



Grow some Transformers for the kitchen

Transformers are herbs, salad crops or veggies that when added to a good dish can transform it into an exquisite one. They are small in volume but large in flavour. In this pot we have planted some of our favourites: sages, thyme,

rosemary, golden marjoram and parsley. Keep cutting regularly and water and feed equally regularly.

Claiming back some space under a mature tree or shrub

After a few years many small trees and large shrubs suddenly seem to have taken over more of your garden than you intended.

Removing the lower branches will expose the trunks and give you space for planting underneath. Our leaflet, **Plants for Shady Places** recommends lovely plants for dry shade. Here under a conifer we have put a Japanese Pagoda (with solar powered fairy lights inside) and foliage plants that will cover the ground and enjoy the dry shade.



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PERAMBULATION OF LINLITHGOW MARCHES 2023

You are invited to participate in the Perambulation of the Marches this year!

The Perambulation compliments the Marches by walking the line of the Linlithgow parliamentary boundary as established in 1832.

The organisers, Linlithgow Civic Trust, invite town residents and visitors alike to attend.

The walk is four miles long (6.5k) and passes seven out of the eight marches stones, (one original and seven replica stones installed in 2014).

The Perambulation of the Marches takes place on Wednesday 7th June starting at 7pm at March Stone No. 1 in front of St Ninian's Craigmailen Church on Falkirk Road (just west of the West Port Hotel) and proceeds in a clockwise direction round the route.

The walk will be led by the provost, flagbearers and the halberdiers of the Deacons Court, and the town crier. At each march stone along the route, a standard is mounted on the stone and a piper will play. The perambulation stops for refreshments at Linlithgow Canal Centre where walkers will be entertained by Linlithgow Reed Band.

Linlithgow Civic Trust hopes for a supportive turn out this year and look forward to seeing you all.



Don't let glaucoma steal your sight



More than 11,000 people in the UK are diagnosed with glaucoma every year, which can lead to loss of vision if left untreated.



One of the best ways to detect glaucoma is during a routine eye test, and so ahead of Glaucoma Awareness Week (26 June – 2 July) Diana Kelly, store director at Specsavers in Linlithgow, outlines the symptoms to look out for and the treatment options available.

What is glaucoma?

Diana says: *'Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases which damage the optic nerve. It often affects both eyes, usually to varying degrees. The most common form is chronic or primary open-angle glaucoma, which typically affects adults in their 70s and 80s.'*

'The condition tends to develop slowly over many years with some people not realising they have it until they go for a routine eye test. Therefore, it's very important to attend regular eye check-ups, particularly if there is a history of glaucoma in your family.'

What are the causes and symptoms?

'Most cases of glaucoma are caused by a build-up of pressure in the eye when excess fluid is unable to drain properly. It tends to affect the edges of your vision first, with symptoms including blurred vision or seeing rainbow-coloured circles around bright lights.'

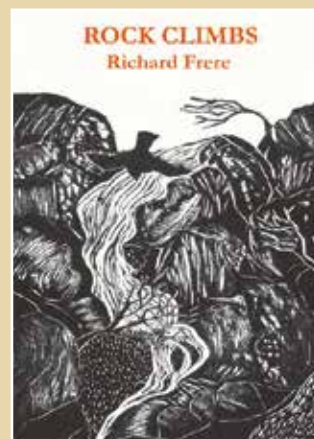
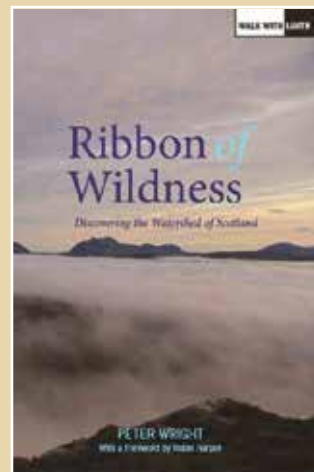
How is it treated?

'While it's not possible to reverse any loss of vision which may have already occurred, there are treatments available to stop the condition getting worse, including eyedrops to reduce the pressure in your eyes and laser treatment to open up the blocked drainage tubes.'

Can I access treatment at my local optometry practice?

'Patients are currently only able to access glaucoma treatments within in-hospital settings, which can cause problems for people who struggle to travel to and from hospital. From next year, Specsavers in Linlithgow will be one of the first to deliver NHS Scotland's flagship Community Glaucoma Service, which will see people with lower risk glaucoma able to access treatment in store, rather than travel to hospital.'

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



LOCAL PENSIONER PETER WRIGHT AND AN ADVENTURE OR TWO...

By the time this lands on your doorstep, I'll have been away from home comforts in Union Road for a number of days; well on my way to bike-camping the Eight River Valleys of Dumfries and Galloway. I'm doing it because I want to of course, but also fundraising for one of my favourite charitable causes: 'Maasai Girls Education Project'.

So why's this local 76-year-old embarking on such a caper, I hear you ask?

Well, to start with, I've been raising money for charities one way or another, for many years – charities I know, that do a fabulous job at making life better for those they work with. My particular emphasis has been on young people; enabling many life-transforming things to happen. It started in my professional life as a youth worker, and now occupies a fair bit of my retirement time. As founder of a number of charities, most of which have endured and flourished, it's my great joy to see the many ways in which they focus on the disadvantaged, or those that would be denied educational opportunities for cultural reasons.

Combining charity fundraising with a challenge or two, has obvious synergy, as it usually attracts positive support, often in good measure. My big challenges started almost twenty years ago, when I walked solo,

along the 1,200-kilometre Watershed of Scotland. I was so blown away by that whole experience and my gentle engagement with the wild landscapes encountered along the way, that my first book, **Ribbon of Wildness** was the result. Others followed, in what finally became a quartet.

