



ISSUE 100

A CELEBRATION OF LINLITHGOW & ITS PEOPLE

LINLITHGOW COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

BITTACK



ESTD. 2011

LINLITHGOW'S NEWS BY LINLITHGOW'S PEOPLE

BITTCH

ISSUE NO. 100
AUGUST 2023

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FRONT PAGE: Linlithgow Past and Present



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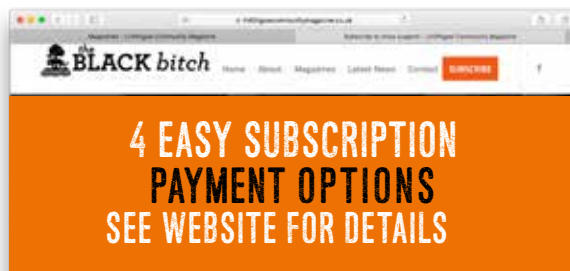
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20 SEPTEMBER 2023

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**DAVID TAIT,
EDITOR**

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MAGAZINE**



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As we prepare Issue 100 for distribution it is a good time to look back at what we have all achieved and more importantly to look forward to what comes next.

When we look back we see an amazing achievement by a group of volunteers growing the magazine from small experimental beginnings in 2011 to the present day version with articles reaching into many aspects of community life which we hope you find positive, informative and constructive. None of this, of course, would have been possible without our small army of committed volunteers who happily respond to requests for their services eight times per year and many times in between. Altogether an achievement of which everyone associated with the magazine can be very proud.

So, what of the future? Where does the magazine go from here?

Workload is increasing with more complex articles and, of course, costs have risen significantly over the past year or two. Ageing bones and brains are creaking, in need of fresh ideas and administrative support to take responsibility for aspects of production and management. Based on discussions with other town groups, the latter point seems to be a common denominator reported by many volunteer based groups and this is not only across Linlithgow but across the whole country. This issue gained high profile coverage recently when in an article in The Times of May 2, 2023, William Hague, past Leader of the Conservative Party, declared there is a need for a "Volunteering Revolution".

These are strong words. The problems arising for community life are becoming severe. Volunteering is no longer a "nice to have" but a "necessity".

While the magazine is supported by a great team, the "necessity" for us is to find some new blood to take on roles such as sub-editor, IT expert, distribution management and fundraising. None of these roles taken individually is hugely time consuming but as each role is filled that makes it easier to manage the rest. And we are always keen to hear from anyone wanting some exercise in the fresh air delivering magazines; keen writers young and old would be welcome too to add to our existing contributors.

So, if you'd like to help build the magazine for the future please get in touch with me in the first instance at on.a.lead@gmail.com to find out more.

To turn to Issue 100 and its front cover, we thought it would be good to set some of those who have helped in different ways to make Linlithgow a community over the years alongside some of the town's built heritage and institutions that many volunteers have helped, and continue to help, to sustain.

Inside the magazine we have some of our old favourites – **Bruce Jamieson, Folk Festival, Walk for Jock, Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions, One Linlithgow, New Hopetoun Gardens** – and some brand new – **Junior Parkrun, Flutes Unlimited** as well as a really interesting story of **Linlithgow Rose** football strips that have found their

way to Malawi; and best of all a letter of thanks to all of Linlithgow from an Australian couple who used the town as their base to explore the town and its people and visit more of Scotland too.

"The people of Linlithgow should feel rightly proud of making a visitor feel at home".

MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION

We've mentioned above how the magazine depends on our team of volunteers but it also depends to a significant extent on our subscribers and donors. Their contributions reduce dependence on adverts leaving more space for editorial content.

So, for those who do not yet subscribe, if you can manage to make a contribution, please visit our website at www.linlithgowcommunitymagazine.co.uk to see the options available to subscribe or donate.

All contributions make a difference.



Correction Issue 99:
Front cover photography by Liz Henry.

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



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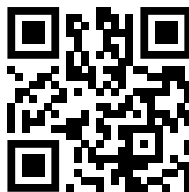
ONE LINLITHGOW

INAUGURAL SCOTLAND LOVES LOCAL WEEK

THE FIRST EVER SCOTLAND LOVES LOCAL WEEK WILL TAKE PLACE FROM 28TH AUGUST TO 3RD SEPTEMBER 2023.

Scotland's Towns Partnership are planning a busy programme of activities across Scotland as they seek to shine a spotlight on the people and places where hard work and innovation is delivering projects which will make our towns and communities fit for the future.

TV Presenter Sean Batty, a son of Paisley, is spearheading Scotland Loves Local Week by showcasing some of the local businesses where he grew up.



Throughout August, the One Linlithgow team hosted politicians and MSPs from across the political spectrum, introducing them to local business owners who are at the heart of the community and drivers of local prosperity.

It was a chance to get up close and personal to explain the issues and challenges that affect businesses. Discussions covering everything from rates to recycling, footfall and Scotland's place in the world were covered on a rare one to one chance opportunity to speak to the policy makers.

We also showcased samples of our 45,000 Visitor Guides, packed with QR Codes linking to Linlithgow.co.uk, part of our new campaign to increase footfall to Linlithgow and increasing the overall digital footprint of Linlithgow to reach a wider audience.



Scotland's Towns Partnership aims to champion the Scotland Loves Local message, putting localism at the heart of a stronger, fairer future for Scotland's towns.

Throughout the summer especially, people from all over the world come to Scotland to wander through the picturesque streets, nooks, crannies and alleyways that we all take for granted. From Linlithgow to Milngavie, Inverness to Inverurie, Oban to St. Andrews and many more. Our Scottish towns are our greatest assets that we cannot take for granted in the modern age.

**THE MESSAGE IS SIMPLE:
#ThinkLocalFirst and #ChooseLocal**

DISPLAY BOARDS

As part of ongoing improvement to communications, One Linlithgow has commissioned the upgrade of signage at the entrance to Mill Road and the display boards in the town centre.

The Mill Road display will provide a QR Code link to Linlithgow.co.uk/millroad for immediate directions to any business located on the estate. The upgraded display boards in the town centre have been jointly funded by One Linlithgow and the Linlithgow Community Development Trust. The display boards will be much easier to manage posters and local business advertising for the years ahead.



BANNERS AND BRACKETS

One Linlithgow is working with West Lothian Council to install improved brackets for the seasonal banners that are placed on the lamp posts in the town centre.

The improved versions will enable a much better fit of banners to promote events and other key communications tools for Linlithgow. The upgrades will provide a much better first impression for short-term visitors to Linlithgow.



WELCOME TO NEW BUSINESSES

BAKED LINLITHGOW



It's been a very quick month for Baked Linlithgow, who opened their doors at No.74 on the High Street, serving scones and a range of bakes including strawberry tarts, millionaire shortbread along with a superb range of brownies and cookies.

TIVOLI GROUP



The owners of the Mill Road Industrial Estate, SRA Ventures Limited, announced a 5-year lease to 2028 to Tivoli Group Ltd.

Tivoli is a grounds and winter maintenance company with a significant presence in the public sector grounds maintenance, with a £51m turnover in 2021. This has created local employment opportunities for local people in Linlithgow.

As you can see, Linlithgow attracts businesses of all sizes to locate here.

WEBCAM REPLACEMENT

One Linlithgow has agreed to take over and replace the Webcam situated on Old Linen Bank building as well as the cost of internet communications. We will also be upgrading the camera to a more modern version with better quality images for viewers to tap in to.

This means that anyone can see what is happening real-time in the town centre from 4 fixed view rotating views of the Palace, the Cross and the High Street.

One Linlithgow will also embed the link to the Linlithgow.co.uk home page as a feature attraction for anyone considering a visit to see us.

CARDBOARD CRUSHING & BALING DEMONSTRATION

Mid-August, One Linlithgow organised the demonstration of a mobile cardboard

and plastic crushing and baling machine, gratefully hosted by Linlithgow Gin on the Mill Road Estate. Who knew that baled cardboard and plastic had a value per tonne, rather than being a waste material?

The possibilities of this potential project are endless and under review by One Linlithgow. If there is appetite among businesses in Mill Road, One Linlithgow is considering the benefits of acquiring a baler machine from Mil-Tek Scotland.

Who knows, imagine one day an electric van cruising around Linlithgow collecting cardboard and plastic, and turning it into hard cash.?

LINLITHGOW COFFEE AND CAKE TRAIL

In conjunction with the monthly artisan market, One Linlithgow has produced a flyer and map featuring all the coffee shops in the vicinity of the market. The flyers are handed out by keen local young people to encourage visitors to the market stalls, to also visit local businesses as part of their visit to Linlithgow.

The flyer is also an opportunity to promote the pub trail, inviting them back to earn a coveted t-shirt.

LINLITHGOW COFFEE AND CAKE TRAIL

- 1) LOCHSIDE CAFE
- 2) MAC'S OF LINLITHGOW
- 3) COSY TEA ROOM
- 4) ARAN CAFE
- 5) SO STRAWBERRY CAFFE
- 6) BURGH HALLS CAFE
- 7) COFFEE NEUK
- 8) GRANARY CAFE
- 9) COSTA COFFEE
- 10) CRANNOG CAFE
- 11) TASTE CAFE DELI
- 12) WHITE DOVE COFFEE ROASTERS CAFE

Linlithgow.co.uk
Coffee & Cake Trail

FREE MAP OF NEARBY COFFEE SHOPS IN LINLITHGOW

www.linlithgowfolk.com

LINLITHGOW FOLK FESTIVAL

A FEAST OF FOLK MUSIC AT THE BURGH HALLS



Linlithgow Folk Festival Association will be offering a feast of music at the Burgh Halls on the second weekend in September.

The fun will get underway on Friday September 8th with a Session from 2pm and a warm welcome is extended to anyone interested in coming along and joining in.

