

**ASPIRE - AMBITIOUS LONG TERM PLANS** P11. | **PLANNING FORUM LOCAL PLACE PLAN** P6.

# BLYACK

LINLITHGOW COMMUNITY MAGAZINE



ESTD. 2011

# BITCH

LINLITHGOW'S NEWS BY LINLITHGOW'S PEOPLE

ISSUE NO.  
104 MARCH 2024

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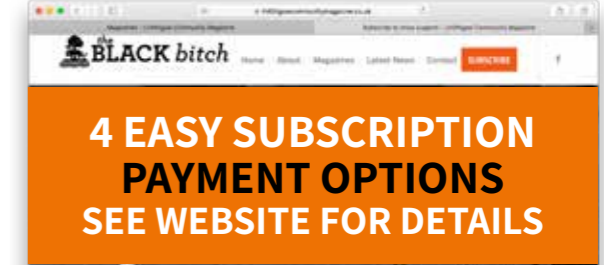
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**DAVID TAIT,  
EDITOR**



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**So what's new in this Issue?**

On the front cover, you will note an artwork representing what is arguably Linlithgow's most famous feature to mark the near completion of the refurbishment of St Michael's Spire returned to its original golden glory. And that is not the full story. It also marks both the beginning of detailed work on the rejuvenation project centred on Cross House - A House for the Town - as well as Project 600, major works to make the ancient Church itself watertight. These are bold and ambitious plans, part essential and part to enhance community facilities while spreading understanding of Linlithgow's heritage. All this of course requires a considerable fundraising effort. See page 11.

Also looking to the town's future, Linlithgow's Planning Forum summarises the efforts that have been made over past years to draw attention to the need for a "master plan" for development around the town. This would set out proposals for the optimum use of its land assets to create affordable homes for younger residents who at present have to look elsewhere for a home as well as solving the long obvious issues with pollution and congestion - making Linlithgow's High Street the top priority for action by consultees. See pages 6/7.

Good news also for followers of the return journey of the Low Port Centre to community control. Work is now well advanced with Linlithgow's superb Reed Band able to put a roof over its head after years of makeshift equipment storage and practice arrangements. Other space is also being taken up thanks to sterling voluntary work by a gang of committed supporters keen to see the re-birth of a valued community asset. See page 15.

Along at Linlithgow Union Canal Society a very big birthday approaches next year when the members and friends will celebrate 50 years of hard work and fun. Meantime, there is a standing invitation to anyone who enjoys pottering about with boats to call in for a chat to find out what it's all about. See pages 12/13.

Also reaching 50 this year is Low Port Primary School. Events will be held throughout the year and for now the call is going out for former pupils to make contact to meet up with old pals and take part in the celebrations. See page 32.

What's in a load of rubbish? Linlithgow Community Development Trust went to investigate. What goes in the blue bin? What about the green bin? It seems quite a lot of us are not getting it right often enough so LCDT undertook a visit along with two Councillors and Community Council members to the Biffa sorting facility in Broxburn to find out more. You'll get the picture on pages 8/9.

The recent coronation of King Charles III brought to Bruce Jamieson's mind the events surrounding the return

of King Charles II in 1660 and the subsequent celebrations around the Cross when the well ran with wine, many toasts were consumed, glasses smashed and a massive bonfire lit the scene. [Celebrations are a little quieter these days and water running from the well would be a notable event.]

And as always, our round up of many other interesting events and activities around the town from gardening to music to silent films to solar energy and much more.

**Magazine Subscription**

While the magazine is always keen to help other groups raise funds please also remember that the Black Bitch too is a voluntary charitable organisation and must raise the means to maintain and grow our coverage of life in Linlithgow. We thank our existing subscribers, donors and advertisers and, if you enjoy reading our content and haven't yet contributed, please consider making a subscription or donation and become a vital member of the team.

To visit our online "Subscriptions" page go to: [www.linlithgowcommunitymagazine.co.uk/subscribe/](http://www.linlithgowcommunitymagazine.co.uk/subscribe/)



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## BUSINESS FUNDING FACILITATES ONGOING LINLITHGOW PROJECTS.

Continued operation of the webcam at the Cross along with updating and re-printing the Linlithgow Visitor Guide are just two examples of projects that require ongoing investment.

Without the funding to replace the camera and pay for the monthly broadband connection, there would not be a webcam at the Cross. The statistics from YouTube have recorded over 241,000 views since the live stream was launched, indicating it is a widely popular resource for people to have a glimpse of our beautiful town before they visit.

The visitor guide was re-designed last year with 45,000 booklets printed and circulated across Central Scotland to reach the tourist market. This year, as funds have been made available from BID levy paying contributions from all One Linlithgow members, a further 50,000 are scheduled to be printed for further circulation by Landmark Press.

The first edition of the Linlithgow Visitor Guide was produced in 2014, co-ordinated by John Altken on behalf of Pride & Passion Linlithgow, replacing several publications.



The history of the Linlithgow webcams located at the Cross and at the Canal Centre, are also thanks to Pride and Passion, who received a small amount of one-off funding to set up and install.



In February 2024, a new high-definition camera – with automatic screen wiper sensors – was

installed. Access to the upgraded webcam footage can be viewed from [Linlithgow.co.uk/webcam/](http://Linlithgow.co.uk/webcam/)

**Evelyn Noble, chair of the One Linlithgow BID said** “One Linlithgow have decided to continue with these very worthwhile projects as we can see value to all our businesses in the town. It is only by working together as a business community can we all thrive into the long-term”.

**One Linlithgow**  
Email: [office@onelinlithgow.com](mailto:office@onelinlithgow.com)  
Tel: 07708 194592



## PROJECTS TO DATE IN 2024

There are a range of established projects that are now classed as ‘Business as Usual’ when reporting monthly about the BID teams’ work to the volunteer board of directors. These include the monthly loyalty lottery; part-funding of the artisan market; funding of broadband connections for CCTV, ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) and now the new webcam.

After a winter break, we would like to welcome back the Linlithgow Artisan Market along with some warmer weather. The market is run by Judith from JSG Management, who is a very experienced and dedicated market operator.



## EASTER TRAIL PREPARATIONS

To continue with the One Linlithgow themed trails, we’ll be launching our “Animal Easter Trail” from Friday 22nd March to Sunday 7th April. Participants will match up the baby animals with their mummy’s located in the shop windows. Every completed entry receives a Cream Egg, and the winner will be presented with a large Easter Egg.

## CRUISE FORTH SEMINAR

One Linlithgow attended a very informative and engaging Cruise Forth seminar in January to learn about how the industry operates and how short-term stay visitors can be attracted to Linlithgow for a short visit. One Linlithgow have agreed to provide our visitor guides. A paid for link from CruiseForth.com will also be linked to [Linlithgow.co.uk](http://Linlithgow.co.uk) to provide as much detailed information as possible to visitors.

Congratulations to Far from the Maddening Crowd based on Linlithgow High Street who have been shortlisted as regional and country finalists for Independent Bookshop of the Year.

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY 8TH MARCH 2024.

On 8th March, women across the world are being celebrated on International Women’s Day. It is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating women’s equality.

This year’s theme is ‘Inspire Inclusion’. When we inspire others to understand and value women’s inclusion, we forge a better world. And when women themselves are inspired to be included, there’s a sense of belonging, relevance, and empowerment.

All IWD activity is valid, that’s what makes IWD so inclusive. Join in and make IWD your day by doing what you can to support and advance women.

For more information, visit [www.internationalwomensday.com](http://www.internationalwomensday.com) where you can participate in International Women’s Day. #IWD2024 #InspireInclusion

## LINLITHGOW WOMEN RUNNING THE TOWN.

In celebration of IWD, we have featured just a few inspiring women who run businesses in Linlithgow.