Oh, I'll never be a great writer, having left school aged 14, I'd a bit of catching up to do. A year at Newbattle Abbey College when in my early twenties though, set me on course to train as a youth worker. My career started in Galloway, and then migrated to the Edinburgh area, all of it within local government services. Much of it, was as manager of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Unit in the City of Edinburgh. That's when the potential for charities to do what local government couldn't, or would not do, came in, setting that ball rolling. The work that sprung from this, was often highly innovative at the time, but is regarded as almost mainstream now. It influenced the direction of provision for children and young people, especially those in greatest need, and added a significant environmental dimension too.

The fourth book in that quartet was a novel, **Waking the Sleeping Giant**. Those who read it quickly demanded a sequel, and so **Where Sings the Skylark** came out earlier this year. On a completely different note, we published, or should I say, re-published, **Rock Climbs – A Guide to the Craggs in the Inverness Area**, by Richard Frere, very recently. It's a wee gem of a book, written by a 16-year-old, and originally published in 1938. How did six boys, when they were aged

between 13 and 16 tackle their great passion for rock climbing? How did they approach what we now call risk assessment or safety? Quite simply, how did they function as a group of six boys, out on the crags together? We have sought to answer these rather obvious questions. And we invited **Jane Frere**, daughter of the original author, to add a very moving Memoir. On a personal note, two of the six were uncles of mine.

The African connection lies in the fact that I'm a descendant to Joseph Thomson, African Explorer. Along with other descendants, we formed a link with a social enterprise in Kenya, run by the Maasai, for the Maasai people. Education for girls quickly became the priority for action, and so, our Joseph Thomson Maasai Trust provides a grant for this purpose each year. From the testimonials received, we know that what we are doing is indeed life-transforming, in the best possible way.

It's been a delight to work alongside so many volunteers who have made and shaped the charities. A pleasure to share some of the adventurous experiences and creativity in my books. And above all, to just keep doing worthwhile things, whilst in my mid-seventies. More to follow, no doubt.

P.S: I can trace my maternal roots back to 1585, right here in Linlithgow.

Peter Wright



“CRICKET WAS INVENTED BY THE ENGLISH TO MAKE ALL OTHER HUMAN ENDEAVOURS LOOK MORE INTERESTING.”



I'm fairly certain that whoever wrote that must have been from Scotland, because if you ask the average Scottish person for their views on the sport, you usually get an equally witty, tongue-in-cheek response. Better yet, play a game of cricket within earshot of a road and you're likely to hear some very honest, robust, and flowery opinions shared with you by passing motorists. It could be the association with the Auld Enemy, that cricket is an English pastime. It could be the misconception that the sport is only played behind the well-manicured hedges of private schools or that dressing head-to-toe in white should be reserved for your wedding days. Or it could simply be that any game which is left entirely to the mercy of the Scottish weather must, by association, be played by crazy people. Whatever the reason, cricket in Scotland is very much the marmite of sports.

And we at Linlithgow Cricket Club are those crazed, marmite loving sportsmen and women who take to the field each summer Saturday to try and put our beautiful town on the Scottish cricketing map.

Truth be told, the historical view on cricket is changing. It's something I've visibly noticed in the 15 years I've been playing cricket in Scotland – the ever growing glitz and glamour of T20 cricket, increased outreach programmes amongst schools by the sport's governing bodies and the strong performances of our national teams on the world stage mean I no longer feel embarrassed telling someone that half my weekend was spent standing in the middle of a cold, windswept field chasing a red ball around.

Whilst many sports clubs up and down the country are facing hard times as a result of Covid, the cost-of-living crisis, and the deeper pockets of some of our other, more popular national sports, LCC is bucking

that trend. This is down to, in no small part, the hard work and sacrifices of many unsung heroes at the club, who dedicate their spare time to ensuring that we are well positioned to ride the wave of growing interest in cricket.

Our membership base continues

to grow and with it so does the calibre of cricket that we play. After dual promotions in 2021, our first and second X1's now play their respective trades in the Championship and Division 4 of the East of Scotland Cricket Association. Both teams will be vying for promotion again this season, following an influx of new players during the winter. In addition to our competitive teams, we also field a Sunday Development team, which is a great way to help our kids make the step-up to senior cricket in a friendly environment.

And speaking of kids, our junior section is flourishing, with more than 60 incredibly talented boys and girls actively involved in our programme across the various age groups. If you have an interest in cricket and would like to help with our junior section, then please don't hesitate to get in touch. You never know, you could play a part in unearthing the next Don Bradman.

The club is located smack-bang in the middle of Springfield, and that is precisely how we view ourselves – as being at the heart of a diverse, vibrant, and family friendly community, a community that welcomes people of all ages, from all walks of life, race, and religion. We pride ourselves with our connection to the town and surrounding areas, and this is evidenced by our sponsorship base – nearly all our club/player sponsorship this year has come from local business owners and shops on our High Street – a massive thank you for your continued support! Please feel free to visit our website and see who our affiliated sponsors are, they have kindly invested in us, so that we can invest back into the community. Our calendar of social events also continues to grow – Club quizzes, Diwali celebrations, wine & cheese nights, beer tastings, just to name a few – so there is something to accommodate all tastes (again, head over to our social media pages and take a peek, we are always excited to see new faces at these events).