Traditional musicians and singers from throughout central Scotland will be appearing on the Nora Devine Stage in the garden adjacent to the Burgh Halls café on Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th from 12 noon until 5pm. This space has been used to great effect in the past two years and spectators have enjoyed the opportunity of using the café and bar. The seating area

upstairs has been particularly popular with people dropping by to hear the music.

A whole range of musical styles will be involved on the stage, which is organised to honour the memory of local traditional music stalwart, Nora Devine, who ran the famous Linlithgow Folk Club for many years and was well known on the Folk music scene throughout Scotland and beyond. In the 1960s and 70s, the local club provided a platform for budding musicians who went on to have glittering careers - people like Aly Bain, Barbara Dickson, and the McCalmans. Nora was always very keen to encourage developing talent and her example has been followed by Linlithgow Folk Festival since its inception in 1999.

Just before the stage gets underway on the Saturday, there will be the traditional "Come and Sing" session in the Masonic

Hall from 11.30am, featuring two great singing groups - the "Liltin Lassies" from Dunblane and our very own Sangschule.

Dancers will not be forgotten over the weekend. On the Sunday afternoon from 2.30pm, there will be a ceilidh in the Bailie Hardie Hall, with music provided by "Cockleroy" and friends. As will all the other events, admission is free and family groups are strongly encouraged to come along and take part.

Full details of the "Feast of Folk" can be found on the Folk Festival Association website www.linlithgowfolk.com and on the group's Facebook page.



Murdoch Kennedy



PLANNING FORUM: PROJECTS UNDER REVIEW

Edinburgh Road development – artist’s impression



The last issue of the Black Bitch reviewed the work of the Linlithgow Planning Forum over the past 10 years. In this brief article we consider two new care home projects in addition to those projects which have been under review for some time.

All planning applications are held online at <https://planning.westlothian.gov.uk/publicaccess/>. A search in Linlithgow can be made easier by focusing on the Linlithgow Ward and the area covered by Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council. Immediate access can be gained by entering the reference number for the planning application.

The two new proposed care homes are at: the site opposite Sainsbury's on the Falkirk Road, and the site of the previous Jet filling station on the Edinburgh Road which has lain dormant for a number of years.

Inuos Developments Ltd, a subsidiary of Lorimer Care Homes Ltd, received planning permission for a 60 bed care home on the Falkirk Road (reference 0898/FUL/21) on 19th January 2023. A debate over whether this would create undue additional pressure on Linlithgow Group Medical Practice was answered in the planning officer's report: *"the majority of residents (of the care home) will be from the Linlithgow catchment area for health care services, these residents will already form part of the case work for the GPs, nurses and other health care professionals within the LGMP"*. Work on site has not yet commenced.

A planning application has been made by Morrison Community Care for a 60 bed care home and 18 flats on the old Jet filling station site on the Edinburgh Road. An artist's impression of the completed development can be seen above and at <https://www.morrisoncommunitycare.com/ongoing-work/>. The planning application documents file, (reference 0580/FUL/23) includes several objections one of which from Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council again raises the point of pressure on Linlithgow Group Medical Practice. The question is raised that while no decision has been made on the future of St Michael's Hospital, how can it be argued it should be closed due to lack of demand for residential care of the elderly while this application argues there is demand? Also of concern are the design and building materials proposed for the development - these are judged to be out of keeping with the town's character.

Projects under constant review by the Planning Forum are the former bus depot offices - 81 to 87 High St, the site of the Victoria Hall, and the proposed Vennel development. The site of the former bus depot offices has planning permission (0249/FUL/11) for two retail units and five flats for the elderly. As described in the 'Black Bitch' magazine, August 2021, McCarthy Stone has stated that it is not commercially viable to develop the site as originally planned. The site was offered to West Lothian Council for a peppercorn sum but this was declined. West Lothian Council did, however, demand the sum of £90,000 from McCarthy and Stone as a contribution towards affordable housing

which the Council has, contentiously, chosen not to construct in Linlithgow. The Planning Forum continues to press the Council to spend this money to subsidise the construction of social rented housing on-site to fill the ugly gap in the historic High Street frontage.

A planning application for the Victoria Hall site (0591/FUL/18) received planning permission on 27 March 2019, but this permission expired on 31 March 2023 (extended due to Covid). There is therefore no current planning proposal for this site which remains another unsightly gap site. The site's owner has been reminded of past proposals for a community theatre/cinema on the site contained in a community-funded feasibility study, but have not yet responded one way or the other.

West Lothian Council executive approved a proposal entitled *"Planning Guidance – the Vennel"* on 25 February 2020. This described new uses for the property either side of the Vennel including the old library (now Linlithgow Community Development Trust Hub) and the car park. The Planning Forum has a continuing watching brief over this development, based on its past feasibility report and community consultation, and awaits further progress.

Now that we have a date for the submission of the Local Place Plan, our future work will give more emphasis to this over the coming months.

Articles on the progression of the Local Place Plan and final consultation will be the subject of future Black Bitch articles.

Linlithgow Planning Forum

SOCIAL CLIMBERS OR NATURAL SUPPORTERS?

Would you like to add some extra flowers to some of your trees or shrubs, perhaps later in the season on early flowering shrubs? Or to make use of tall trees and shrubs in your garden to support flowering climbing plants, using nature's structures to support some social climbers?

We have been enjoying this display of summer flowers scrambling up the Cornelian Cherry in our front courtyard. We keep this small tree (*Cornus officinalis* or the similar *Cornus mas*) pruned as a large shrub against the wall and enjoy its show of many small yellow flowers in late winter on bare branches. We planted two clematis and a climbing rose near the base of the tree and look how they are performing in high summer on the green leaved tree!



Climbers in Cornelian Cherry

Clematis Blue Angel These soft blue flowers with somewhat crinkled edges create a stunning and prolonged display from June to September. It is in pruning group 3 which means you can cut it back to 45cm (18") in the spring but don't do this if



you are growing it up a shrub, once it has spread through the shrub leave it be and enjoy its display each year. The yellow stamens also attract pollinators.

It was bred by Stefan Franzsale, a Polish Jesuit priest, in 1987 and its name was inspired by the enticing beauty of the actress Marlene Dietrich as 'Blue Angel' in the 1930 film of the same name.



Clematis Minuet This small flowered Viticella type Clematis loves scrambling through other plants. There are many Viticella varieties to choose from and once established

they don't need pruning unless they have too much unruly growth at the top of their host plant.

Climbing Rose Mary Delany This is an English Climbing Rose bred by David Austin and formerly known as 'Mortimer

Sackler'. It repeats flowers from July onwards with loosely double, light pink flowers with a gentle fragrance of 'old rose'. It also has very few thorns and can grow up to 3-4 metres (12ft)



This is a great time of year to start training climbers up some of your larger plants. As late summer drifts into autumn the soil is damp and warm and ideal for new young plants to get established. There is a lot of competition for moisture at the foot of an established shrub so at this time of year it is easier for new climbers to get their fair share of water! Pick up our **purple piglet project** on growing climbers up trees and shrubs next time you are in for more suggestions.



Dougal Philip and Lesley Watson
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LATE SUMMER TO AUTUMN

THIS IS A GREAT TIME OF YEAR TO ADD NEW PLANTS TO YOUR GARDEN WHEN THE SOIL IS DAMP AND WARM TO HELP THEM GET THEIR ROOTS DOWN AND SETTLED IN!



LAMP LIGHTS UP THE STAGE: A MUSICAL NIGHT TO REMEMBER!

Images:
Rebecca Holmes,
Cameron Leask.



When the clock strikes 7.30 pm on 1st September 2023, the Linlithgow Academy Theatre will spring to life, filled with the harmonious melodies of musical theatre. Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions (LAMP) invites you to their dazzling cabaret evening – a must-attend event for all theatre enthusiasts.



For those who might be new to our community, LAMP stands for Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions. Since 1985, our talented teams of adults and kiddos have been bringing down the house with some seriously impressive shows. This cabaret evening? Well, it's not just another performance. It's a heartfelt tribute to the world of musical theatre, and a bit of a tip of the hat to our fans and supporters.

We've cherry-picked the best songs from our most beloved musicals. From solos that'll give you goosebumps to duets and group numbers that'll make you want to dance in the aisles,

we've got a bit of everything – all performed by over 25 of LAMP's most accomplished performers.

Now, we all love a good show, but this one comes with a noble purpose. It's a fundraising event aimed at ensuring LAMP continues to delight the community with two marvellous musical theatre performances each year. Every ticket purchased is a contribution towards preserving the magic of theatre in Linlithgow.

The event will be setup around an intimate ground-level 'stage' area, with table seating and a bar stocked up with both boozy and non-boozy options, plus some snacks to nibble on. Glitz and glamour are encouraged – so it's the perfect excuse for a fun dressed-up night out, all in the name of a good cause.



Want to join in on the fun? You can grab your tickets online (just scan the QR code on this page or follow the link below). Tickets are £10 a pop, or £7 if you're eligible for a concession.

So, if you're in the mood for an evening filled with great tunes, warm company, and a dash of sparkle, we've got your ticket. We can't wait to share this special night with all of you. Let's keep the LAMP light shining bright!



LAMP Cabaret – Friday 1st September, doors open 7pm for a 7.30pm start.

www.ticketsource.co.uk/linlithgowamateurmusicalproductionsboxoffice



PS. Don't forget we've also got our fabulous The Addams Family musical starting on October 10th! More on this in the next issue.

LAMP committee and members would like to congratulate the team at the Black Bitch Magazine on the milestone of 100 issues! Thank you for supporting us so well over the years.

The Lamp Committee



LINLITHGOW FOR WELLS – AND SMELLS!

Bruce Jamieson

For centuries, Linlithgow was noted for its abundant, clean water, supplied by fresh, uncontaminated streams to the south of the town and piped to public wells situated along the High Street. Prominent among them was the (now removed) West Port Well – supplying the “industrial end” of the burgh with water for domestic purposes and for manufacturing concerns such as the loch-side tanneries, Dawson’s Brewery (where St John’s Avenue is now) and the many public houses including The Black Bitch, The Commercial Inn, the Customs House, The Wheatsheaf, The Windsor Buffet and The Cross Keys.