**CLAIRE STAINES**  
LOTHLORIE  
DOG SERVICE



**PAULINE ADAM**  
FLOWERS BY  
CAROLYN



**SAMANTHA JORDON**  
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THE LINE  
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**CAROL MURRAY, ANNALIES HARDIE**  
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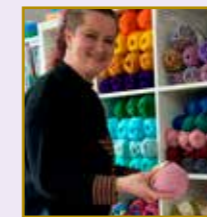
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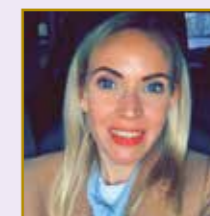
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COFFEE  
ROASTERS



**LAURA STEVENSON**  
LULU’S NAIL  
AND BEAUTY  
SALON



# LINLITHGOW'S LOCAL PLACE PLAN IS REGISTERED – WHAT DOES THIS MEAN AND WHAT'S NEXT

The Black Bitch magazine has, over the past two years, printed several articles on the evolution of Linlithgow's community plan – the Local Place Plan. In summary, the timeline of Black Bitch articles has been as follows:



**March 2022** – introduction to the changes to planning legislation to promote Local Place Plans. Local authorities, such as West Lothian Council, are legally required to

take account of the wishes of a local community as reflected in a properly presented Local Place Plan.



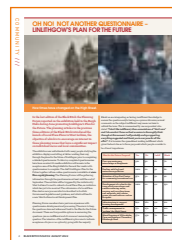
**April 2022** – consultation begins with an article on Linlithgow's housing problems.



**May 2022** – consultation continues with a discussion on the plans for the High Street and how it might be relieved of through traffic.



**July 2022** – report on the Local Place Plan exhibition held in the Burgh Halls on 16th and 21st June 2022.



**August 2022** – following the exhibition at which many questionnaires were completed, there followed a period during which further questionnaires were completed and many comments received. You may remember the article “Oh no, not another questionnaire”. The

questionnaires and comments yielded over 12,000 discrete pieces of data which were all read, analysed, and incorporated to form the draft Linlithgow Local Place Plan.



**November 2023** – after a lengthy period of further consultation and analysis, the Linlithgow Local Place Plan was finalised. The Black Bitch article said it all “*The Local Place Plan Report – It's Finished!*”.

There followed a period of interaction with West Lothian Council and finally on 10th January 2024, we received the notice we had been waiting for; *“I am now pleased to confirm that the statutory requirements of the Local Plan Regulations (Scotland) 2021 are held to have been satisfactorily addressed and that the Local Place Plan ‘Linlithgow 2024 – 2034’ has today been formally registered.”*



The register can be viewed online at <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/78847/Local-Place-Plans-LPPs-Register>

## What does this mean?

The registration of the Local Place Plan is a key stage in the preparation of the overall West Lothian Local Development Plan, the implications of which are summarised as follows:

>> The Local Place Plan is recognised as a community-led plan for the development and use of land in the Linlithgow area. It will be considered in the preparation of the West Lothian Local Development Plan when the planning merit and deliverability of the community aspirations will be assessed. West Lothian Council is required to explain why proposals have, or have not, been included during the Local Development Plan process and there will be the opportunity for these decisions to be challenged and independently assessed. This is a significant improvement in the influence of the community, compared with the previous Local Development Plan process.

>> Registered Local Place Plans may also be “material considerations” in planning application decisions. Material

considerations are factors which must be considered in assessing planning applications. They include for example, planning policies, impact on the natural environment and existing infrastructure. We would like to think that the Linlithgow Local Place Plan is comprehensive and therefore is more likely than not to be relevant to future planning applications.

>> Once the Local Place Plan has been registered, West Lothian Council is only permitted to remove it from the register in very specific circumstances.

## What's next in the Local Development Plan Process?

The next stage in the Local Development Plan process will be the production by West Lothian Council of a document entitled the “Evidence Report”. The Evidence Report will be approved by West Lothian councillors and sent to Scottish ministers who will appoint an independent assessor (a Reporter) to determine, in a process entitled the “Gatecheck”, whether or not the Council has sufficient information for the preparation of a draft Local Development Plan. In its approach, the Council must prove that it has gathered representative planning information from those who live and work in West Lothian as to their needs and aspirations for housing, services, and infrastructure over the next 10 to 20 years.

If the Reporter decides that the Council successfully passes the Gatecheck, then the Council will move on to undertake a further process called the “Call for Ideas”. In the 2018 Local Development Plan, this process was entitled the “Call for Sites” in which landowners put forward land to meet housing and infrastructure needs.

## What's next for the Planning Forum?

The Linlithgow Local Place Plan has already aroused interest in the development community. At the beginning of February, the Community Council was invited to send representatives to a meeting of three major UK national housing developers. Two members of the Planning Forum attended the meeting, primarily to answer questions on the Local Place Plan, to investigate the approach that house builders were considering for development in the Linlithgow area, and to underline the basic principles being sought by the community, such as the relief of the High Street from unnecessary through traffic and provision of suitable housing for local people. The two-hour meeting demonstrated the developers’ almost forensic examination of the Linlithgow Local Place Plan. A further meeting is likely towards the end of the year at the time of the “Call for Ideas”. Meanwhile, the Planning Forum will continue with its monitoring of planning applications but from this point onwards with the advantage of reference to our completed and registered Local Place Plan.

Planning Forum February 2024

## Top tips for looking after your eyes at work



As the way we work continues to adapt and change, more of us than ever are embracing the use of technology to allow us to work smarter, faster, with more flexibility.

While the risks to your eyesight in jobs such as construction and manufacturing are more obvious, office-based roles can be just as damaging to our eye health.

No job is worth putting your eyesight at risk, so to mark Workplace Eye Wellness Month this March, ophthalmic director at Specsavers in Linlithgow, Diana Kelly, shares her top tips for keeping your eyes healthy in an office environment.

### Adopt a good posture

**Diana says:** ‘Sitting properly at your desk can help to reduce strain on your eyesight. Make sure you keep your head and neck upright and in line with your torso and try not to hunch over or tilt backwards. Not only will this help your vision, but it will reduce the strain on your neck and shoulders too.’

### Adjust your work station

‘Face your screen directly and position your computer about an arm’s length away, slightly below eye level to avoid squinting. You can also adjust the brightness of your screen so it is similar to that of your surroundings and tweak the colour temperature of your display from blue to red – similar to the ‘night mode’ setting on an iPhone – to make your long-term viewing more comfortable.’

### Remember to take regular breaks

‘Giving your eyes a rest every so often will help relax the eye muscles and reduce the strain caused by prolonged screen time. An easy way to do this is to follow the 20-20-20 rule – every 20 minutes, take a 20 second break by looking at something 20 feet away. You can even set a timer on your phone or desktop as a reminder.’

### Don't forget to blink!

‘As obvious as it sounds, sometimes we can become so fixated on a task that our body can occasionally forget to blink. Staring at a screen for hours on end can often cause our eyes to become dry and irritated, so be mindful to blink regularly to keep them moist.’

### Get your eyes tested regularly

‘Regular eye examinations are vital to ensure we’re looking after our eyes properly, no matter which environment we work in. Our team of experts at Specsavers in Linlithgow are always on hand to help you with your eyecare needs. **To book an appointment, visit [www.specsavers.co.uk/stores/linlithgow](http://www.specsavers.co.uk/stores/linlithgow) or call us on 01506 534484 and one of our friendly team members will arrange your visit.**’

Specsavers is located at the Regent Centre in Linlithgow, and is open from 9:30am – 5:30pm every Monday, and 9am – 5:30pm from Tuesday to Saturday.

## PUTTING RECYCLING IN ITS PLACE

Have you ever wondered what happens to your empty plastic juice bottles and cans after you drop them into your green bin? At the Linlithgow Community Development Trust we're very interested in waste and how it's recycled and eventually reused. We joined a group from Linlithgow, including representatives of the Linlithgow Community Council and two of our Councillors, on a visit to the Biffa site in Broxburn.

**Together with a member of the West Lothian Council waste department, we were given an extensive and informative tour of the facility by site manager Marcin, who has worked in recycling for nearly twenty years.**

The site in Broxburn, open 24 hours a day, 5 days a week, deals with recycled materials from the City of Edinburgh, West Lothian and from the Highlands. It's brought by the refuse lorries into the facility during the course of the day where it is sorted both mechanically and by hand before being baled (see photo) and collected by the companies who process it, eventually making it ready to be remanufactured into new products.