Perhaps with the exception of the occasional dog walker, many of you will have walked past the club all your lives

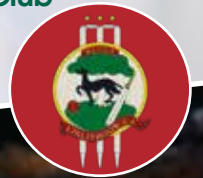
without ever setting foot on the grass or popping into the clubhouse. That's a perception we are very keen to change. So why not stop by the next time you're walking past and judge for yourselves how crazy we are, take a seat in the sun on one of the giant deckchairs, grab a beer from our newly refurbished bar area, sit back and relax whilst watching a bunch of folk chasing after a little red ball. And who knows, you may discover you have a taste for marmite after all (or, at the very least, it will make any other endeavours appear more interesting, if the author of the earlier quote is correct)

And if you're struggling to understand what's going on, don't worry, the rules are really easy to follow:

You have two sides, one out in the field and one in. Each man that's in the side that's in goes out, and when he's out he comes in and the next man goes in until he's out. When they are all out, the side that's out comes in and the side that's been in goes out and tries to get those coming in, out. Sometimes you get men still in and not out. When a man goes out to go in, the men who are out try to get him out, and when he is out, he goes in and the next man in goes out and goes in. There are two men called umpires who stay all out all the time and they decide when the men who are in are out. When both sides have been in and all the men are out, and both sides have been out twice after all the men have been in, including those who are not out, that is the end of the game!

**Craig Black, Captain
Linlithgow Cricket Club**

www.linlithgowcc.com



PUBLIC NOTICE

COURT of the DEACONS of the
ANCIENT & ROYAL BURGH of LINLITHGOW

MARCHES RIDING 2023

1. DEACONS PROCESSIONS

Deacons processions will take place on Saturday 3rd & 10th June 2023 at 6.30 pm from the West Port car park to the Cross. The Provost, Bailies & Deacons of the Deacons Court will be in attendance to install those Deacons presented.

All organisations who wish to install a Deacon should intimate, in writing, the name and address of their Deacon and My Lord to the undersigned on or before 27th May 2023, also stating the preferred day they will be present. A form is available to download online at www.linlithgowmarches.org NOTE All groups who install a Deacon are expected to participate in the Marches Day Processions.

A trophy will be awarded to the group who, having installed a Deacon, have in the opinion of the Judges, made the most notable contribution to the success of Deacons Night.

2. DECORATED VEHICLES, TABLEAUX ETC.

Entries are invited from organisations and individuals for the various trophies to be awarded on Marches Day, 13th June 2023. The prize money for decorated vehicles, tableaux and youth sections is £50, £30 & £20. Entry forms along with a description of the categories are available online at www.linlithgowmarches.org and must be returned to the undersigned on or before 27th May 2023.

3. DECORATED BICYCLES

The prize for decorated bicycles are Book Tokens which are sponsored by Linlithgow and Bo'ness Rotary Club. Entry forms are available online at www.linlithgowmarches.org and must be returned to the undersigned on or before 27th May 2023.

R. McIntosh, Clerk to the Court
19 Royal Terrace, Linlithgow, EH49 6HQ.
Email: linlithgowmarches@gmail.com



The Fraternity of Dyers Linlithgow Museum Exhibition

The Fraternity of Dyers in Linlithgow celebrated their 350th anniversary in 2020. To commemorate this milestone the Fraternity has organised an exhibition in Linlithgow Museum currently running to the end of June.



Deacon Crawford Flint explains the background to the exhibition.

The Fraternity has records dating back to 1670. Over time these records have been passed down from Deacon to Deacon. More recently they have been housed in homes and safes in a Solicitors, an Undertaker, and a Café.

A group of Dyers first inspected "our records" in R Bennie & Sons offices around 12 years ago. None of us knew what to expect. It was an absolute goldmine of information - legal and financial documents galore, minute books dating back to 1713 and rule books going back to the early 19th century. And, best of all, our earliest document dated 1670.

We realised that these valuable records needed to be kept secure. Dyers **John Laurie** and **Andrew Corr** started the search for a suitable place to keep our records safe. The University of Glasgow Archives Services were happy to help. Our records have been stored in Glasgow University since 2018. Many of our documents have also been digitally scanned by the University.

One of the events we planned for our 350th anniversary in 2020 was an exhibition at the Museum. Circumstances dictated that we could not hold it then so, three years later, we finally launched the exhibition in May. We want to explain our history, transforming from a Trade Fraternity to a Friendly Society and our place in the history of Linlithgow and its traditions. We have too many records to show everything, so we have chosen items that have real local historical interest as well as some more modern objects to bring us up to the present day. The Museum team have also designed activities for children attending as well so there is something for everyone.

WHO ARE THE DYERS? Bruce Jamieson



To mark the 350th anniversary of the Fraternity of Dyers, an exhibition is being staged in the Linlithgow Museum. To add our congratulations, we print again Bruce Jamieson's account of this ancient organisation.

The Fraternity of Dyers is a time-honoured society that can chart its existence back to the 17th century. Initially, the Fraternity united those inhabitants of Linlithgow who practised the craft of dyeing but it soon adapted to become recognised as a Society of Relief and thereafter a Friendly Society, with the purpose of assisting members and the people of Linlithgow who had fallen on hard times.



Early Dyers used natural pigments including madder - a plant which grew in Linlithgow - now remembered in the street name 'Madderfield Mews'.

The earliest written evidence of the Fraternity is a bond dated 1670 in which the Deacon of the organisation, **Thomas Heart**, grants one hundred merks Scots to **George Dickson** - a litster (a dyer of cloth). The fact that the group had enough money to lend at this time suggests that they may have been in existence for a considerable period before then.