The West Port Well. Below is St Michael’s Well.



At the eastern end of town, St Michael’s Well supplied the residents there with their water requirements – the town’s patron saint standing guard over the outlet pipe.

In the centre of town, stood the Cross Well – the original, constructed around 1535, being of the dipping variety where a constant body of water was accessed by dropping in an empty bucket to be pulled out filled to the brim. This simple, spring-fed well stood for nearly 100 years but gradually became rather dilapidated. A Town Council minute of 1628 described it as “ane deid monument and necessary to be helpit for decorment of the croce” (adornment of the Cross). John Richie was commissioned to rebuild it and to improve the piped water source from the Friars Well in what is now Rosemount Park.



The Cross Well and, below, the spring in Rosemount Park.

Linlithgow’s excellent water supply (and strict quarantine arrangements) kept out the worst of the bubonic plague pandemic which decimated the Scottish population in the mid 17th century. Such was Linlithgow’s reputation for clean water that the students and lecturers from the University of Edinburgh left the disease-ridden city and decanted to Linlithgow where lessons were delivered in St Michael’s Church. They were soon joined by the members of the Scottish Parliament (the Estates) who held their meetings in Linlithgow Palace.

With its elaborate design featuring roses and thistles (in celebration of the 1603 Union of the Crowns) as well as the Stewart unicorn and oak tree symbols, not to mention the figure bearing the slogan “God Save the King”, the structure was intensely disliked by Cromwell and his Roundhead troopers. The well was promptly vandalised and not rebuilt until after Cromwell’s death in 1658.

Local mason, James Thomson, was commissioned to repair the structure but his efforts were so badly executed that, in order to disguise his botched job, the Town Council ordered it to be painted with a mixture of linseed oil and white lead paint.

Over the next 150 years, the well’s condition grew worse and, to stop it deteriorating further, a metal railing was erected around the main structure. Eventually, in 1806, to a design by John Haldane, the “one-handed” stonemason Robert Gray set to work, totally restoring the ancient edifice back to its original form. It was

officially opened on June 4th, 1807, King George III’s 47th birthday.



John Haldane’s Cross Well, executed by Robert Gray.

The well was universally admired as “a veritable cornucopia of elaborate sculptures and ostentatious grandeur.” Along with Linlithgow’s seven other wells, the one at the Cross served the town for many years. However, by the end of the 19th century, some High Street wells were increasingly being polluted and the demand for a better, in-house supply of water was growing. In addition, the town’s population was increasing and the centuries-old method of providing water was increasingly unable to cope with demand.

The challenge was taken up by a local doctor, Andrew Gilmour, who first joined the Linlithgow Town Council in 1865, subsequently being elected Provost in 1884 - and remaining in that post for 19 years. As a medical man, Gilmour was deeply concerned by public health issues and set about investigating ways of improving the town’s amenities.

In this regard, he was helped by a new approach towards health and hygiene adopted by the British Government and several laws gave local authorities the powers to investigate and act on areas of concern. Gilmour initiated a review of conditions within the royal burgh and, to no one’s surprise, it was reported that, despite the efforts of Town Councils over many years, effluent of all kinds was still being flung into the streets – often contaminating the water in the wells and in the loch, and creating unpleasant smells.



A 1905 attempt to improve street conditions.

Also affected was the River Avon which, in addition to receiving contaminating material and human sewage from the Loch Burn, was also being affected by industrial effluent from the likes of mining and paper-making.

The Council commissioned the civil engineering firm of Warren and Stuart to come up with proposals for a new Water Works and a Sewage Disposal System and arranged for site visits to the area north of Cockleroy and to the banks of the Avon to see the pollution problem for themselves.



An inspection visit to the Avon. (Provost Gilmour in the centre in the light-coloured coat).

At the following council meeting, and with professional advice from Professor George Armstrong, engineering advisor to the Local Government Board for Scotland, several sewerage schemes were investigated. Some favoured carrying Linlithgow's effluent through a pipe leading to the tidal waters of the River Avon where it was believed that the salt water and tidal flow would "naturally purify the sewage solids." This solution, however, required the permission of the trustees of the late Duke of Hamilton – and that was unlikely to happen. Professor Armstrong also expressed the view that dumping sewage into rivers or the sea might one day be illegal!

Another point of view favoured the purchase of three acres of land planted with osiers (small willow trees) over which the sewage would be spread. Concern was expressed however at the resultant smell – and the fact that the land would gradually get clogged.

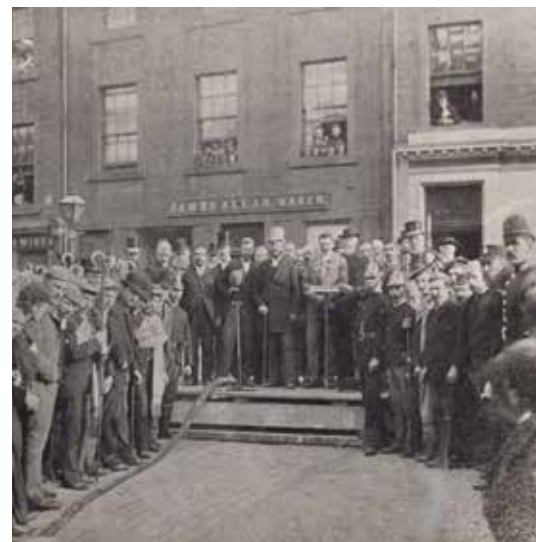
The most favoured solution was to create a filtration plant where the raw sewage would be treated with lime and alumina (aluminium oxide). However, another expert, a civil engineer called Stevenson, warned the committee that "effluent from this method is not by any means innocuous - lime especially has bad effect on fish." Mr Stevenson also asked the meeting to determine how any sewage works would cope with heavy rainfall, adding that the smell in the burgh was bad enough, and not helped by "emanations from the glue works and from the habit of tanners burning offcuts of leather in their grates."

An easier problem to solve was that of water storage and supply. Between 1889 and 1890 a reservoir was constructed at the foot of Cockleroy, in a large depression caused by the removal of puddle clay excavated to line the Union Canal. The existence of residual clay provided a watertight base for the eventual holding basin which measured 90 X 50 feet and 12 feet deep. Water was collected to fill the reservoir from a 230-acre site in specially dug channels with an additional supply from the Hiltly Spring.

A prominent feature of the new creation was a tall outlet tower from which cast iron pipes led the water to a concrete service tank which handled

130,000 gallons of water every day – enough for a town with a population at the time of around 3,000. The wells still continued to provide some water – but the new supply produced water at a much higher pressure directly into houses and industrial concerns such as the St. Magdalenes Distillery and Aitken's Brewery.

The new water supply also enabled the Linlithgow Fire Brigade to connect their hoses to hydrants placed along the High Street, supplied and fitted by the Glenfield Company of Kilmarnock. The new system was officially opened by Provost Gilmour in the early Spring of 1891.



Provost Gilmour switches on Linlithgow's new water supply with Fire Brigade members and many others in attendance.

LOCAL HISTORY ZOOM PRESENTATIONS

Bruce Jamieson is once again going to put on four Autumn presentations covering various aspects of Linlithgow's local history. Each presentation is fully illustrated with a live narration. As always, local charities will benefit from the "joining fees."

The 2023 presentations are:

WED, 6 SEPTEMBER 7.00pm
"Linlithgow and the Reign of King James V"

WED, 4 OCTOBER 7.00pm
"Mary Queen of Scots - The Sequel."

FRI, 10 NOVEMBER 7.00pm
"Linlithgow in World War Two."

THUR 7 DECEMBER 7.00pm
"Linlithgow's Fascinating Folk an' Kenspeckle Characters."

For more information please contact
bruceajamieson@yahoo.com



FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS THE RUGBY CLUB CHOIR HAS GROWN IN NUMBERS AND QUALITY

What do Bette Midler, the Beatles, Frank Sinatra and the Everley Brothers have in common?

They all feature in the repertoire of the Linlithgow Rugby Club Male Voice Choir. And that is just a small sample of the extensive and continually growing list of music that the choir is able to perform.

Formed 32 years ago, the group have developed and improved their standards and numbers such that they can put 40 singers on stage. That is quite a feat for a bunch of former rugby players who started the choir as a response to visiting Welsh teams who, after a pint or two would regale the local team with full blooded renditions from their Welsh homeland.

OPEN INVITATION

If you think you might like to join Linlithgow Rugby Football Club Male Voice Choir come along and meet the guys on our open night which is in the Mains Road clubhouse on Monday, 4 September at 7.30pm

Thanks to the encouragement and expertise of former musical director Joe Lavery it has built into its present formation, performing four-part harmonies to a list of songs which range from classical favourites through evergreen standards to modern pop hits under the directorship of Jim McGuigan.

Over the years the choir has entertained audiences internationally and has travelled to China, Canada, France (twice), Ireland, Belgium and Holland. They have also sung in two majestic venues, the Royal Albert Hall in London and the Usher Hall in Edinburgh. At home and on their travels, the choir has helped to raise many £000's for charities and good causes.

As choir chairman, Harry Lynch explains: "We have come a long way since the early years and by singing alongside choirs from all over the world have come to realise that we have improved immensely, and we are not overawed by some of the excellent international singers we have shared the stage with.

"Thanks to a very successful recruitment



Taking over as chairman of Linlithgow RFC Male Voice Choir, Harry Lynch (right) is congratulated by the outgoing chairman, Peter Russell.

campaign last year we increased our number by 40% to the 40 singers we have today. An added welcome bonus was that our average age has been substantially reduced and the quality of sound hugely enhanced.