Although the site manager acknowledged that the majority of the West Lothian recycling was well sorted, the facility still has to deal with a large quantity of non-recyclable waste that has been put in green bins in error. This raises the risk of the recyclable materials being contaminated, rendering whole loads unrecyclable.

West Lothian Council are able to raise money through selling good quality recyclate to the private companies who process the materials for reuse, but in practice, contamination of waste streams means that this is rarely possible. It's therefore important that all of us as householders continue to use our council recycling bins for the correct waste streams, reducing the likelihood of waste being directed to landfill or incineration, neither of which are environmentally friendly.

Following the changes in October 2023 to opening times of the five council recycling centres, householders are required to book their visits in advance. The council implemented these measures to reduce costs and to limit access to householders only from West Lothian. They have recently published an update in the News section of their website giving statistics from the first three months of the new appointment booking process.

**The volume of waste brought to the recycling centres has dropped by 29% compared to 2022 (it would be interesting to hear what is happening to the 29%), whilst the fly-tipping rates have remained static (132 tonnes in both 2022 and 2023). WLC's Head of Operational Services Jim Jack states "The majority of the fly-tipping that we're collecting is commercial waste, not household waste disposed of at CRCs." Although it is still early days for the appointment system, it is encouraging to hear that the fears of increased fly-tipping have so far been proven to be unfounded.**

The visit to Biffa's site was fascinating and made an impact on all who attended. **Councillor Sally Pattle** said of it "I was absolutely amazed at the volume of waste dealt with at the Biffa plant in Broxburn... it's so important for us to learn what can be recycled here in West Lothian. I'm now consciously choosing to buy different products if I can see that their packaging can't go in either my blue or green bin" and **Councillor Pauline Orr** stated that the visit "renewed my commitment to ensuring that I personally and my

household continue being proactive about recycling and making a difference". Although the West Lothian recycling system is fairly comprehensive, **secretary of the Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council Jill Pattle** suggests "If legislature could be compatible, nationwide in Scotland, to give all Councils a coherent plan to follow it could make the whole scheme much more profitable". We were overall very impressed by the detailed processing of waste that can be done at the Biffa plant, and by the sheer volume of recyclable materials that can be recovered for remanufacture. It was fascinating seeing the journey our recyclable waste makes after we put it in the bin!

**So, what are the main actions we as householders can take to make the recycling process as smooth as possible?**

- > Ensure you know which items go in which bin,
- > Make sure your green and blue items are clean and dry before recycling,
- > There should be no contamination on

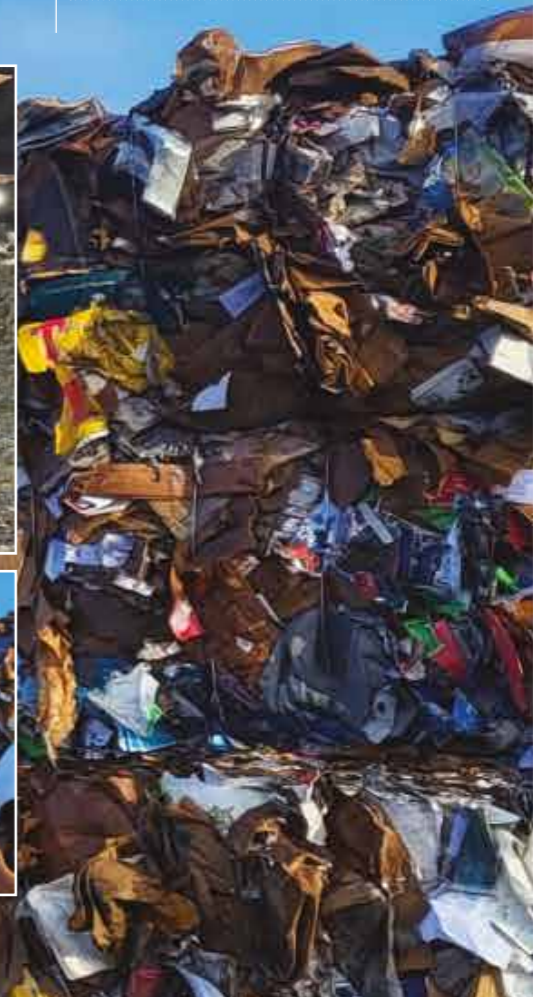
foil or paper e.g. grease on a pizza box – these should go into the grey bin as general waste,

> Check out the council's recycling information on their website [westlothian.gov.uk](http://westlothian.gov.uk), including how to book an appointment at one of their Household Waste Recycling Centres.

> Consider alternatives to throwing out your items to landfill. Can they be upcycled into something else? Would you be able to sell them online or even give them away for free to neighbours or on sites like Facebook Marketplace or Freecycle?

**Lindsey Campbell**  
Linlithgow Community  
Development Trust

**Linlithgow Community Development Trust** aims to make Linlithgow a better place to live and work, and runs a number of projects including solar energy, active travel and a number of initiatives regarding the circular economy including a Tool Library, Community Shed and Repair Café. **For more information please email [lindsey@trust-linlithgow.org.uk](mailto:lindsey@trust-linlithgow.org.uk).**



## LINLITHGOW'S 'MUNITIONETTES' OF WW1 AND WW2



To mark **International Women's Day 2023**, Linlithgow resident Kathryn Welch took part in a women's history tour of Edinburgh. On the train home to Linlithgow afterwards, wondering about the women who'd lived, worked and died here, Kathryn set up the **'More than Mary' Facebook group**. Growing to over 200 members in just a few days, the group decided to kick off their research by delving into the experiences of the women who worked at Linlithgow's munitions factory during WW1 and WW2. What follows is a short extract from a talk given about their findings to a large audience at the Linlithgow Civic Trust in January 2024. Text of the full talk is available online at [www.kathrynwelch.co.uk/blog](http://www.kathrynwelch.co.uk/blog)

Soon after the outbreak of WWI, it became apparent that munitions for the troops were in desperately short supply. There were just a few munitions factories in Britain specialising in making shells, and the shortage of supplies (known as the 'shell scandal'), led to the mass recruitment of female workers to staff the munitions factories. Women came to make up 90% of the overall wartime munitions workforce, and Linlithgow's women were keen to play their part; by the end of WW2 over 500 'munitionettes' had joined Nobel's Munitions Factory here in Linlithgow, playing a vital role in the war effort. In June 1918, the Linlithgowshire Gazette reported that **"A large staff has been trained, for much of the work has been entirely new and unknown, and, dangerous as it is, it is with a feeling of pride that women don their overalls and take their places at strange machinery and in perilous operations. In one department cheery girls were very busy weighing and packing finished T.N.T. The material is dangerous in many ways, but the women are undaunted."**

An earlier report in the Gazette - of a reporter's visit to a similar factory further south - describes the making of TNT powder into pellets: **"One girl carefully wipes and polishes the mould, a second measures the powder and pours it in, and the third, the**

**girl on the press, completes the process. All the workers engaged in handling explosives wear masks and shields for the eyes, and their hands and faces are stained with yellow."**

Working with TNT in the manufacture of munitions brought particular hazards. Ethel Dean, who worked at Woolwich Arsenal, recalled, **"Everything that that powder touches goes yellow. All the girls' faces were yellow, all round their mouths. They had their own canteen, in which everything was yellow that they touched... Everything they touched went yellow - chairs, tables, everything."**

The yellow skin discolouration often faded harmlessly over time, and you may have noticed that stories of Linlithgow's 'canaries' are often told comically, as a quirk of the job that caused striking but harmless effects. Further research, however, shows us that things are not quite that simple. Whilst short-term exposure to TNT was fairly harmless, prolonged exposure could cause serious health problems, birth defects and organ failure. A medical investigation was carried out by the government in 1916, to closely study the effects of TNT on the munitions workers. They found that the effects of the TNT could be roughly split into two areas: irritative symptoms, affecting the skin, respiratory tract, and digestive system; and toxic symptoms, including anaemia, liver failure, nausea, jaundice, constipation and dizziness. Across the UK, there were at least 400 cases of liver disease amongst munitionettes caused by exposure to TNT, and at least 100 munitionettes died of TNT poisoning during WW1.