It is recorded in their archives that the Fraternity inherited funds from the Walkers, an older incorporation that had ceased to exist. However, the clearest indication of an earlier existence is the story of dyer **William Smith**. It is recorded in the Kirk Session records of 1648 that Smith testified under oath that a local girl, **Agnes Dilap**, had worked witchcraft and thus affected his dyeing process.

Apparently, he had refused to lend her some money and she had used sorcery to pay him back. His evidence helped to convict the young girl who was later burned at the stake at Linlithgow Cross.

Finance also accrued from the members who paid an entry fee and quarterly dues which varied depending on the age of the applicant. Age limits for members were set at between 21 and 35 and all members had to be resident in Linlithgow, able to "gain his bread by his own industry" and be of "a sound and healthy constitution."

Meetings were held four times a year - in the house of the Deacon who had the power to summon an emergency meeting if the need arose. The Deacon, assisted by two Key Keepers, four Masters and a Clerk, was also the Treasurer whose job it was to collect and account for all moneys gathered. A member could call for financial help during an illness which prevented him from working - unless "the illness was the result of folly, intemperance, unsoundness of mind or insanity." Widows received help towards funeral expenses and an annual grant, as long as she remained unmarried.

The first Dyers Minute Book in existence starts on October 6th, 1713, when an entry laments the fact that numbers were dropping off. In order to attract new members it was agreed to reduce subscriptions and to allow members of other trades to join the Fraternity. In 1717, an entry makes reference to "the Great Disturbance" (the 1715 Jacobite Rebellion) which had interfered with regular Fraternity meetings.

Several entries refer to the group's participation on Marches Day when, accompanied by a piper and drummer, the Dyers would parade, along with the members of the other incorporations including the Smiths, Tailors, Baxters, Cordiners, Weavers, Wrights and Coopers.

The Fraternity enjoyed Marches Day and records of expenses in their archives detail the money spent on

drinking and dining. A meeting of the members in 1798 declared that if a member did not turn up on Marches Day he should still be made to pay a proportion of the £10 cost of the meal and libations!

The members were also magnanimous in dispersing the organisation's funds to help those in need in the community - especially in times of poor harvest and high food prices. They also responded to a government plea for financial assistance in the wars against France and, in 1832, contributed towards a fund set up by the Board of Health to help tackle a cholera epidemic. In the same year, £20 was given to the Town Council to help with repairs to the Burgh Halls - as long as Fraternity members were allowed to hold meetings therein. Again, after the disastrous town hall fire of 1847, the Dyers contributed to the renovation.

The society thrived during periods of warfare when their dyeing skills were put to full use in the preparation of uniforms for the army and navy.



Linlithgow Dyers prepared vast quantities of blue woollen material to be made into the short, blue "bum-freezer" jackets worn by British sailors.

Their accumulated wealth saw the Dyers buying land in and around the burgh. The power of such associations caused the government to worry that, as in France, working class revolution might break out in Britain. Combination Acts were passed forbidding the creation of Unions designed to better pay or conditions.

The regulations also made illegal any gathering of labourers. Linlithgow **Provost Adam Dawson and Deacon of the Dyers James Roberts** petitioned the authorities, sending them a copy of the rules and regulations of the Fraternity and a list of the thirty-two members. Along with a promise of good conduct, this succeeded in gaining the Dyers exemption from the regulations and allowed them to meet and to take part

in the Ridings of the Marches.

By the mid-19th century, the Fraternity numbered around 60 members and their funds increased considerably. Membership included the great and the good of Linlithgow including: Provost Adam Dawson; Doctor Robert Spence; lawyer Fletcher Read Lowe; businessman Alexander Gibb; Town Clerk Robert Riddoch Glen; tanners William Callender and James Hardie; brick manufacturer William Dougal; printer and author George Waldie and merchant John Braes.

Standard bearers **James Mickel** and **Charles Douglas** carried the Saltire and the Dyer's standard on Marches Day. In 1979 this venerable flag was replaced with a new banner.



Lord Deacon of the Dyers Bill Bennie shows off the new Dyers' banner. It depicts a

shield bearing three bags of madder dye borne by two panthers. On top, is the grain tree - a plant whose berries were used in dyeing. The motto 'Da Gloriam Deo' means 'Give Glory to God'.

By the 1990s this standard was showing signs of disrepair and the Lord Lyon was consulted over a replacement. He pointed out that the coat of arms was not that of the Linlithgow Dyers but that of the Worshipful Company of Dyers of London! During the Deaconship of **Kenny Henderson**, a new coat of arms was produced bearing some of the features of the earlier one as well as heraldic symbols of Linlithgow.



The new Dyers standard. The earlier ones are in the Linlithgow Museum.

Tradition is everything to the Fraternity. New members still take the 'oath de fideli' whereby they pledge to 'contribute for the advancement of the community'. They still dine together on Marches morning (although now in a local hostelry - not the Deacon's home); they fraternise with the Provost, Bailies, Deacons and guests at the Palace; they still bring up the rear of the parade - a position they have adopted since 1834 when **Provost**

Adam Dawson decided that he would head the procession and not come last. The Dyers' Deacon also addresses the assembled hordes at Linlithgow Bridge and the Fraternity plays a prominent part in the remembrance ceremony at Blackness. In years past, the Provost's Party and the Dyers met in different areas of Battison's public house - getting together briefly for the purposes of exchanging further fraternal greetings. Now they mingle together.



Deacon Bill Bennie awaiting his turn to speak at Linlithgow Bridge. On one occasion Bill stated that Marches Day was not an easy day to run. A voice in the crowd responded, "It's no' an easy day tae walk either."