"Our plan is to repeat the recruitment drive this summer and perhaps you would like to join us. We are holding an "Open Evening" on the evening of Monday September 4 from 7.30pm at Linlithgow Rugby Club, 42 Mains Road, Linlithgow. You will be made very welcome if you would like to come along and hear us practice and sing some of our favourite pieces. You may even want to join in.

Doubtless you may know some of the guys, but if not then chances are you could make a whole new group of friends."

The choir's most recent concert was in May of this year in St Michael's Parish Church when Linlithgow hosted two other choirs, Morrision Male Voice choir from Wales and the Septimus choir from Denmark.

The evening was a resounding success, making more than £3000 for the church's appeal to replace the iconic Crown of Thorns on the tower. It also resulted in a more than glowing report from the Danish choir's chairman Carl Hanson who, on receiving a complimentary video of the concert

wrote: "Thank you so much for sending us the recording of one of the greatest moments in our life".

He has also invited Linlithgow RFC Choir to visit Septimus in their home town of Svendborg, in Denmark, an invitation which the choir is keen to take on board in the not too distant future.

Should you wish to come along and join us on September 4 you can either contact our chairman, Harry Lynch on 07540 634550 or our secretary Gerry McLean on 07722 107067 or you can turn up at the Rugby Club in Mains Road at 7.30pm where you will be made very welcome.

THE CHOIR ON TOUR

- 2004... Beijing, China**
- 2008... Toronto, Canada**
- 2009... Belfast, N. Ireland**
- 2013... Limerick, Ireland**
- 2014... Langon, France**
- 2015... Dordrecht, Holland**
- 2016... Malmedy, Belgium**
- 2019... Langon, France**



OPEN EVENING INVITATION

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

Come and join us!

Linlithgow RFC Male Voice Choir

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

OPEN EVENING

Monday 4th, September, 7:30pm
Linlithgow Rugby Club
Mains Road, Linlithgow

Contact us:

Harry Lynch: 07540 634550

Gerry McLean: 07722 107067



www.linlithgowrfcmalevoicechoir.co.uk

www.facebook.com/linlithgowrfcmalevoicechoir



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1
SEPT



CHARITY GROUP SET FOR ANNUAL ASSAULT ON THE WEST HIGHLAND WAY.

Local charity group, **The Walk for Jock**, goes from strength to strength and on Friday September 1st, will embark on its annual assault on the West Highland Way. This year, eighteen people will tackle the 98-mile path from Milngavie to Fort William. Last year, the undertaking raised over £7500 for good causes in Linlithgow and beyond and there are great hopes that a much higher figure will be raised this year. Around £180,000 has been amassed since 2012.

The driving force behind the group is well-known local character **Davie 'Deep Sea' Paterson**. Davie walked the West Highland Way for various causes from 2008 onwards, but the loss of his elder brother **Jock** to cancer led to the establishment of a group set up to honour his memory, as Davie explained:

"I started doing the West Highland Way with pals in 2008 and it became an annual fundraising event. In 2011, the biggest-ever group took part, including my brother Jock, who loved

the experience and couldn't wait to do it again. Sadly, a few months later, he was diagnosed with cancer and died on the day before the Marches in June 2012".

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

"My best mate, Les Pattison, said 'Do the Walk for Jock, in his memory', and that's how we got the name. My cousin Audrey quipped, 'it's what you do' and we turned that into our motto 'It's what we do'".

The Walk for Jock is open to anyone who wishes to join the group in walking the West Highland Way. The only rule is that all participants nominate their favourite charity. All the money raised under the general Walk for Jock banner goes into a central pot and is distributed equally.

Participants are also encouraged to set up their own fundraising efforts, through 'Just Giving' pages on Facebook and similar initiatives.

The Taste Deli-Café at 47 High Street is the group's main sponsor and is the base for their participation in the Marches, both on the second Deacons' Night and the Marches Day itself. Owners **Lisa and Steven Wilson** are enthusiastic participants in the annual walk and this year their chosen charity will be **Alzheimers Scotland**, in memory of Lisa's Mum, **Jeanie**.

Others involved this year will include **Claire Kirkwood** and **Susan and Frank Reynolds**, in aid of the **Chest Heart and Stroke Foundation**, **Douglas "The Captain" Smith** in aid of **CALM Mental Health Charity**, and **Ben Smith and David Manderson** for **Ronald McDonald House, Glasgow**, in memory of **Harley McKenna**.

Over the years, I have heard so many stories about walking the West Highland Way with the Walk for Jock and always admired those who gave up their time to do it. This year, I am delighted that I will be joining the intrepid band and I am already very much looking forward to meeting everybody else on September 1st in Taste Deli-Café at 6.15am for a quick cup of coffee before we embark for the starting point at Milngavie. I am raising funds for the **Scottish Stammering Network**, the dedicated charity supporting and empowering those who stammer.

No doubt, there will be a few tales to tell after this year, so watch this space!!

Davie Paterson and the other group members would like to thank all this year's sponsors who have made the walk possible.

Murdoch Kennedy







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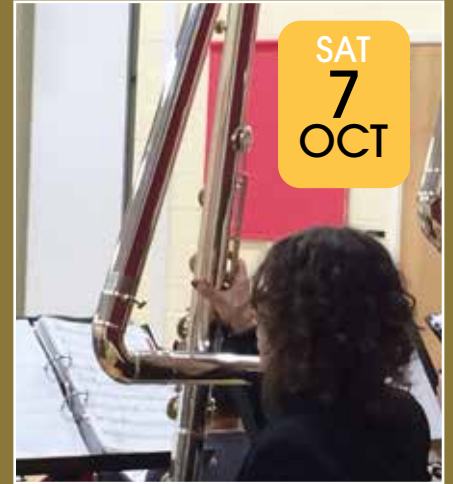
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FABULOUS FLUTE SPECTACLE TO COME TO LINLITHGOW



SAT
7
OCT



The flute is very in vogue this year, with pop sensation Lizzo promoting it on stage and on the red carpet. But it is also the instrument of choice of lots of other surprising but well-known faces. Sir Keir Starmer and Katherine, Princess of Wales played flute in school. And French international and Paris St Germaine footballer Killian Mbappe studied flute at the Paris Conservatoire. Annie Lennox of Eurythmics fame was a flute major at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and American President George Washington and artist Leonardo da Vinci were also flautists (or should that be flutists? A word that's always up for debate).

Flute fans will be pleased to know that Linlithgow will be hosting a concert in October by **Flutes Unlimited**, an award-winning Glasgow-based flute choir, and **Flutes & Co**, a Kendal-based flute orchestra. The two groups are joining forces for a performance on **October 7th in St Michael's Parish Church**, and the line-up will include everything from the tiny piccolo to the massive contra-bass flute – so large that it has to be played vertically, towering above the head of the player.

These large flutes are very expensive, and so therefore little seen, but they are amazing to behold, resonating fulsome deep notes like the double bass of the string section in an orchestra.

The flute choirs (so-called because of their ability to 'sing like voices') also include bass flutes and alto flutes, producing a vivid variety of sounds and a beautiful blend.

The two groups have been performing together since first collaborating in 2018, putting on joint concerts in Scotland and the Lake District.

More info:

Flutes Unlimited – including Linlithgow's very own **KIRSTY BALL** – is a community flute choir for players of around Grade 5 to advanced, for all ages – from school age to teachers! They rehearse weekly in Shawlands, Glasgow on Sunday nights, and perform around 4 times a year in Glasgow and across central Scotland. Their musical director, **Andrea Kuypers**, is a freelance performer and educator, working both home and abroad. She is the flute tutor for Napier University and runs an annual flute retreat in Eastwood House, Dunkeld. Find out more at www.flutesunlimited.co.uk and www.kuypers.co.uk.

Flutes and Co is based in Kendal and is led by Sue Nicholls, who studied music at Lancaster University and has been the group's musical director since the mid noughties. Their members are drawn from across Cumbria, and they welcome players of all levels and ages, running workshops for beginners and returners as well as more experienced

players. They are an adventurous lot, who enjoy playing in a variety of locations, including outdoors in the beautiful Lakeland countryside. **Flutes & Co** are on Facebook.

Concert details:

St Michael's Parish Church, Linlithgow
6-7.30pm, Saturday October 7th

Tickets: £10 (£8 concession) from www.flutesunlimited.co.uk or at the door (cash or contactless card payment accepted).

Murdoch Kennedy



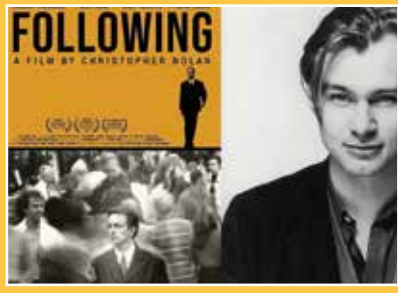
FILM REVIEW: CALVIN SINCLAIR LINLITHGOW ACADEMY CHRISTOPHER NOLAN'S 'FOLLOWING'

Christopher Nolan is one of the most widely acclaimed directors working today. His list of achievements include action blockbusters like 'The Dark Knight' and 'Inception' as well as more mind twisting conceptual movies like 'Memento' and 'The Prestige'.

His latest movie 'Oppenheimer' (currently in cinemas) is one of his biggest films to date. It boasts a massive budget to pay for both the star studded cast (including the likes of Cillian Murphy, Emily Blunt, Matt Damon, Robert Downey Jr, and many more big names) and his more traditional methods of film-making such as his preference for practical visual effects and shooting on 70mm IMAX film. However, there was a time where he didn't have access to any of these things. All he had at his disposal was a £6000 budget, a handheld camera and a handful of his mates. This was how he made his debut feature film 'Following'.

'Following' is a sort of noir thriller being shot entirely on black and white. This was both a practical and stylistic measure. 'Following' is about a writer who takes up the pastime of following around strangers to get inspiration for his characters. One day he ends up following a man called Cobb who burgles houses. Cobb notices his follower and invites him to come along to a burglary and the young writer really begins to get a taste for it.