Many women observed the effects of exposure to TNT on their periods and reproductive health, and Gladys Sangster, whose mother worked at National Filling Factory Number 9 near Banbury, Oxford, tells the BBC **"when I was born my skin was yellow. We were called Canary Babies. Every woman that was pregnant, nearly every baby was born yellow** [the Museum Director interjects on the recording here, to confirm that the yellow colour was not jaundice, but was chemical discolouration of the babies' skin caused directly by exposure to TNT]. It gradually faded away. Mum said

**you just took it for granted, it happened and that was it."**

We don't know details of the full effects of TNT exposure on the munitionettes in Linlithgow, but as there are plenty of stories of the 'canary girls' here with dyed yellow skin, we can assume that some of the women, at least, would have suffered more serious effects.

In addition to the ongoing risk of TNT poisoning, the munitionettes worked at constant risk from explosion. On the 5th February 1943, there was an explosion here at the Regent Works factory, in which four female workers were killed. Wartime censorship meant that Nobel's or Linlithgow were not mentioned in newspaper reports (which referred to an explosion in a "south-east Scotland town"), and the women's photographs were not printed in the paper.

The Linlithgowshire Gazette reported that **"The explosion is said to have occurred about 2pm. Workers in adjacent parts of the factory and residents nearby were alarmed by a loud report. The factory fire unit, first aid squad, doctors and ambulances were soon on the scene and the victims were taken to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary"**.

In the absence of a local or Scottish memorial to the women who died in war service (yet...!), the four munitionettes who died in service in 1943, here in Linlithgow, were Margaret Kennedy Wilson (aged 40, of Preston Terrace), Susan Cowan Allan (aged 21, of Preston Road), Barbara Pitcaithley Baillie (aged 20, of Castleloan, Bo'ness) and Jane McMenemy Baillie (aged 23, of Deanfield Terrace, Bo'ness).

Working long hours in difficult conditions, women's work here contributed enormously to the war effort: by July 1945, almost eleven million incendiary bombs had been produced here in Linlithgow, by our munitionettes. Acknowledging the true picture of the dangers women faced, far from being simply cosmetic or temporary, is an important part of respecting the work and courage of the munitions women, and the sacrifices they made for the war effort.

**Kathryn Welch**

## ST MICHAEL'S CROWN OF THORNS SPIRE NEARLY FINISHED! (PART 1)

**"When will it be finished?" is a question many people excitedly ask me these days - and like all the best questions, there's more than one way to answer.**

**Let's start with the short answer: "Soon!". The gleaming new bronze alloy cladding, visible for several weeks on the top upright of St Michael's Crown of Thorns spire, is clearly attracting huge interest and anticipation from you, the community whose generosity helped to fund it. Thank you once again for your tremendous support through donations, coming to events, buying raffle tickets and generally being very enthusiastic!**



Exactly when the spire's full glory will be unveiled now depends mostly on the reliably unreliable Scottish climate. In the meantime, however, we can share a wonderful image showing how local artist **Meg Wallace** visualises the spire as it will be. One way we plan to use this is to produce a limited edition run of high-quality prints framed alongside a sample of the new cladding. Watch out

for further details of how and where to buy one of these unique commemorative items!

Ask a member of St Michael's fundraising team "When will it be finished?", though, and you may hear a different answer. That's because we're re-focusing onto our next two projects. **A House for the Town** is about repairing and



transforming Cross House so that it can continue to serve as a hub for community health and wellbeing, but now with 21st century facilities and a welcoming and bright interior.

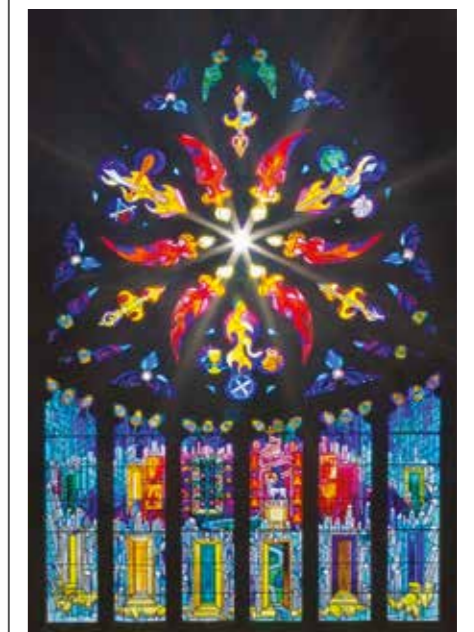
We're currently speaking with community groups and the many regular Cross House users. These conversations are helping us understand better how to develop the role of Cross House as both a community hub and a gateway to



Aspire  
Linlithgow

Linlithgow's rich heritage. We'd be delighted to hear from anyone with ideas to contribute - just email [aspirelinlithgow@gmail.com](mailto:aspirelinlithgow@gmail.com) to share what you're thinking.

Up the hill in the church building, **Project 600** is taking shape. Why 600? Work started on the present church after a fire in 1424 ravaged the previous structure. In 2024, it's not fire but water that threatens the integrity of the building. We're planning major works to stop further rainwater damage, to implement a new solution for drainage and to put right the consequences of existing water penetration. Woodworm in the timbers that hold the plaster ceiling in place is another serious issue to be resolved.



While we're seeking major grant funding for both projects, we'd also be delighted to talk with anyone who shares our passion for living heritage and wants to help make it happen. We recognise that the path to full funding for these projects will involve several stages and a great deal of work.

**Maybe that's why, just occasionally, I sense a flavour of "When will it ever end?!" in the question. Well, projects run their course one way or another; but what won't ever finish is the motivation that drives us on with this work - for the church to continue to provide a place of welcome, sanctuary and support for all in the community we serve.**

**Alan Miller**



# LINLITHGOW UNION CANAL SOCIETY



Despite having hundreds of spectators at our Fun day it may not be obvious what the **Linlithgow Union Canal Society (LUCS)** actually does. LUCS was started in 1975 by a small group of volunteers led by Mel Gray MBE; who aimed to open the canal to boats after many years of dereliction as well as opening the canal towpath. The Union Canal was in a poor state back then: weed grown, full of rubbish, buildings derelict, bridges blocking the canal, and no facilities for boats. Since then, the hard work and enthusiasm of the Society's volunteers made a substantial contribution towards creating a fantastic resource for tourists and residents alike. LUCS has evolved with the times, our first boat was procured in 1976, we now have 4 cruise trip boats and two work boats, a Tea Room, Museum, Workshop and Classroom. Our membership has grown to over 400, all of whom enjoy the benefits of being in a vibrant and interesting organisation.

However, importantly we also have lots of room for new members to help support LUCS.

We have an active Society and large membership but we are always looking for new members to help it thrive. We hope some of those could volunteer to join our merry band 'messing about' by the basin and on the canal.



We offer boat driving training and have volunteers experienced in many fields and trades who can help anyone wanting to learn new skills and share their own. **Currently we could particularly do with help in our Tearoom and manning our Reception at the Museum.** We also need volunteers to help us with some of the backroom roles, with IT support and Social Media management particularly.

At our regular Saturday and Wednesday morning sessions, we maintain our canal boats and buildings and would welcome extra help. The support and camaraderie between us over coffee and lunch always makes for an enjoyable morning.

**If this sparks your interest we would be delighted to see you. Check out our website at [www.luc.s.org.uk](http://www.luc.s.org.uk) and come to visit us at our Manse Road Basin any Wednesday or Saturday morning when we would be happy to talk to you.**

We are open all winter and summer. If you wish to join us, do come to chat to one of our volunteers at our open sessions on Saturday 23 March and also w/e 30/31 March, coinciding with our Season opening to the Public.

### A QUOTE FROM A RECENT NEW MEMBER.

*"So, what's it like as a new member of LUCS?"*

*Firstly, and most importantly the folks at LUCS are very welcoming, friendly and inclusive. Very quickly you are made to feel part of it and not an outsider. You are actively encouraged and trusted to do new things and the experienced guys take their time to mentor you. I enjoy the banter at the (many) tea breaks and it's nice to spend time with a bunch of like-minded people but who also have very diverse career backgrounds, experience, and opinions.*

*The range of possible activities to get involved in at LUCS is quite staggering and could put some sizable companies to shame."*

**Andy Eaglesfield**  
Membership Secretary



VISIT  
23  
MAR

VISIT  
30/31  
MAR



### LUCS Afternoon Tea Cruises

LUCS is delighted to confirm that we will continue to run our Vintage Afternoon Tea cruises and this season we are incorporating Mother's Day and Father's Day cruises.