At the end of the day, it is the Deacon of the Dyers who helps to close proceedings with a speech delivered from the steps of the Burgh Halls. Over the years, the Fraternity has taken an active interest in the town's traditions: initiating the idea of a Provost's Lamp and presenting the Waldie Loving Cup to **Provost Hebson** in 1923.



Provost Fergie Byrne shares the Loving Cup with Deacon Gilbert Snedden in the mid 1960s.

In more recent years, the Dyers have presented **Provost Tom Baird** with a new Deacons' Court Flag in 1989 and helped with the creation of Marches marker stones.



Crawford Flint, the 85th Deacon of the Dyers, followed in the illustrious footsteps of his grandfather and father, Lindsay and James.



Other notable recent Deacons include cousins Bobbie and David Bennie.

The present organisation continues the practice that began in the 1930s when the trades met in various hostelries around the town. The Wrights used the 'Swan Tavern', the Shoemakers either the 'Masonic Arms' or the 'Cross Keys', the Fleshers used the 'Black Bitch' and the Papermakers, the 'Windsor Buffet'. The Dyers can still be found on the second Deacons' Night established in their chosen venue where they fraternise with the Deacons' Court and other visiting organisations.



Deacon David Oliphant leads the Dyers during the 1997 Deacon's Night parade. Next to him is Sandy Smart.

It was the customary practice on Marches Day for each trade organisation to wear distinctive garb. The Gardeners wore tall hats and flowered gaiters; the shoemakers dressed in black coats and white corded trousers with hats decorated with sprigs of boxwood; the whipmen wore black coats, white breeches and long boots. Today the Dyers wear their recognisable outfits of black morning suits, grey ties and grey top hats.

As the Dyers celebrate their 350th year of proven existence, they continue to support the local community. Their fund raising events allow them to make charitable donations to organisations throughout Linlithgow and they also contribute to the running of the Marches Day. They have also recently started to present a trophy to Linlithgow Academy to be appropriately awarded for creative activity on the textile front. Long may they continue - and live up to their motto: "We dye to live; we live to dye."

THE MARCHES PROGRAMMES 1899- 1975

Bruce Jamieson

In the early days of the Riding of the Marches only the Town Council, the Deacons and members of the trade fraternities actually took part and it was very much an occasion to impress the townsfolk with the power of the magistrates and the responsibilities of a deacon in ensuring that trade standards were upheld. In the late 19th century, this began to change. **Provost Gilmour** (who fronted nineteen Marches Days) realised that if the event was to continue in a changing world, it had to involve more members of the community. Gilmour was himself a man of the people - a local doctor, not, as had often been the case previously, a member of the aristocracy, a rich landowner or a powerful merchant.



Dr Andrew Gilmour, Provost of Linlithgow 1884-1902.

One result of this 'reaching out' was, from 1899, the publication of an "Official Marches Programme" outlining the events of the day for all the townsfolk and giving information on the town's traditions and customs. The Town Council prepared the booklet and sold it at one penny a copy for Marches funds - the actual publication being produced by the Gazette Printing Office at 69 High Street.



The second "Official Programme" in 1900.

Also featuring in these early "magazines" are the proclamations made at the Crying of the Marches and on the day itself - a reminder of the time when ignoring the various summons meant a hefty fine. Poetry occasionally featured, including some by **Editor of the Gazette, Robert Fleming**. Then, as now, adverts also appeared - no doubt to help finance the publication. **Robert Jamieson** (who was Provost from 1903 to 1914) promoted his establishment which sold (rather hypocritically as he was a strict teetotaler) "the best malt whisky" at 3/6 a bottle. Perhaps to appease his critics the advert went on to advertise the spirit as "a medical stimulant."



Thomas Woodcock's "Star and Garter"; Alex Gow's "Palace Hotel" (with space to stable your horse); Joseph Braithwaite's "Cross Tavern"; Thomas Young's "Masonic Arms"; John Cowan's "Golden Cross Tavern"; William Beaumont's "Volunteer Arms" and Andrew Fleming's "West Port Hotel".

1914 was to mark the last Marches for five years as the First World War meant that no official parades took place. When the Marches did resume



The petrol pumps of Donaldson's Garage are on the left.

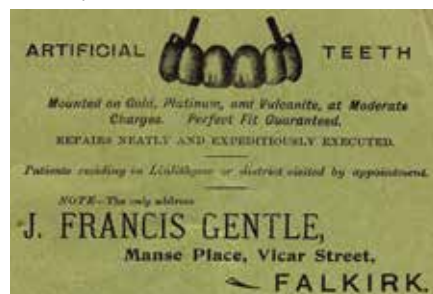
ORDER OF PROCESSION.	
1 B'ness and Carricle Band.	11 Fraternity of Tanners.
2 Carriage and 4 horses with Provost and Magistrates.	12 Fraternity of Whipmen (Carters).
3 Carriage and two horses with Treasurer, Dean of Guild, Town Clerk and Fiscal.	13 Fraternity of Carriers.
4 Carriages with Councillors and Provost's Guests.	14 Painters.
5 Incorporation of Hammermen.	15 Pipe Band.
6 Incorporation of Baxters (Bakers).	16 Distillery Employees.
7 Broxburn Band.	17 Candlemakers.
8 Incorporation of Cordiners (Shoemakers), and Linlithgow Natives Association.	18 Lochmill Paperworkers.
9 Incorporation of Wrights (Joiners)	19 Good Templars.
10 Masons.	20 Cricketers.
	21 Football Clubs.
	22 Other Societies in order as fixed by Marshal.
	23 Kinneil Band.
	24 Fraternity of Dyers.
	25 Private Carriages.