Due to the budget the cast is sparse and composed mainly of Nolan's friends and family. The locations are numbered and all very practical to shoot in including places like rooftops, the flats of the cast and crew members, crowded streets, and even Nolan's parent's house. The film was shot on weekends as everybody involved had full time jobs. It took the better part of a year to shoot.



The movie was limited in scale, especially in comparison to all of Nolan's later works, however he knew this while writing and wrote a story that suited the scrappier film style that was all they could conceivably achieve. As a result it's a very grounded movie. It doesn't feature much action and what little there is just consists of some play fighting and people bashing one another with a rubber hammer. The movie is more concerned with the plot and atmosphere. It enjoys keeping you on edge and aims to put you in the shoes of the main character who, for the majority of

the movie, is just as confused and disoriented as the viewer. Just as elements of the story are kept from him, the movie tells the story to the viewer in a disorganised, non-linear way. It plants seeds without proper context behind them until the end, when all is revealed and then makes sense.

This method of storytelling invests and includes the viewer which, in turn, elevates a story that would not be half as interesting if told chronologically. It's an interesting technique that Nolan would go on to really expand on in many of his later films most notably 'Memento'.

Being a debut 'Following' of course has some shortcomings. Some editing is awkward, the acting isn't great, and Nolan really showcases his apparent inability to write compelling female characters which will certainly go on to plague his later films.

Despite all of the difficulties of indie production, the movie was released to festivals and enjoyed relative success. Enough to jumpstart Nolan's career anyway. Even through the weaknesses, it's quite good for what is effectively a feature length student film and it's an interesting point in Nolan's career to revisit and contrast with some of his later massive budget blockbusters.

INDEPENDENT'S DAY

HERE'S SOMETHING NEW FOR YOUR DIARY,
ON SATURDAY 26TH AUGUST - LINLITHGOW
INDEPENDENT'S DAY!



A day to celebrate all the amazing and diverse independent businesses operating in Linlithgow. Lots of your favourite shops, cafes and other businesses will be offering special discounts and giveaways, please check the Linlithgow High Street Trader's Facebook page for more details on who's taking part and individual offers, or look out for the posters around town!



JUNIOR PARKRUN OPENS IN LINLITHGOW



SINCE STARTING 19 YEARS AGO, PARKRUN HAS BECOME A REMARKABLE GLOBAL SUCCESS STORY. LAST MONTH IT ARRIVED IN LINLITHGOW...

What is parkrun?

The parkrun concept is unusual, in that nobody makes a profit and the events are always free for participants. It started out as a tiny event run by friends and has grown ever since. The idea is to promote wellbeing through running/walking. There are 5km parkrun events for adults and 2km junior parkruns (for children, ages 4 - 14).

There are now over 2,000 parkruns around the world, with over 100 here in Scotland (including junior events). Each weekend, a staggering quarter of a million people around the world will participate in a parkrun.

The new Linlithgow event is a junior parkrun: for 4 to 14 year olds and their families. It takes place at the new West

Lothian Cycle Circuit every Sunday morning (see <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/westlothiancyclecircuit-juniors>).

The parkrun ethos is to provide a friendly inclusive setting, which celebrates participation ahead of performance. These events are therefore not framed as 'races', however participants are encouraged to register with parkrun (again - see the website for details).

If this sounds good, but you're older than 14, then your nearest parkrun for grown-ups can be found on the website - there are events across West Lothian, Falkirk and Edinburgh.

Bringing parkrun to Linlithgow

Although the event itself is always free to participants, there are initial costs to be met. This covers the expense of setting up the event and the necessary equipment.

For Linlithgow these costs were borne equally between Linlithgow Athletic Club (using proceeds raised from the annual 10k event) and also Cala Homes. The Linlithgow Community Development Trust was also vital here enabling use of the cycle circuit

every Sunday morning on an ongoing basis.

There was a festive atmosphere on 16th July, for the inaugural Linlithgow event. A grand total of 86 participants enjoyed a breezy but dry run around the cycle circuit. This was a good turnout considering the relative lack of publicity, and the fact that many families are on holiday at this time of year. Why not get your kids down to the next one? - they are held every Sunday morning. Adults are permitted to accompany kids. Just remember to register first at the website mentioned above.

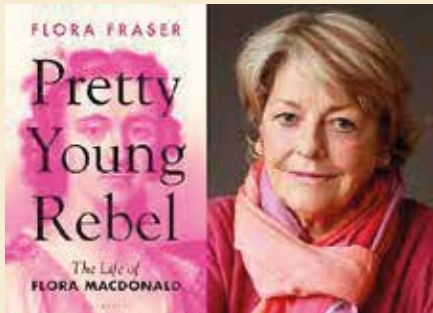
The free nature of parkrun requires volunteers - to run the event safely and efficiently each week. This requires a core team of 5 people who commit to running the event, plus a broader network of volunteers who pitch in to help from time to time. If you can spare an hour on a Sunday morning, and you'd like to help out - please email: westlothiancyclecircuitjuniors@parkrun.com

Gerry McArdle

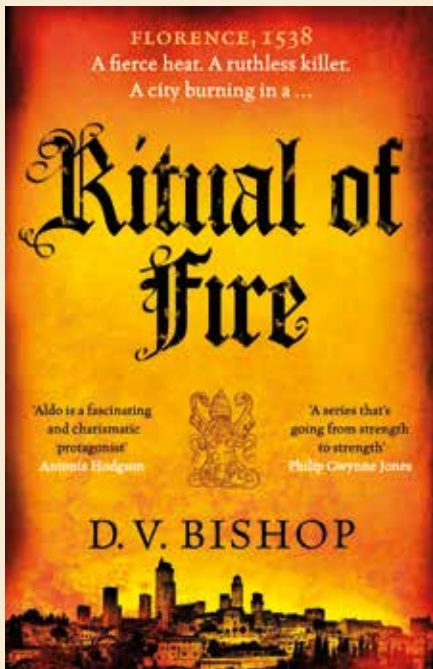
Above: Provost Elizabeth Park cutting the ribbon. Photography: Roddy Simpson.

AN AUTUMN TREAT FOR BOOK LOVERS

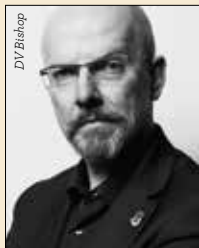
Far From The Madding Crowd Bookshop has organised a sparkling line-up of events for you this autumn!



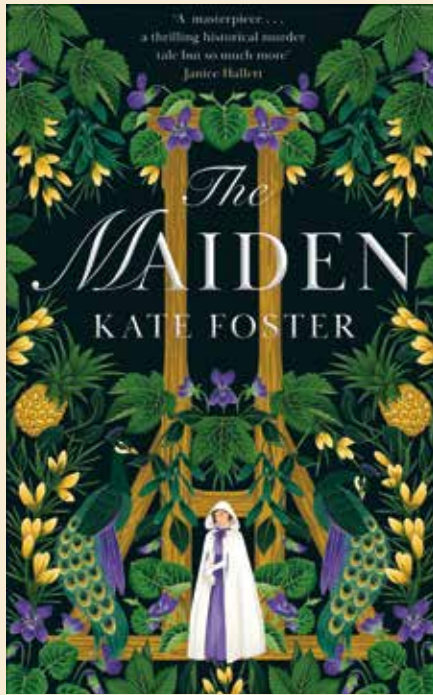
We begin our autumn season of events with a visit from **Flora Fraser** who'll be here to discuss *Pretty Young Rebel*, the definitive biography of her namesake Flora MacDonal. We all know the Jacobite heroine rescued Bonnie Prince Charlie, but that was only the beginning of her adventures! **Join us in St Peter's Church at 7pm on Wednesday 20th September to find out more.**



Next up is an evening of historical crime fiction, with a duo of authors who write about very different places and times. **DV Bishop** has just won a CWA Dagger Award for his Cesare Aldo series set in and around renaissance Florence and **Kate Foster** has won critical acclaim for *The Maiden*, set in 17th century Edinburgh and based on the real life murder trial of Lady



Christian Nimmo which scandalised the nation. **We'll be delving deep into the darker side of history on Wednesday 11th October at 7pm in St Peter's Church.**

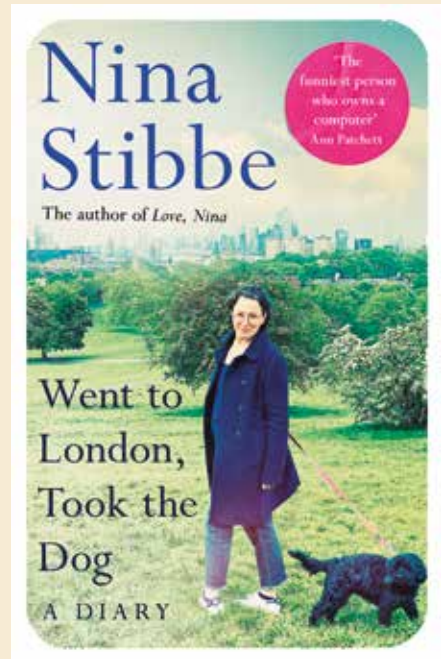


The following week, **Allan Radcliffe** will be here to talk about his beautifully written debut novel, *The Old Haunts*. Set in a town in central Scotland (Allan hails from South Queensferry), it deals with relationships, ageing and coming to terms with grief in such a simple, yet powerful way.

I loved this book and can't wait to discuss it with Allan on Wednesday 18th October at 7pm in St Peter's Church.

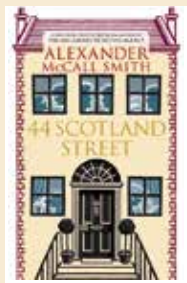


In November, we've got some real treats for fans of funny books and authors! **Nina Stibbe** is the best-selling author of *Love, Nina*. She's back with another instalment of her diaries with *Went to London, Took the Dog* which covers the year she ran away to London aged 61.