The cruises will leave the canal basin for the Aqueduct, at 2:30 pm on the following dates

- Sunday 10th March (Mothers day)
- Sunday 21st April
- Sunday 12th May
- Sunday 16th June (Fathers day)
- Sunday 21st July
- Sunday 18th August
- Sunday 22nd September

They are approx 2.5 hours long and cost £30 per person.

As last year, the cruise offers a tasty afternoon tea of sandwiches, scones, jam and cream and cakes with a choice of teas. Gluten free and vegetarian selections will be available and we are more than happy if you bring your own 'bubbly'.

All bookings must be made through the booking system on the LUCS website, but if you need further information you can contact Maureen O'Donnell on 07881223654 or Lynne Nelson 07796767487

Book your places at  
<https://bookings.luc.s.org.uk/cruise/3>  
or use the QR code



Opening Weekend is  
Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2024  
1.30pm to 4.30pm



**LUCS**  
LINLITHGOW UNION CANAL SOCIETY (LUCS) founded in 1975 to promote the recreational use of the Union Canal. LUCS is a voluntary society and all its facilities are staffed by unpaid volunteers. New members are always welcome - see the attached membership application form at the rear of this leaflet.

**OPENING DATES & TIMES**  
Weekend afternoons: Saturdays and Sundays from April to September  
Weekday afternoons: Monday to Friday around the school summer holidays. Refer to [www.luc.s.org.uk](http://www.luc.s.org.uk)

**TEA ROOM**  
The LUCS tea room was converted from the 1822 stables and cottage. It is a good place to relax and enjoy fresh baking tea or coffee.

**MUSEUM**  
A former stable houses Scotland's only Canal Museum which displays historic photographs and artefacts. There is a sales counter. Admission is free.

**TOWN TRIPS**  
Short 20min trips on our flagship boat "Victoria". Departs every half hour from 1:30 pm. Max 10 passengers. NO ADVANCE BOOKING.

**AQUEDUCT CRUISE**  
Cruise along the Union Canal and sight on the towpath on the magnificent Auld Aqueduct. Cruise operates weekends only departing at 2:00pm to return around 4:30pm. ADVANCE BOOKING RECOMMENDED.

**THE FALKIRK WHEEL**  
LUCS cruises operate to the Falkirk Wheel take about 4 hours. Depart by boat and return by bus or vice versa. BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL.

**SPECIAL CRUISES**  
LUCS also offers Afternoon Tea cruises in the summer as well as Halloween and Santa cruises. Ref [www.luc.s.org.uk](http://www.luc.s.org.uk)

**PRIVATE CHARTERS**  
Charter a boat with a driver for private parties to the Auld Aqueduct or canal side basins. With a catering table our large boat seats 35 or 40 without the table. Our 12-seater flagship Victoria is also available for charter. BOOKING ESSENTIAL - Minimum 10 days notice.

**SELF-DRIVE**  
LUCS also operates "Leisurecruiser", a self-drive boat for up to 12 persons. Full instructions are given prior to departure. BOOKING ESSENTIAL - Minimum 10 days notice.

**ROOM HIRE**  
Subject to availability the Tearoom and a dining room in the LUCS educational centre may be available for hire. Contact [bookings@luc.s.org.uk](mailto:bookings@luc.s.org.uk)

## GALA DAY 2024 - SISTERS ARE DOING IT FOR THEMSELVES!!

Preparations are now well underway for the annual Children's Gala Day, which will take place on Saturday June 22nd.

February 2nd was the date of the draw for this year's main retinue and characters and history was made when **Springfield Primary School pupil, Hannah Scott**, was chosen as Queen. Hannah will be following in the footsteps of her big sister, **Ruth**, who was the principal character in 2022. It is believed that this is the first time in the ninety-four-year history of the Gala Day that two sisters have been chosen as Queen.

Hannah and her mum, **Seonaid**, attended the draw and Seonaid later announced on social media:

*"Can't quite believe it, but it looks like we have another Gala Day Queen in the house. To say she is excited is an understatement!"*

This year's Crowner will be **Mr Tom Park, husband of Liz Park, who is currently Provost of the Deacons' Court**, and Hannah is looking forward to meeting him at the rehearsals. He will be only the third man ever to have carried out this very important



SAT  
22  
JUN

duty and, amazingly, Hannah's sister Ruth was also crowned by a man, **Mr Murdoch Kennedy**.

**The full main retinue is as follows:**

- Queen-Elect **Hannah Scott**
- Chief Lady **Danielle O'Neill**
- Queen's Champion **Emre Demir**
- 1st Lady-in-Waiting **Charlotte Brice**
- 2nd Lady-in-Waiting **Ailish Robertson**
- Herald **Josh Oliver**
- Provost **Ruari Burns**
- Mary Queen of Scots **Lucy McKillop**
- 1st Maid of Honour **Penelope McCallum**
- 2nd Maid of Honour **Lily Townend**
- Queen of Flowers **Maryann Orr**
- Queen of Fairies **Sophia Ferrario**

Crown Bearer **Hrihaan Gaitonde**  
Sceptre Bearer **Hamish Griffin Lowry**  
Train Bearers **Katie Innes & Josie Fountain**

It costs over £25,000 to stage the Gala Day every year and the committee members are hard at work raising funds to keep this tradition going.

**Among the forthcoming events** are a Prize Bingo in Linlithgow Rose Club on Sunday March 17th and a Ladies Day on Sunday May 5th with the wonderful Blockbusterz 70s Glam Rock band - also in the Rose Club.

Full details of both events can be found on the Gala Day social media pages.

**Kelly-Anne Martin**



## REED BAND GETS READY FOR SPRING CONCERT AND MOVE

The start of 2024 has been a very busy period for the members of **Linlithgow Reed Band**. As always at this time of year the period from January – March is taken up with preparation for the annual Spring Concert, which will be held in Linlithgow Academy Theatre on Sunday 24th March. The band members are working on a varied programme which includes standard pieces such as ‘Florentiner March’ and ‘Blaze Away,’ selections from ‘Beauty and the Beast’ and ‘Hairspray,’ through to music from **Star Wars** and **Taylor Swift**.

In what will undoubtedly be the highlight of the concert, the musicians will be joined by long-term friend of the band, piper **Walter Williamson MBE**, who will accompany the playing of ‘Celtic Farewell’, in tribute to founder member and former **President and Honorary President, Eddie McKenna**, who died last year at the age of ninety-two.

Eddie was one of many woodwind players left ‘homeless’ when the former Kinneil Military Band made the decision to become brass-only, a move which led directly to the formation of Linlithgow Reed Band. The first public appearances took place in 1956. Eddie joined the band in its very early days, was on the committee for over 50 years, taught

countless young musicians and continued playing until the pandemic stopped all band activities.

The concert will also feature performances by the **Beginners’ and Training sections**, who continue to go from strength to strength. **Amy Leitch** took the reins as the Beginners’ conductor in August 2023 and has been really impressed at how well things have developed since then.

Besides working towards the Spring Concert, preparations have also been continuing for the move into the **Low Port Centre**. The band will have a permanent base on the ground floor which has been stripped and redecorated by members led by **Richard Bell** and is now nearly ready to receive all the equipment from the various places around the town where it is currently stored.

**President Jonathan Molloy** said “We are really looking forward to our move to the Low Port Centre. It is a great opportunity for us to have all our activities and storage in one place which will make most of the logistics of organising and running the band much simpler – at present if a member needs equipment during a rehearsal, someone has to drive to a different venue to collect the item, meaning that they often

*miss up to 20 minutes of the rehearsal, but now they can just pop down stairs to get it. On a Sunday when our training bands rehearse there will also be benefits as there is more space and better sound proofing, so when we have a band rehearsal and four different sets of lessons all going on at one time, they will each be able to hear what they are playing!”*



The band hope to be up and running in Low Port from mid-April.