Deacons are requested to have their carriages at the Whitten Fountain not later than 10.45 a.m. to be marshalled in the procession.

The order of procession in 1900.

Provost Gilmour did not himself advertise his dental services but rival practitioners did. **G. Hills Watson** announced that he would be visiting Spence the Chemist's every Friday afternoon to pull or treat damaged teeth while **J. Francis Gentle** offered his services as a home-visiting, artificial teeth fitter.

Linlithgow's public houses also touted for business, including: David Barclay's "The Auld Hole-I'-the Wa";



There were also articles on aspects of the Marches. The 1914 booklet carried a piece about venerable **Town Drummer, Robert Bowie**, who, aged eight, had played triangle with the town's first fife and drum band, dressed in a green surtout coat and white trousers with red stripes. He could remember seven provosts: three Dawsons; Hardy; Mackie; Gilmour and Jamieson. He also remembered the shows and the bioscope which were set up all along High Street from the Cross to the Low Port.

Below: Mr Robert Bowie and Biddal's Bioscope - an early travelling cinema.



In the 1920s and 30s, local pubs still advertised including “The West Port”, “The Windsor Buffet” and “The Star and Garter” - all with female owners, a sign perhaps that the war had left many widows. **William Morrison** had returned from the front to run the family shoe shop selling footwear by Lotus and Delta and ‘Mansfield Hotspur Football Boots’. **Oliphant’s and T. D.’s Bakery** competed in the “best Scotch pie” stakes.

By 1939, the Marches programme had doubled in price to 2d and bore testimony to the tensions of the day. **Town Clerk Norman Main’s** article carried the hope that for that one day in June the “madness of dictators would be forgotten” and the townsfolk would “forget the clattering of hammers on battleships and instead enjoy the sanity of good fellowship and tradition.” **Robert Bennie’s** advert urged the locals to “adopt a policy of appeasement” and let his firm build “a happy, matrimonial bungalow”.



Bennie’s employees and their Marches float.

Once again, from 1940 until 1945, no Marches took place, and no magazine appeared until the cessation of World War Two. The 1946 issue was a very simple, eight-page pamphlet featuring the contributions of the bands: **Kinneil; Bo’ness and Carriden; Wallacestone Pipes and the Eyemouth ATC.** By 1947, the Riding was back in full swing and the Programme carried a three page ‘History of the Marches’ and the first “spoof” article to appear - wondering what Mary Queen of Scots and Lord Darnley would have made of Marches Day.

The 1950s and early 60s saw little change in the composition of

the publication, although it was occasionally enlivened by a photo of the Gala Queen, a Papermill’s decorated brake or a performing band, such as the **Winchburgh Public, the Boys Brigade Pipes or the Linlithgow Reed Band** after it was formed in 1956.



The Linlithgow Reed Band in 1957.

More poems were printed and detailed features on such local history matters as: “Why, as a result of the railway litigation the town owned very little property” and “Are the Dyers the oldest Fraternity in Scotland or is it the Carters of Leith?”

New advertisers appeared such as those from several newsagents including **Sam Doak, Alex Dalrymple and Harry Baxter.** Past Provost **J. Crawford Lamb** advertised his pharmacy at 230 High Street and **Thomas Stobie** promoted his shoe shop at number 78. There was mention of **Fleming’s Blackness Tearoom, the Cooperative Store** (with its 2/- dividend), **George Baird’s “Avon Place Garage”, Jim Mackay’s “Red Lion”** with its skittle alley and **Jim Clark’s “Auld Hole I’ the Wa”.**



Linlithgow High Street in the 1960s.

By 1966, the Marches “Souvenir Programme” cost 1/- and carried

adverts for “The Charlotte Rooms”, run by the formidable **Miss Coupar, “Westfield Motors”** at Stockbridge selling **Morris 1100s for £530** and “Fords” at **Greenpark Garage** offering **Cortinas for £850.** The Orders of Procession listed in the 1960s Programmes included some newcomers such as the Young Farmers, employees from the reopened **St Magdalene’s Distillery, the Avon Valley Pipe Band** and the **BHC Grangemouth Pipe Band:** all marshalled in the parade by Police Superintendent Rutherford.

Provosts George Baird’s and Fergie Byrne’s Marches Programmes saw some interesting articles including: the signing of the **Burgh Charter** in 1389, the origin of the oatcakes and salt fish eaten at **Blackness** and a thirteen-page feature, “From Whence Our Customs Came”. More photographs appeared such as one of **Katie Wearie’s tree** and a float advertising **Billy Gray’s shop** which also stood at the West Port.



Billy Gray and his prize-winning float.

By 1978 the annual publication (costing 25p) appears

under the title “**Linlithgow Round Table Magazine and Programme**”, for the **Town Council** was no more. A new organisation, established in 1974, the **Linlithgow Deacons’ Court**, was in charge of organising the Marches celebrations and a new organisation (founded in 1959) was in charge of the annual Programme – the **Linlithgow Round Table** who still produce the **Marches Magazine** to this day.

LOW PORT CENTRE – UPDATE ST JOHNS CHURCH

We’re now in discussions with West Lothian Council for an initial lease of the Low Port Centre ahead of an asset transfer. Drafting a lease with acceptable terms is one of the key conditions of our project.

St John’s Church Linlithgow is committed to investigating the suitability of the Low Port Centre as a vibrant, active and sustainable hub to serve the communities of Linlithgow! We are in the early stages of a Community Asset Transfer process which may enable us to reopen the Low Port Centre and turn it once again into a vibrant community hub.