It's as funny, heart-warming, and real as all of her writing, and is guaranteed to make us all laugh! **Nina is visiting Linlithgow on Thursday 9th November and we're really privileged to be hosting an event with her at 7pm in St Peter's Church, all are welcome!**

And finally, we are delighted to welcome **Alexander McCall Smith** back to Linlithgow! Celebrating 25 years of the **No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency**, plus the first Scotland Street Recipe Book.



Join us in the magnificent surroundings of St Michael's Church on Wednesday 15th November at 7pm as we celebrate one of Scotland's best loved authors, and the owner of the best giggle in the business!

All of these events are ticketed, and tickets can be purchased in Far From The Madding Crowd Bookshop on the High Street, or online: www.maddingcrowdlinlithgow.com

For more information on any of these events, or anything else that's happening at the book shop, please email: info@maddingcrowdlinlithgow.com

Solar for the Savvy

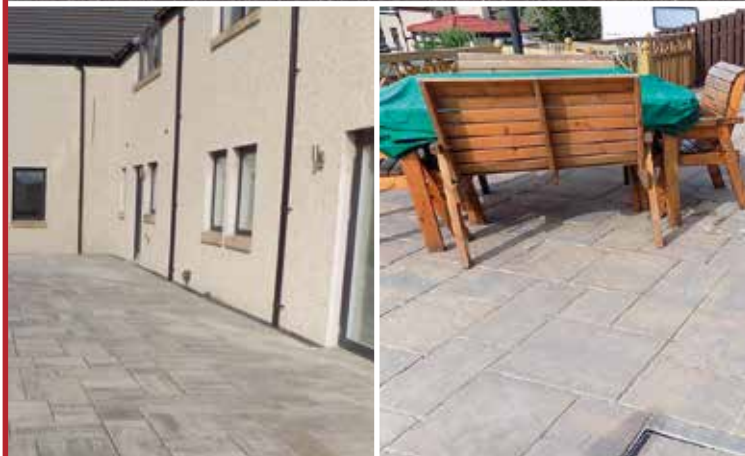


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Cover your family *with love*

Like it or not, insurance to protect you and your family from the worst is important. So here's a quick guide to what's what in life, illness and income protection, and how to make them work for you

Nobody looks forward to tackling their life assurance, critical illness plans or income protection. Unlike a mortgage, investment or pension, there's nothing aspirational about them either. They can seem like just another load of household expenses.

We understand that it's all too easy to bury your head in the sand. There are so many excuses, after all. From the classics, 'It'll never happen to me' and 'We can't afford it', to the ever-hopeful 'My employer will look after me if something awful happens'.

We understand it's all too easy to bury your head in the sand

Let's talk life insurance

There are two types of life insurance and both pay out lump sums when you die. Term insurance provides cover over a pre-determined period only, while whole of life assurance continues until you die. With the latter, a payout is guaranteed. So which is best for you? Think about who the insurance is for and why. How much cover do you need and for how long? It's also worth checking whether your employer provides a death in service benefit.

If you're looking at term insurance to provide security for your family, it might be worth considering 'family income benefit' as an alternative. Rather than a lump sum, this pays out a regular income until the end of a specified period and is relatively inexpensive.

What about illness cover?

Critical illness cover (CIC) pays out a lump sum if you're diagnosed with one of a specific range of conditions, from heart complaints and cancers to rarer diseases. Typically, a policy will cover 40-50 conditions. These can vary considerably, however, which makes it tricky to compare like with like.

You can buy CIC as an extension to life insurance or as a standalone product. The right option will depend on personal circumstances.

Income protection gives you a regular income if you become unable to work due to sickness or disability. It's the most expensive of these insurance options, as it's the most likely to be called upon. It's also one that's often overlooked, typically because people think that prolonged health problems are covered by their employer. Sadly, this is rarely the case, so make sure you check.

If you're trying to prioritise, you're more likely to need income protection than critical illness and more likely to need critical illness than life assurance. Consider a survey by the Financial Conduct Authority (Financial Lives survey 2020, updated February 2021), which reveals 39% of adults saying that, were they to lose their main source of income, they'd be able to cover less than three months' living expenses. That's more than 20 million people – and their families – at risk.

For the average family, income protection is probably the most important type of cover

There are savings to be had, however. Cover becomes cheaper, for example, if you're prepared to extend the length of time before the replacement income kicks in. Short-term income protection contracts that pay out for between two and four years are another relatively affordable option.

Get in touch

We'd love to help you secure your family's financial safety net. At St. James's Place we're proud to offer tailored solutions and access to our carefully selected insurance panel.

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Kayleigh Dorrian
Principal

**St
James's
Place**

500 MILES AND 500 MORE:

LOCAL LASS WALKING 1000 MILES IN 2023 IN AID OF MY NAME'S DODDIE FOUNDATION AND ALZHEIMER SCOTLAND



Over the course of this year, Pamela Amatller (currently a Literacy Officer with West Lothian Council) is taking on a sponsored walk with a difference. She is walking in aid of My Name's Doddie Foundation and Alzheimer Scotland. Pamela has given herself the challenge of walking 1000 miles in total, with monies raised being split equally between the charities.

Pamela tells us *"I signed up to Doddie Aid 2023 in January and gave myself the challenge of walking 100 miles over the 6 weeks. I know this doesn't sound like much for some people. But for an unfit and very busy 40-something whose commitments are numerous, the REAL challenge was going to be time to get out walking."*

In addition to working full-time and having two teenagers in the house, Pamela also helps husband Philippe with the admin for his business Highfield Garden Services. Outside of work and home, Pamela is a member of Bo'ness Old Kirk, distributes the Black Bitch magazine in her street, and enjoys the role of accompanist for Linlithgow Rugby Club Male Voice Choir. She is also a member of LAMP who are currently rehearsing for 'The Addams Family', to be performed in October.

Pamela explains *"During the 6 weeks of walking for Doddie Aid, I had plenty of time to think. And as I got to enjoying my regular time outdoors I thought about extending the challenge. With the lyrics of the famous Proclaimers hit ringing in my ears, I asked myself 'Could I really manage 500 miles and 500 more.....???'"*

Since the beginning of the year, Pamela has done numerous walks around Linlithgow and the immediate vicinity, the Union Canal and Beecraigs routes being favourites. She uses Strava to count the mileage which she logs on a spreadsheet. In terms of longer walks, she has done several circuits at Strathelyde Country Park and Holme Pierrepont Country Park in Nottingham (while eldest son attends kayaking events). In early July, Pamela completed the Fife Coastal Trail, walking solo from North

Queensferry to St. Andrews over 5 days. At the time of writing, Pamela has clocked up around 540 miles so still has some way to go to reach her goal. Although she has reached her original fundraising target of £1,000, Pamela would love to see this number rise further before the end of the year.

She tells us *"I have created an online Blog about my walking challenge, where I post photos, Strava screenshots and short videos. People are welcome to visit my Blog to read more. I have two charities closest to my heart. The first is My Name's Doddie Foundation (my Grandpa died from Motor Neuron Disease in 1980). Our family supported MND Scotland for many years and recently I began following the inspirational stories of rugby legends Doddie Weir and Rob Burrow. The second charity is Alzheimer Scotland (for those that don't know, my lovely Dad was diagnosed with this disease back in 2013). Unfortunately Dad died in July this year after his 10-year battle with Alzheimer's disease."*

Since receiving this devastating news, Pamela's walking has taken a bit of a back seat. However she is determined to finish the challenge in his memory.

Locals are encouraged to support Pamela's fundraising efforts by making a donation via the online fundraising page 'Give As you Live'. Also feel free to give her a wave if you see her out walking in the town as she heads towards her 1000 mile target.

Please donate here:



Visit my Blog:



My Name's Doddie Foundation (registered charity number SCO047871) was launched in November 2017 with the vision: **"A world free of MND"**. Doddie Weir OBE was one of rugby's most recognisable personalities. He earned 61 caps for Scotland during a successful playing career, represented the

British and Irish Lions on their successful tour to South Africa in 1997, and won championships with his two club sides, Melrose and Newcastle Falcons. A talented, committed and athletic lock forward, Doddie then faced his biggest challenge. In June 2017 the Scot revealed he was suffering from Motor Neuron Disease. Sadly the charity's founder passed away in November 2022. MND is a disease which affects the motor neurons of the nervous system. It is life shortening and mostly progresses rapidly. MND damages and attacks the nerves, meaning that messages being sent from the brain to the muscles no longer work.



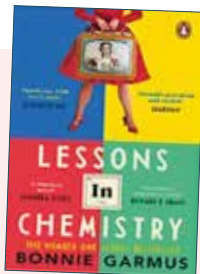
Alzheimer Scotland (registered charity number SC022315) provides information, support and dementia-friendly activities to help make sure nobody faces dementia alone. Dementia is not part of the natural ageing process. Dementia affects the brain, making it harder to remember things or think as clearly as before. It's an umbrella term for over 100 different types of illnesses and disease symptoms. Symptoms of dementia may include memory loss and difficulties with day to day tasks, language and problem-solving. Alzheimer Scotland campaigns for:

- » A timely diagnosis with structured support after diagnosis
- » Support to live well with dementia, in your local community
- » Support to live as a carer of someone with dementia
- » Good quality healthcare, from professionals who understand dementia
- » Support to manage all the needs of advanced dementia and end of life
- » Equality of access to health and nursing care, free at the point of use

Lessons in Chemistry

Bonnie Garmus

"Your days are numbered. Use them to throw open the windows of your soul to the sun".