Tickets for the Spring Concert are available from **Far from the Madding Crowd** or online at [www.linlithgowreedband.org.uk](http://www.linlithgowreedband.org.uk)



**Seonaid Scott**

**SUN  
24  
MAR**

## LOW PORT CENTRE TRANSFORMED BY DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

In just a few short weeks, the main wing from the cafe to the lochside of the Low Port Centre has been transformed into a bright, airy space for community use. Much of the transformation is due to a large number of hard-working volunteers from **St John’s Church** and the local community.

Volunteers have been removing old fixtures and fittings, painting the walls, washing the windows, filling skips full of rubbish and sprucing up the exterior perimeter of the Low Port Centre. The area which has undergone the most significant transformation is the main hall auditorium, which was once a sports hall with a climbing wall. Contractors have been working on partition walls to hide the climbing walls and provide more storage space. This hall is being fitted out as a conference space with a stage and will be used by St John’s Church on a Sunday morning, as well as by community groups throughout the week. One of the volunteers commented, “I am keen to see the Centre back up and running as a much-needed

community space, so I am here to lend a hand and do whatever is needed to get the place ready for use. It’s exciting to see the place coming alive again!”

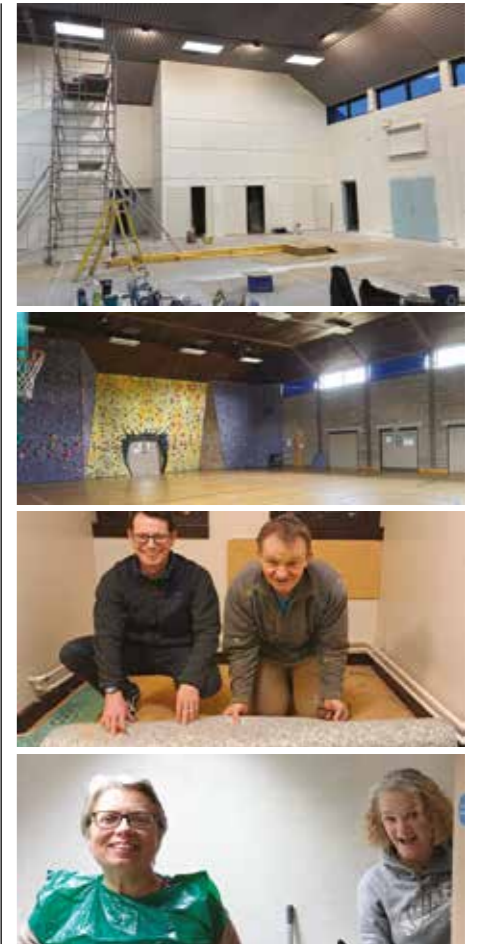
There are a number of rooms being painted and freshened up ready for use on an hourly rental basis for community groups. There are also a number of other areas of the building already in use including a space rented by **SJ Fitness Coaching**, who have transformed an old workshop into an amazing gym studio.

**The Low Port Centre will reopen from Monday 4th March, with the official reopening being held on Saturday 18th May.**

The Low Port Centre would be keen to hear from any community groups or businesses that might be interested in hiring their facilities on an hourly basis during the week.

If you would like to enquire about hiring on a weekly basis contact: [info@lowportcentre.org](mailto:info@lowportcentre.org) [www.lowportcentre.org](http://www.lowportcentre.org)

**SAT  
18  
MAY**





## GROWING-YOUR-OWN HERBS THAT ARE PRETTY AND PRODUCTIVE

Our Potager here at New Hopetoun Gardens is a way of growing-your-own that is pretty and productive. Most of the herbs we grow are really useful as well as being very attractive. There are so many different herbs that you can grow for many different uses. **To help you choose the best ones for you we have a leaflet 'Herbs at Hopetoun' which is in our Potager to Plate Series No.4. Do pick up your free copy next time you visit us.**



Perhaps you would love a restorative infusion in a hot bath? Tie a bunch of Eau de Cologne Mint under the running hot tap and lie back. Lemon Verbena tea is so refreshing; dry the leaves in a warm oven and store them in a caddy ready to make this wonderful infusion. Leave your herbs to flower as most of them are great providers of nectar and pollen for visiting pollinators. Once the flowers are over, clip them off and you'll get fresh new growth that you can use.

Growing herbs in pots allows you to create changing pictures as well as having the herbs near the house for easy harvesting.

We do a lot of staff training throughout the year, usually on a Wednesday morning as part of our weekly staff meeting because all the garden centre staff apart from Lisa (who knows a lot!) work on a Wednesday. There are always new products arriving at this time of year and we all need to know about them so we can answer your questions. This month Lesley has four members of the team that she is teaching general horticulture, here Rowan is helping (not) with herb identification.



**Dougal Philip and Lesley Watson**  
New Hopetoun Gardens



Chives, thymes and lavenders make lovely edgings in the potager. Chives are one of our 'must grow' herbs - one of our summer treats is to pick the flowers and pull them apart to sprinkle the purple florets over potato salads and mixed salads.



**To create the perfect salad we follow Sarah Raven's 'Rule of Five':**

1. Any type of lettuce for gentle flavour and background bulk
2. Add one of Mark Diacono@ 'transformers' with strong flavours like rocket or mustard
3. Sprinkle on chopped herbs like basil, parsley, mint
4. Add finely sliced salad vegetables like radish, peas, fennel bulb
5. Garnish with edible flowers for a creative sparkle like violas.

This side salad has crisp lettuce + rocket + mint + radish + viola flower.



so much more than just a garden centre

[www.newhopetoungardens.co.uk](http://www.newhopetoungardens.co.uk)



**FRESH HERBS FOR YOUR GARDEN**

NOW IS A GOOD MOMENT TO CHOOSE SOME NEW HERBS FROM OUR WIDE SELECTION OF THIS SEASON'S HERBS IN LARGE OR SMALL POTS. WHAT WILL YOU CHOOSE TO GROW THIS SUMMER?

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# CELEBRATIONS AT THE CROSS

Bruce Jamieson

The coronation of King Charles III last year reminded me of the celebrations which took place in Linlithgow when King Charles II was restored to the monarchy.

He had been crowned king in Scotland on January 1st, 1651 – just two years after his father, King Charles I, had been beheaded. Seated on a throne in the Moot Hill Chapel of Scone Palace, Charles made his coronation oath which guaranteed the Presbyterian religion.



The Moot Hill Chapel, Scone.



Gold medal cast to commemorate the Scottish crowning.

In July, accompanied by a Scottish Covenanter Army, Charles advanced into England and engaged the Republican Army at the Battle of Worcester. English Royalists failed to appear and Charles was forced to escape – hiding for a time up an enormous oak tree. From that time on, the oak was adopted as a symbol of the Stuart cause – representing strength, loyalty and stability. Some claim that an oak tree was included in the Linlithgow coat of arms at that time – representing the town's adherence to the monarchy which had such historic connections to the burgh. However, the arms shown on the James IV bell in St Michael's predate that by 160 years and clearly show a tree behind the Black Bitch.



The bell Alma Maria, hung in 1490, with its crest.

In retaliation for the King's military action, Cromwell and his Roundhead Army invaded Scotland. King Charles was forced to flee into exile as Linlithgow was taken over by Cromwellian troops who set up camp on St Michael's Mount, sleeping in the upper galleries of St Michael's Church while their horses were stabled below. Any building impeding their line of fire was demolished including the tolbooth, the song school, houses in the Kirkgate and a travellers' hostel. The stones were used to fortify the palace where General Monk and his deputy, Lieutenant Evans, set up their Headquarters.



King James V's Kirkgate Arch entered by Cromwell in 1650.

For nine years, Linlithgow was under military rule while the exiled king conducted his business from the Netherlands. In April 1660, negotiations with the banished monarch saw him promising that,

if returned, he would rule through parliament and ensure religious toleration. His promises were accepted and the king arrived at Dover on May 25th, 1660.

While a number of Linlithgow inhabitants were sceptical, a greater proportion was delighted at the Restoration of the Monarchy, especially those who regarded the Stewart/Stuart dynasty as part of Linlithgow's heritage.