Andy Clark Low Port Project Lead - St Johns Church, Linlithgow

WE’RE NOW IN DISCUSSIONS WITH WLC FOR AN INITIAL LEASE OF THE LOW PORT CENTRE.



LADAS OAKWELL ALLOTMENTS IN JUNE



The weather finally warmed up at the beginning of May with frosts unlikely but not impossible – we are always watching the weather! Looking around now work on the allotments is in full swing. Plots are starting to fill up with vegetables, and fruit trees are in full flower. Broad beans, a very easy crop to grow, are flowering and small pods starting to form. We should have some succulent beans by the end of June. The peas have taken off. It is always worthwhile planting peas over a few weeks to have some ready and some still to come. Early brassicas (cabbages, cauliflowers and broccoli) and shallots planted in April are growing well and early potatoes are showing. Trying to grow beetroot from seed last year was a failure and so this year I planted into modules and brought on and then planted out the small plants which are thriving.

Strawberry plants are now covered in flowers which will form fruit. **Asparagus** has done well this year, and picked and cooked straight away with some butter is something worth waiting for.

Fleshy picked **organic carrots** are so delicious but here at Oakwell we do have problems with carrot root fly which can affect parsnips as well as carrots. Carrot root fly are attracted by the scent of carrots and the flies lay their eggs near the shoulder of the carrot so when the larvae hatch they eat into the roots. This can be so disheartening.



Some ways to protect against carrot root fly are: choose resistant varieties like Flyaway, avoid thinning out because of the carrot smell this releases, don't sow too early –

June is a good time, put some onions near your carrots to confuse the flies, but best of all is to cover with carrot root fly mesh, being careful to tend to your carrot bed only when essential e.g. thinning and weeding, and do this in the evening or when it is windy - the carrot root flies cannot fly to lay their eggs in strong winds.



And don't ignore the weeds! Weeds are growing well too and the hoe is out to keep the weeds down. This is important throughout the summer months to avoid the weeds competing for nutrients in the soil that the vegetables need. There is no need to lift the annual weeds as long as they haven't flowered. They will dry up and die on the surface of the soil. It is always best to dig out perennial weeds as soon as they appear. This will eventually weaken them.

Jobs for June include...

- >> Plant out courgettes (don't plant too many – two or three plants would be enough for a family), pumpkins, squashes and outdoor cucumbers into planting pockets filled with well-rotted manure or compost mixed with soil early in the month. They benefit from protection with fleece or cloches at this time of year as it can be cold and/or windy. It is a good idea to sink a plastic pot in the soil a short distance from these crops and water into it rather than directly onto the plant.
- >> Plant out dwarf french beans and runner beans sown indoors early in June.
- >> In early June plant out sweetcorn in blocks at least four plants wide after hardening off.
- >> Keep sowing carrots, but very thinly, and make sure the bed is covered with fleece or carrot root fly mesh.
- >> Transplant leeks sown outside to their final positions mid-June.
- >> Feed potatoes with high potash fertiliser from the end of the month until the middle of August. Organic tomato fertiliser is good for this
- >> Plant out winter cauliflower and kale towards the end of the month.
- >> Feed all summer cauliflowers weekly to get good-sized curds.
- >> Continue sowing radish, spring onions and lettuces.
- >> Blackcurrants benefit from a liquid feed of a fertiliser high in potash as fruits begin to swell; an organic tomato fertiliser would be ideal.

Val Corry,
Chair LADAS



Linlithgow and District Allotment Society





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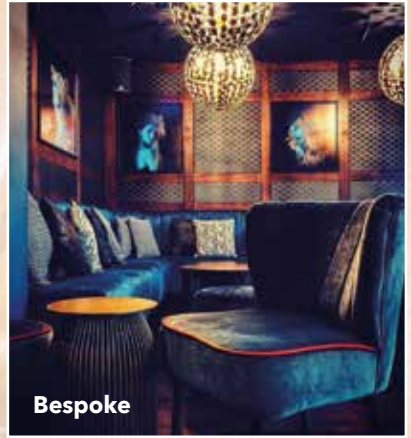
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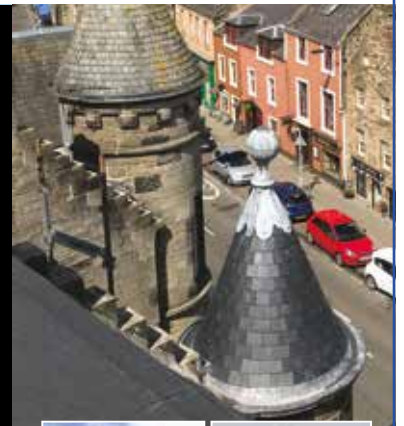
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The Mortgage Market

The Bank of England (BoE) has announced an increase of 0.25% to its Base Rate this month. This is the 12th consecutive rise and has pushed interest rates to 4.5%, which is the highest they've been for almost 15 years. The Bank keeps raising interest rates to tackle high levels of inflation. The UK inflation rate wasn't expected to remain as high as 10.1% in the year to March. And it's still way above the target the Government sets for the Bank, which is 2%.

But in the Monetary Policy Committee's analysis of the UK economy, which was released at the same time as the interest rate decision, the Bank has said it expects inflation to fall quickly, to around 5% by the end of this year, and to meet the 2% target by late 2024. It also says it's likely that the prices of some things such as food will be rising faster than this, but energy bills should come down as gas prices have fallen a lot recently.