Lessons in Chemistry is the debut novel for copywriter turned novelist, Bonnie Garmus. Set in Southern California, in the early 1960s, the storyline addresses key issues of equality, ambition, professional integrity and parenthood in a humorous and interesting way. The novel's protagonist, Elizabeth Zott, is a female scientist during a period in history where society is male-dominated in every aspect of personal and public life. We see through Elizabeth's viewpoint that opportunities for men and women are not equal.

Elizabeth's serious, earnest approach to life has an impact on everyone she meets. She is a hugely intelligent, strong, articulate woman who is making great strides in the field of research chemistry at the Hastings Institute, despite the challenges of her gender. Garmus shines a spotlight on the conscious and unconscious bias faced by Elizabeth by her male contemporaries, superiors and – perhaps most disappointingly – other women. While other scientists are being readily celebrated for their more mediocre discoveries, we realise that for Elizabeth every day is a battle to be valued, and her work attributed correctly to her own efforts.

"As humans, we're by-products of our upbringings, victims of our lackluster educational systems, and choosers of our behaviors. In short, the reduction of women to something less than men, and the elevation of men to something more than women, is not biological: it's cultural."

Only one other scientist sees beyond the stereotypes of gender and intellect to fully recognise the brilliance and potential of Elizabeth Zott's research studies. He is Calvin Evans, the reclusive Nobel prize-nominated scientist. After an initial awkward and insulting first meeting, Zott and Evans develop huge professional admiration for one another, which quickly turns into marriage. A chemical reaction of lightning speed. They are both unique in personality and outlook, with adverse childhood experiences, and this draws them together in a respectful match.

"It wasn't that he couldn't function without her, he told Four Seat, but rather that he didn't see the point of functioning without her. "I don't know what to call it," he'd confided following a full examination. "Am I addicted to her? Am I dependent in some sick sort of way? Could I have a brain tumor?" "Jesus, Six, it's called happiness," Four Seat explained. "When's the wedding?"

Tragedy ensues, of epic proportions, which culminates in Elizabeth finding herself an unemployed single mother, ill-equipped to cope with the practicalities of a patriarchal society. Garmus unleashes a series of misfortunate events upon Elizabeth that are devastating and frustrating in equal measure – miscommunication, bad timing and misunderstandings mean that life conspires against Elizabeth in the harshest of ways. Readers are drawn to her stoic response, and no nonsense drive for life. Her struggle against humanity is real and raw, yet giving up is never an option for her.

To say that Elizabeth Zott is a survivor is an understatement. To support herself and her baby daughter, she accepts a role in television, presenting a daytime television programme, aimed at housewives. It was never intended to be widely appealing, nor more than a piece of light entertainment to appease bored housewives until their husbands returned from work. However, Elizabeth's no-nonsense approach, combined with her advice on nutrition, self-worth and family values meant that an awakening occurred. She challenged women to push against the status quo, to push against the glass ceiling, and in turn started a chain reaction across the nation by empowering women to view the importance of what they were contributing to family life – to future generations – and not to accept a lower status in life just because that was what society at that time was promoting for them.

"Whenever you feel afraid, just remember. Courage is the root of change – and change is what we're chemically designed to do."

Lessons in Chemistry is a pacy, original story that is shrewdly observant, witty and inventive. It has an interesting cast of characters, and makes for an enjoyable summertime read.

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



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HAPPY VISITORS...

Christine and Vernon Burton

My wife and I, following our retirements, had decided to spend an extended time away from our native Australia in Italy and the U.K.

After much research my wife decided our second stay in the U. K. would be in Scotland in the small village of Linlithgow. Our friends in Australia were most perplexed as, no one we knew, had heard of Linlithgow. My wife's research noted that Linlithgow had great transport links to Edinburgh and Glasgow and it was the birth place of a most important person in Scottish history, Mary Queen of Scots.

At school we had learnt mainly about British history with little focus on Scotland's rich history. Happily our stay in Linlithgow with trips to Edinburgh, Glasgow and into the Scottish Highlands has given us a much more rounded knowledge of U.K. history.

We have so enjoyed our stay in Linlithgow and I am sure that it will remain our favourite stop in our whole trip. While the weather is a little



different to what we are used to, the cool conditions are very much tempered by the warmth and friendliness of the community.

We will long remember our morning walks along the Union Canal and around the Loch. We had great fun watching the Jousting and sitting down and enjoying a lunch of "haggis nippes and tatties" with whisky mustard sauce. We felt as welcome in St Michael's church on Sundays as we did in The Four Mary's for an afternoon pint and a delicious bowl of Cullen Skink. We did have to google the translation of both dishes.

Tomorrow will be a somber day as we take our luggage past Platform 3 of the Star and Garter to the train station to depart Linlithgow. A sign on one of the beautiful gardens in Learmonth Park is what we will carry with us as we depart Linlithgow it read

"In memory of good kind folk".

LINLITHGOW ARTS GUILD NEW SEASON

CLASSICAL MUSIC CONCERTS IN LINLITHGOW

Linlithgow Arts Guild has launched its new series of classical music concerts for the Linlithgow community, running from August to April 2024. A postcard of the events is being distributed with this magazine.

This will be its 54th consecutive season of bringing professional performers to the town, at which everyone is

welcome. Full details are available on the Arts Guild's website at <https://www.linlithgowartsguild.org.uk>

A voluntary organisation, and registered charity, the Guild now offers the only programme of professional classical music in West Lothian. It expects to spend about £25,000 this season and will rely mainly on sales of tickets and memberships to recover the costs, also

supported by a grant from Creative Scotland and some sponsorship from local businesses for which it is very grateful.

Following some free fundraising events in August, the new series starts on **Saturday 2nd September** with a concert in Linlithgow Academy played by the **Whitburn Band - Scottish Champions** and current holders of the UK Grand Shield, who are about to bid for the UK title. They will play a championship programme, and this should appeal to the whole community.

FROM
2
SEPT

Sat Sept 2 Whitburn Band Championship Programme	Sat Sept 30 Philip Higham & Alasdair Beatson Cello and Piano	Sat Oct 21 Trio Balthasar Piano trio	Sun Nov 12 Aaron Azunda Akugbo and Zeynep Özsuca Trumpet and Piano
Linlithgow Academy 7.30pm	Linlithgow Primary 7.30pm	Linlithgow Primary 7.30pm	St. Michael's Church 7.30pm

Many of the performers have won awards during their training and in international competitions and some are already household names, or will be in the future - the Arts Guild's stated aim is to bring "Excellence in the Arts" to Linlithgow.



MALAWI KIDS GET A KICK OUT OF ROSE FOOTBALL KIT

Budding young footballers in the east African country of Malawi have been kitted out by Linlithgow Rose Football Club, as part of a Scottish Government-backed project designed to increase sporting opportunities for young people in what is one of the poorest countries in the world.

The help from the Rose came about through involvement with a group called "Strips4Malawi", which is part of a network of collaborating partners across Scotland, who all have the same goal of helping Malawian communities develop sports.

A spokesman told us: *"Ekwaiweni Tafika Sports Academy (ETSA) is one of several youth organisations we are helping in Malawi and by May 2023, they had set up over 200 sports teams (football, netball, volleyball, and rugby). ETSA organise the teams, provide coaches and referees and also offer a pathway for the youth from their region to reach the national teams. They now have players in the Malawian Netball, Volleyball and Football youth teams"*.

"Sport is being used as a means for behaviour change and ETSA tell us it reduces teenage pregnancies and alcoholism and improves the school grades for participating students."

Sport also glues communities together, giving a reason for large crowds to turn out on a Saturday to watch the match and cheer on their team. Crowds are large and one of our networks - "Talk about Tsetse" - uses the crowds at matches to pass on information about local health issues. Other organisations we work with include Play Football Malawi and Play Soccer Malawi".

The Strips4Malawi network provides teams with strips and footwear donated from across the UK and are currently sending 30-40 boxes of sports equipment every 6 months. Linlithgow Rose sent two boxes of equipment at the back end of last year and recently received word that the vital gear had arrived.

Ray French from the organisation contacted Rose President, Jonathan Mahoney and told him: *"I'm writing to confirm that the boxes of Linlithgow Rose strips that the club were kind enough to donate to our Strips4Malawi initiative last October have now been delivered to a couple of our partner academies in Malawi, specifically ETSA in the north of the country and Play Football Malawi (PFM) in the capital Lilongwe"*.

"These strips make a huge difference to the motivation and morale of the players who attend these academies. Being able to play wearing a full set of strips is a terrific boost to their self-esteem and

encourages the players to stay active, eat well (not always easy in Malawi) and ultimately contribute positively to society".

Davie Mpima of PFM also expressed his thanks: *"On behalf of Play Football Malawi Academy and myself, we really appreciate how the Academy is being motivated with the kit donated to us. A big thank you to Linlithgow Rose FC and all the people of Scotland who have donated these items. We really appreciate it"*.

Jonathan Mahoney commented: *"We were delighted to be part of the Strips4Malawi initiative. Stuart McIntyre does a brilliant job looking after our kit, so we were able to donate three full sets, all of which were in great condition"*.

"It's easy to forget how fortunate our players are to have access to the facilities and equipment that are available to them but football is a truly global sport and the initiative the Scottish Government has spearheaded really does help to grow the game in areas where things are a bit more difficult."

MURDOCH KENNEDY



LADAS OAKWELL ALLOTMENTS IN AUGUST



The beautiful weather earlier on in the summer has been followed by wet, cooler days. Growth seems to have slowed down. The wet weather has brought out the slugs and snails! They can create havoc in lettuce beds and brassica beds. But not all slugs damage plants. The larger ones eat decaying or dead plant material and they are an important part of the composting process. Slugs are most active after dark, especially when it is warm and damp.

Many of us have home remedies to try to reduce the damage done by these gastropods, including pine bark mulch, crushed eggshells, copper tape, wool pellets and horticultural grit. But do they work? A research project carried out for the Royal Horticultural Society suggests that some home remedies may not be worth using. In fact, the research found there was no difference in the damage caused with or without the pest barriers listed above, with the exception of copper tape where there was a hint that this could be useful. The conclusion was that to be effective other solutions need to be found.