The new minister of St Michael's Church, the Rev James Ramsay – an Episcopalian who went on to become Bishop of Dunblane – set about restoring St Michael's after its Cromwellian abuse and got permission from the Town Council to remove the unsightly wall which had separated the area used for worship from that used by the Roundhead troopers.



St Michael's in need of repair.

King Charles II was crowned in Westminster Abbey on April 23rd, 1661. There were some minor celebrations in Linlithgow and a service was held in St Michael's, but, following a decree that the King's Restoration was to be celebrated every year, 1662 witnessed an extraordinary occasion at the Cross – the hub of Linlithgow life and the setting to this day of many memorable civic events. However, the Cross may not have witnessed anything quite like the happenings which took place 360 years ago.

As the ancient well ran with wine, a procession made its way from the palace, down the Kirkgate and into the Cross. It was headed by George Livingstone, 3rd Earl of Linlithgow, the Earl of Middleton (the King's Commissioner), Provost Andrew Glen, the Rev. James Ramsay and Bailie and Dean of Guild Robert Milne.

Along with other Burgh authorities and wealthy merchant burgesses, the celebrants stood behind an enormous table loaded with sweetmeats, exotic food and flagons of wine. The health of every member of the royal family was drunk, the glasses smashed after each toast, and the leftover "confections" thrown into the large crowd whose cheering increased as a massive bonfire was lit.

Further applause was forthcoming when a gigantic tableau was trundled into the square, accompanied by the beating of drums, the blowing of trumpets and the sound of cannon fire.



The giant "Extinguishers" construction at the 2023 Marches.

The 1662 construction was as impressive as any on Marches Day and consisted of a large, many-arched "float" topped by an enormous royal crown. On the massive structure had been placed depictions of evil and wrong belief including a witch holding the National Covenant which had opposed the Episcopal church, a grotesque Whiggamore (an opponent of Episcopacy), a devil representing evil thoughts, a caricature of "Rebellion" with, in her right hand, the slogan "LEX REX" (the King is the law) and, in her left hand, a large poster headed "THE CAUSES OF GOD'S WRATH" and bearing this verse:

*"From covenanters with uplifted hands,  
From remonstrators with associate bands,  
From such committees as govern'd this nation  
From kirk-commissions, and their protestation,  
Good Lord deliver us."*



A copy of the National Covenant in St Michael's Church. Was the original burned in the 1662 bonfire?

The whole symbolic construction was set ablaze and into the fire was thrown copies of the Covenant and all the Acts of Parliament passed during the

previous 20 years. Suddenly, out of the smoke, there appeared four angels carrying a large placard praising the restored king and damning all traitors, schismatics and Covenanters.

As other bonfires were lit along the length of the High Street, the magistrates accompanied the Earl to the Palace, where he, as Keeper, lit a grand bonfire, around which the loyal toasts were drunk all over again.



George Livingstone, 3rd Earl of Linlithgow.

A broadsheet published after the event carried an account of the incredible goings-on and added that, around the same time, swans (a symbol of royalty) were seen returning to the loch which they had left while the Cromwellian soldiers were stationed in the town.

Finally, the Earl and the Burgh Magistrates made a (perhaps rather unsteady?) procession through the burgh, "saluting every man of account."

Similar, if not quite so lavish, celebrations continued for some years on the anniversary of the Restoration of the Monarchy. A Linlithgow Town Council minute records in 1663 that the Bailies were to "make enquiries into how diligent was the Kirk Session in finding out those who, out of contempt, did not attend church on the King's night." Another entry in 1664 records the imposing of fines of £5 on those who "did not kindle bonfires on the anniversary day."

Episcopacy was certainly in the ascendancy but it did not last forever. The Revolution of 1688 saw the Stewart king, James VII and II, driven into exile and a Protestant monarch (the husband of Mary, James II's daughter) selected to be King William III.

In Linlithgow, an enquiry was launched into the "traitorous and ignominious burning of the Covenants at the licentious gathering in the Linlithgow Market Place." However, no record of the event could be found in Council Minutes so it was declared an unauthorised act, "not sanctioned by the Town or the inhabitants thereof." The investigation concluded that the "remarkable and treasonable occurrence" was planned and carried out by "the chief actors – Mr Ramsay, the Minister and Mr Milne, Dean of Guild." It was certainly an unforgettable event.

# THE SUPER SCRIBBLERS

THE SPRING EDITION: JOINTLY RESEARCHED AND WRITTEN BY THE SUPER SCRIBBLERS - PUPILS OF SPRINGFIELD PRIMARY AND LOW PORT PRIMARY SCHOOLS.



Welcome! We would like to introduce you to The Super Scribblers. We are a group of P6 and P7 pupils from Low Port Primary School and Springfield Primary School. We love to write and be creative in the designs we make. This month's article is all about sharing happiness and fun during the spring season. Please enjoy our baking recipe, poems, quiz and more. Here's to a happy spring!



## A Spring Haiku

### Flowers

Leaves start growing back  
Cherry blossoms everywhere  
Beautiful and sweet



Daffodils appear  
Snowdrops growing  
in the grass  
Fresh and cute tulips

Fresh smell in the air  
Flowers spread throughout the field  
Colours everywhere

### Animals

Chicks are running wild  
Adorable and fluffy  
Happiness on farms



Noises from newborns  
Fluffy wool as white as snow  
Rattles from the hay

## All about Easter edition!



Easter is an important part of spring. People celebrate Easter to mark the day that Jesus was said to come back to life. The reason we have Easter eggs is because when Jesus died, he was buried in a cave with a giant rock guarding it. On Easter Monday the stone rolled away, and Jesus came back to life. It is said that the rock was shaped like an egg and that is why some people paint eggs at Easter and roll them down hills. This is to symbolise the rock rolling away.

## A Rabbit Spring Quiz

Complete the quiz and check using the answers at the bottom of the page.

### When does a rabbit's teeth stop growing?

- A) 3 years
- B) 8 months
- C) Never
- D) 82 years



### What is a baby rabbit called?

- A) A bunny
- B) A kit
- C) A coo
- D) A rabb

### What is the most popular type of rabbit?

- A) Holland Lop
- B) Lionhead Rabbit
- C) Rex Rabbit
- D) French Lop

### What is a group of rabbits called?

- A) A dome
- b) A nest
- C) A ruffle
- D) A walt

## Easter Crunch Crispy Cakes



These quick and easy Easter nests are the perfect treat for an afternoon snack! Go and bake these delicious treats and give yourself a bite to eat!

### What you need

- 225g chocolate broken into pieces
- 2 tbsp golden syrup
- 50g butter
- 75g cornflakes
- A bag of mini chocolate eggs

### What to do

1. First, line a 12-hole fairy cake tin with paper cases.
2. Next, melt the chocolate, golden syrup, and butter in a bowl by setting

it over a saucepan of gently simmering water (try not let the base of the bowl touch the water). Stir the mixture until silky smooth.

3. Remove the bowl from the heat (be careful as it may be a bit hot) and gently stir in the cornflakes until all the cereal is coated in the yummy chocolate.
4. Divide the mixture between the paper cases and press 3 mini chocolate eggs into the centre of each nest. Chill in the fridge for 1 hour, or until completely set.
5. Finally, eat these delicious treats and enjoy the flavour of Easter!

**Oor Wullie!** Wullie Hamilton was sitting on a bench next to the loch with his pals. Suddenly, he saw something shiny amongst some leaves. It was an Easter egg. He picked it up and opened it and took a whiffy, and in one bite it was gone. Wullie decided to go hunting for more. He came across someone who was looking for the same eggs as him.



"Excuse me but have you saw any Easter eggs today?" asked the child. "No, I have not saw any Easter eggs," said Wullie with a cheeky grin on his face. They both went their separate ways to find the eggs. Wullie skipped off happily.

## A Spring Goddess!

### Flora

Flora is the Roman goddess of spring, gardens and flowers. She is known as the symbol of nature and all plant life. Her name now serves as a synonym for different plant species. The Floralia was her annual festival that was celebrated in April and May. People would dance around maypoles, gather flowers and embellish themselves with blossoms. The flower connected to Flora was the rose, which symbolises love and beauty.