How might today's interest rate rise impact mortgage rates? **Rightmove's mortgage expert Matt Smith** says: "There is unlikely to be any immediate changes in lender rates based on today's

decision, and lenders are instead likely to wait to see what impact the Bank's comments on the outlook of the economy will have on swap rates." In terms of current mortgage rates, an average five-year fixed 85% Loan-To-Value (LTV) mortgage rate is now 4.52%, up from 4.44% last week.

"To put this into context, this amounts to a difference of £14 a month for someone purchasing an average property and spreading the cost over 25 years. So, while we may continue to see fixed-deals fluctuate slightly up or down in the short-term, home-buyers coming to market soon may find that the amount they need to repay each month doesn't change significantly," says Matt.

Latest Scottish Housing Market Trends

The Registers of Scotland (Land Registry) recently reported that after significant volatility in housing market activity following the Covid-19 pandemic, Registers of Scotland statistics indicate house sales in Q4 2022 were close to their pre-pandemic levels, with residential property transactions up 0.2% in Q4 2022 relative to the 2016 - 2019 average for Q4. However, more recent residential LBTT returns, available to February 2023, show

LBTT returns for the period December 2022 - February 2023 9.7% lower than in the corresponding months of 2019 (Source: Revenue Scotland)

House Prices

The elevated level of house price growth since the Covid-19 pandemic continued in Q4 2022, although there are signs of a slowdown in house price growth, with the average (geometric mean) Scottish house price increasing by an annual 6.5% to £190K down from 11.7% in Q2 2022. The most recent figure for January 2023 of 1.0% provides further evidence that house price growth is moderating. (Source: UK HPI)

The strongest annual price growth by property type in Q4 2022 was for detached properties, up by an annual 9.4%, whilst flats increased by the lowest amount, up by 3.1%. (Source: UK HPI)

The average new build property price increased by an annual 11.0% to £280k in Q3 2022, higher than the increase on the average existing build price of 7.7% (note these figures are one quarter behind other HPI data). (Source: UK HPI).



Hello
I'm Harry
Sutton

Harry's owner says he makes her smile every day. He charges madly around the house and garden, in search of hidden food. He loves to play tug, train, learn new tricks, and he has recently achieved his advanced trick award!

Harry's owner started taking him hillwalking shortly after he came to live with her when he was 15 months old. He quickly developed strength and stamina. They started with long walks in the local area and built up to full hill days. His owner says he is so happy being in the mountains, especially if there are not many people or dogs around. He can be a shy boy!

He gets very excited when he finds rivers and lochs to jump into. The muddier the better .. a plentiful supply of old towels comes in handy. He enjoys camping, easily adapting to sleeping quietly alongside his owner in the tent.

Harry's owner says:

"Our first big hills together were Ben More and Stob Binnein near Crianlarich. It was early in the year and there were still some patches of snow. I quickly discovered that Harry likes to roll in snow and chase snowballs."

"Many of the hills we climb are more

remote hills, without obvious paths. Harry loves to find his own way through the heather, chasing new aromas. He has an excellent recall, essential if your dog is going to be off leash in the hills. It is also necessary to use a leash where there is livestock, in a habitat where there are ground nesting birds in season and where there may be stalking (Reference Scottish Outdoor Access Code). I find it helpful to use one just to pace him as well. He doesn't know we have another day of hill walking ahead of us."

"The best bit is when I get my phone out near the top of the hill. He now knows to run to the top of the cairn to pose to get his photo taken. Quite the mountain poster boy!"

Having a dog to share a day in the hills with you is a very rewarding experience, however this is something which should not be taken lightly. Like Harry's owner has done, time must be spent building dogs up to become 'hill-fit'.

Remember that at all times when out in public, including on the hills, you are responsible for your dog's safety and wellbeing.

Owners are also responsible for ensuring their dog doesn't disturb other animals. Never let your dog worry or attack livestock and during the bird breeding season (usually April to June) keep your dog under close control or on a short lead in areas such as mountain, moorland, forests, grassland, loch

shores and the seashore.

Certain breeds can be better suited to hill walking than others, however, with sufficient preparation, any breed of dog can be trained to become a fantastic mountain companion.

Owners should make sure they take advice from their vet and arrange a pet health check to ensure they begin hill-fit training at the appropriate age - this will vary from breed-to-breed to the individual dog. Young dog's bones, joints and soft tissues are developing rapidly and it is extremely important not to over-exercise young dogs during this period to prevent long term skeletal damage. Bearing in mind that large dog growth takes longer to develop.

Start small, start slow and take time to gradually build up your dog's fitness. Terrain on paws is also a factor - getting their paws used to harder surface walks and working small gradual inclines. You must have decent lead work as a dog pulling on lead is both a hazard for the dog's health and your own. Decent recall (even if they don't get off) - in case they ever do - is a must.

Do your homework - plan ahead! Monitor weather apps and checking websites for areas of free-grazing sheep, check route for steep drops/cliff edges, risk areas, areas of water (blue-green algae warnings)

Once you have a hill-fit dog - be prepared! Ensure to always have

plenty of water, first aid kit, plenty of energy supplies, a lead is a must!, something to rest on, towel to dry, waterproofs, poo bags, dog light (should you need it for fog/mist patches) and ensure dogs ID tags and microchip details are up to date.

Always plan a full rest day after a hill day - your dog needs it! Remember just because your dog doesn't stop or look tired doesn't mean they should keep going - you need to teach them how to rest and ensure they don't over do it. If you are further afield ensure you are familiar with where the nearest vet is in case of emergency.

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




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Paul Rolfe*

LUXXE