Controls that do work such as organic slug pellets or nematodes are available but can be costly when trying to deal with a large growing space. Other suggestions are picking off the slugs at night. Not pleasant! In my experience this is useful when trying to deal with a small growing area but not when the area is large, and the slugs that produce



the most damage are the small slugs which are not as easy to find. The snail population is unlikely to be reduced by the use of slug pellets. Probably the best solution when growing organically is to accept that there will be loss of produce and to try to create a wild life haven for predators such as birds and frogs that feed on gastropods.

At this time of year one of the main tasks is harvesting, and, of course, with this weather the other main task is weeding. There is a constant battle to keep on top of the weeds which are growing profusely.



What to do in your fruit and vegetable garden in August

- >> Summer cabbages, broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, courgettes (there always seems to be a glut!), peas, French beans, runner beans, spinach, carrots and beetroot are all being harvested this month.
- >> First and second early potatoes are in storage and main crop potatoes can be lifted at the end of this month and into September. Harvesting potatoes is like digging for hidden treasure! Eating steamed freshly dug potatoes at this time of year is a great pleasure, especially when served with butter and mint. If you want a few new potatoes at Christmas, they can be planted in a large tub at the end of August and protected from frost by keeping in a greenhouse or sunny porch.
- >> Garlic, onions and shallots should be kept in a dry place to let them dry out for storing.
- >> Hopefully the warm, sunny weather will return after the wet July to ripen the sweetcorn and squash. Feeding will help the growth of sweetcorn and squash.
- >> Continue to work out what you can do to fill empty spaces. For example lettuce e.g. tom thumb, and radish. This is a good time to sow pak choi and spinach to produce a late summer crop. Black radish is another crop worth trying. The seeds can be sown in a space where early peas have been. It is a root vegetable but it is a member of the brassica family and so should be planted where legumes have been grown previously but any space in your veg plot would do.
- >> It is a good time to sow vegetables for overwintering. Some suggestions are salad onions e.g. apache; spinach e.g. giant winter, broad beans, e.g. aquadulce claudia, spring cabbage e.g. wintergreen (these can be started in modules before planting out. It is best to give them some protection with fleece or cloches during the winter and to give them a high nitrogen feed such as bloodmeal in the spring).
- >> Cut down to ground level the stems of summer raspberries which have borne fruit this year. They will look brown and will show signs of having carried fruit.
- >> Consider growing green manure in bare soil as crops are cleared from beds. Buckwheat sown now is easy to grow. It germinates quickly and provides plenty of organic matter when cut down before flowering. Forage Rye is also a good green manure which overwinters and can be dug in in the Spring.

Val Corry,
Chair LADAS





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SKIN CONDITION – Aging, Discolouration, Redness-prone, Sensitive.

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SKIN CONDITION – Aging, Blemish-Prone, Discolouration.

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FOUR

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Viewing Property - Key Questions

For this edition of the magazine we thought it might be useful to publish a list of questions we think buyers should ask an agent or vendor when viewing property for sale. The aim being to help potential buyers to find out as much as possible not just about a property, but the circumstances and motivations of the sellers, so that they can decide if they are interested in a property and help them negotiate an offer.

Why are the current owners looking to sell the house?

This information will help when it comes to putting in an offer. It's good to find out if they are very motivated sellers who may need to move quickly, or if they've just put their home on the market to see what kind of interest it gets. This also gives you a guide on how quickly you would likely need to act, should you be interested in the property.

Is the property part of a chain?

If the seller has already found their next property, this could present an opportunity to you - particularly if you are in a strong position, having already sold or have no need to sell. Ask the agent or seller when they are looking to move and if a date of entry has been agreed for their onward purchase. If however, the seller is still actively looking - flexibility, on your part as a buyer, may be appealing.

How long has the house been on the market?

The time it takes to sell a property varies depending on local market demand, the price, and type of property, so it shouldn't put you off if it's been on for a few months. If it's been on the market for longer than six months there could be an opportunity to negotiate on the

asking price, unless it's already been reduced recently; in which case the seller will likely want to give the price reduction a chance to take effect.

Has the house had any major building work done recently?

Any previous building work will usually be mentioned in either the Home Report or the listing itself. However, it is still worth clarifying that the necessary permissions were obtained. If they were not, it is up to the seller to approach their local council and get the necessary paperwork issued, this is best done well in advance of any sale as it can take a number of weeks, or even months. It is worth checking the planning section of the local council website for any previous planning permission - depending on the time elapsed, these usually contain the plans for the work as well.

What's the parking situation?

This question may be particularly relevant if you are considering purchasing a flat, it is worthwhile asking the agent or seller if there is designated parking available. It is also worth asking if there is visitor parking available. Any designated parking space should be detailed on the title deeds for the property. If you are purchasing a house and only on-street parking is available, it is worth observing the neighbouring properties to see if a driveway can be created - note you would have to contact the council, should you wish to lower the kerb.

How much are the utility bills?

Recent rises in energy costs and the growing focus on energy efficient homes has seen this become a more important factor. Have a look at the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), available on the property listing, to see how energy efficient the house is. The EPC

will tell you the current rating from A-G and the potential rating if the energy efficiency is improved.

What amenities does the area have to offer?

Investigating the location properly is massively important, particularly if you're new to the area - identify what factors are of the greatest importance to you and ask questions based on these; for example if you are regularly commuting you may wish to ask the seller/agent questions on what transport links are on offer. If schooling is a factor, you may wish to view the School League Tables which are available online.

What's included in the sale?

Get as much information as you can here. For example, will any white goods, such as a dishwasher or washing machine, be included in the price? Having these essentials already in the house will make the move feel a lot smoother as you spend the following days and weeks unpacking. If items such as white goods are not included in the sale, you will likely want to arrange new items to be delivered soon after the date of entry.

Are there any factor fees or residents fees?

In some developments, particularly where there are communal areas, there may be a factor who looks after this and therefore a charge for doing so. A factor is usually appointed by the developer when the development is first built. Residents should be given details of what is included in the factor agreement and therefore what areas the fees contribute towards maintaining. Sometimes the factor fee will also include buildings insurance - clarify this with the seller or agent as if not, you will be required to arrange this yourself.

Hello
I'm Rupert
Clarke

Rupert is a six year old, tabby and white, domestic shorthaired cat.

Rupert's owner describes him as a friendly yet independent cat who likes his own space. He very much likes to say hello, and enjoys a head rub, but he isn't a cuddly cat - interactions are on his terms.

He makes his owner smile the way he comes running back to the front garden when he hears her car coming home, and proceeds to roll about at the front door to say hello (but don't touch the fluffy tummy!) Also, his cute little meow - it really doesn't match his size.

His favourite thing to do is asking to come in the back door, checking his food bowl, walking through the house and then asking to go out the front door. Repeat process 5-10 minutes later! His naughty habit is licking the milk frother on the coffee machine! She's also recently learnt he has been visiting vet nurse Carena's house just over the fence and regularly enjoys head rubbing their car - so he now owns a car!

Rupert is partial to a bit of catnip, which usually results in various antics including rolling around on the floor, and then telling Ted the Whippet off for trying to join in! His favourite place is sleeping on his owners desk chair, or hanging out on the front lawn watching the world.

Poor Rupert has been getting bothered by other local cats. His

owner can tell this is affecting him as he has changed how long he wants to stay out for, instead, staying in sleeping most of the day. When going out he is also more cautious going out the door, his tail twitching, and darting out to find cover. When coming back indoors, his tail is frequently fluffed up, and it takes him a while to relax. His owner has seen another cat coming into the garden and trying to seek out Rupert, so it was clear this cat was infringing on Rupert's territory and it's affecting him.

When Rupert was 7 months old he was diagnosed with both stones and crystals in his bladder; he even required treatment for a blockage at this time. Now at 6 years old, he has had several flare ups of his condition, requiring treatment with painkillers, and sometimes antibiotics over the past few years, but thankfully his condition is well managed with a veterinary diet.

Cats like their own space and will naturally feel stressed or insecure if there are other cats in places they see as 'theirs'. They can get into fights or become very stressed in their own space, even causing illness. Unlike dogs and people, many cats like their own company meaning they may have less ways to communicate with each other and can become stressed if another cat is around.

If your cat is affected by other cats, there are ways owners can help to reduce the stress caused and reduce the risks of future fights. Consider time inside - if your cat doesn't mind

being indoors you could try to monitor timings when the other cat is bothering yours and engage in play with your cat indoors at this time instead of letting them out. Wildlife cams may help you monitor what other animals are using your garden. Visual barriers help massively like window film (which blurs out direct view) or curtains so other cats can't directly see each other.

Be consistent with routines - predictable schedules can help cats avoid each other. It may be worth considering speaking with the owner of the other cat if known - having a plan, letting your cats out at separate times could help avoid conflict.

Never force a cat to go outside and ensure litter tray access is available indoors even if they usually go outside, this reduces stress when kept in.

Microchip activated cat flaps prevent other cats accessing your home.

Neutering will also help - unneutered males can be more territorial and unneutered females can have more issues from entire males.

Check your garden is secure - having high fences with a 45 degree angle at the top will help prevent other cats entering. A garden with lots of safe plants and bushes gives your cat



enrichment and places to explore and hide in their own space. You could consider creating a smaller 'catio' enclosure within your garden that your outdoor cat can use. Ideally make sure it has perches for your cat to get up high and survey their surroundings, as well as some places for them to shade in and to hide if they feel stressed.

Any changes in cats routine, behaviour or habits should always be checked by a vet. Cats hide issues so if anything is noticed it may have been going on for longer and should always be investigated. **If you have any concerns about your pet please contact Westport Vet 01506 844165. For enquiries please email: surgery@westportvets.com**



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