QUIZ ANSWERS : 1.C 2.B 3.A 4.D



## Leave a thoughtful legacy

There are few more confusing – or unpopular – taxes than Inheritance Tax (IHT). If you're unsure of the details, or you'd like more of your inheritance to go to your family and less to the HMRC or on care fees, we can help.

Leaving loved ones to incur up to a 40% reduction due to tax on their inheritance is a hard ask. Yet despite many children and grandchildren being ill-equipped to grapple with IHT, more and more families are having to deal with it.

It's a situation that is set to continue, with the Office of Budget Responsibility forecasting that IHT revenues will reach £8.4 billion by 2026/2027.

Yet the simple fact is that IHT could be considered a voluntary tax. The Treasury relies on our inertia and reluctance to confront the issues of death and inheritance. To make things worse, the Treasury's coffers are boosted at the exact time your loved ones least need the added hassle.

### Help your family now

There are many perfectly legitimate ways to mitigate IHT through foresight and careful financial planning. You don't need high-powered tax planning, just a willingness to discuss the issue, act and make use of the many options available. These include establishing trusts and making use of annual exemptions such as gifting.

### Once thought of as a tax on the truly affluent, IHT now affects more families than ever

In better news for your family, there's been a staged increase in the residence nil-rate band threshold, which is now set at £175,000 for those who qualify when passing their main residence to direct lineal dependants. This goes some way to reflect the growth in property prices, as well as other asset values, which together have dragged more households into the IHT net.

Nevertheless, it can come as a shock to discover that a large proportion of your wealth, which includes the family home, investments such as Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs), life assurance plans not in trust and even old family heirlooms, might have to be sold to meet tax bills when you die.

### Get in the know

So what exactly could your family be liable for? We've already discussed the residence nil-rate band threshold of £175,000. Then you can factor in that the first £325,000 of your estate is likely to be exempt from IHT. This means that, subject to various conditions, if you're married or in a civil partnership, you could have a tax-free estate worth £1,000,000.

### With a little planning, more of your wealth can be passed on to future generations

Bear in mind that if you're domiciled, or resident, in the UK, IHT rules are complex. Certain transfers are deemed exempt from the tax if they pass between a husband and wife or civil partners.

The levels and bases of taxation, and reliefs from taxation, can change at any time. The value of any tax relief depends on individual circumstances.

Trusts are not regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

### Get in touch

If you're after a little help to guide you through the IHT maze, give us a call. We're here to make a difference to your family's future.

Kayleigh Dorrian  
Principal  
07834 837183  
kayleigh.dorrian@sjpg.co.uk  
www.archerjoyfp.co.uk

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SJP Approval 15/02/2024

SJP12204a\_DS B2 (10/23)

# HIPPODROME SILENT FILM FESTIVAL RETURNS AGAIN

FROM  
20  
MAR



**HIPPFEST** – the ever-popular festival of silent film with live music – returns next month to the Hippodrome cinema in Bo'ness, right on Linlithgow's doorstep.

Opened in 1912, the Hippodrome is Scotland's oldest purpose-built cinema. The silent film festival was launched in 2011 and has since become a key annual event in the cultural calendar, drawing audiences from across Scotland and beyond, and generating significant interest internationally.

The organisers have announced the programme for the 14th edition, with a stellar line-up of silent films presented with live musical accompaniment plus fascinating talks, engaging workshops, exhibition, and a generous online offering too. The Festival will take place from Wednesday 20 to Sunday 24 March 2024.

Contemporary talent and vintage Hollywood stars will take the spotlight in a programme that features **Mary Pickford**, **Lillian Gish**, **Clara Bow**, and **Joan Crawford**; with live appearances from musicians and silent film aficionados, including **Neil Brand**, **Jenny Hammerton**, **Maud Nelissen**, and **John Sweeney**.

Depictions of Scotland on Screen are in focus, as the Festival opens with **Peggy** (1916) on Wednesday 20 March with live musical accompaniment from silent film accompanist **Stephen Horne**. This sparkling film debut for Billie Burke (The Wizard of Oz's Glinda the Good Witch) follows New York socialite Peggy Cameron (Burke) as she moves to Scotland to live with her new guardian, "a man as stern and unyielding as the rocky hills of his native land".

Also on the opening day, pioneering Glasgow-born filmmaker Jenny Gilbertson directs an entirely different take on Scotland, **The Rugged Island: A Shetland Lyric** (1933), a poignant "story documentary" about crofting families in Shetland. Presented with a new music commission by award-winning multi-instrumentalist and composer from Fair Isle, **Inge Thomson**, with Shetland-born **Catriona MacDonald** (commission funded by Creative

Scotland National Lottery Open Fund for Organisations), this tender and beautiful dramatisation of Shetland life surpasses the bounds of both fiction and non-fiction filmmaking.

Later in the Festival, local young traditional musicians will accompany shorts from the National Library of Scotland Moving Image Archive in the annual **New Found Sound** screening.

Thursday's screenings begin with a film from screenwriter and director **Frances Marion: Stella Maris** (1918) starring "America's Sweetheart" **Mary Pickford**. Mary Pickford made some of the best features of her career with the prolific and respected screenwriter Frances Marion, including this first-rate female-fronted melodrama about two women who fall in love with the same man. Accompanied on piano by **Meg Morley**, the film handles some very dark themes, but balances them beautifully with genuine light and charm.

The focus on Marion continues with a new restoration of **Just Around the Corner** (1921) and the triptych of his work is completed with the Festival's closing night film, the world premiere of a prestigious new restoration of **The Wind** (1928), starring screen legend **Lillian Gish**

World cinema once again features strongly in the HippFest programme with silent films from around the world, including Ukraine, China and Sweden.

The Friday Night Gala is all about the Roaring-20s and **Mantrap** (1926) with music from **Neil Brand**. **Victor Fleming** (director of *Gone with the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz*) directs the silent-era's quintessential *It Girl*, **Clara Bow** in this entertaining battle of the sexes that allows the star's wild and independent spirit to shine. Be sure to stay for the glamorous gala afterparty, including vintage clothing pop-up, Roaring-20s revelry and much more.

**Lon Chaney** and **Jackie Coogan** star in one of the earliest adaptations of Dickens' work, **Oliver Twist** (1922) directed by Glasgow-born director **Frank Lloyd**. With musical accompaniment from Neil Brand. There are

more big names of the silver screen including **Joan Crawford** in the film that catapulted her to stardom, **Our Dancing Daughters** (1928). The film was originally released with a synchronised soundtrack, but the Festival will show the film with accompaniment from **Maud Nelissen**.

The transition to sound in film features again in this year's Platform Reels with an outdoor screening of hybrid-talkie **The Flying Scotsman** (1929) on the platform of the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway. Musical accompaniment from **Jane Gardner**.

From thrillers to crime dramas, Saturday evening's entertainment begins with **The Racket** (1928), the original, bold gangster film (predating producer Howard Hughes' influential *Scarface* by four years), about an honest cop who vows to bring down his Capone-like nemesis in corrupt, Prohibition-era Chicago.

No HippFest would be complete without a touch of silent comedy, and this year has laughter aplenty with screenings featuring comedy giants **Buster Keaton** and **Laurel and Hardy** on the Saturday and Sunday.

Rounding off the Festival line-up is an entertaining and informative programme of talks and tours. The Pen to Picture Exhibition at Bo'ness library (17 February - 15 April 2024, free) curated by **Richard Weeks** will showcase the colourful artwork that graced the eye-catching covers of 'Film-tie-in' books published by the Readers Library during the early years of cinema.

During Hippfest, selected events and screenings will be livestreamed from the Hippodrome, plus pre-festival talks on Frances Marion, Jenny Gilbertson, and the story of Victorian film by British Film Institute Curator of Silent Film, **Bryony Dixon** as part of **HippFest At Home**. For more information about this, the full HippFest 2024 programme and to purchase tickets, please visit [www.hippfest.co.uk](http://www.hippfest.co.uk).

**Murdoch Kennedy**



## WOLFF'S BANE H.J. RUSSELL

"They lie, they manipulate, they deceive..."

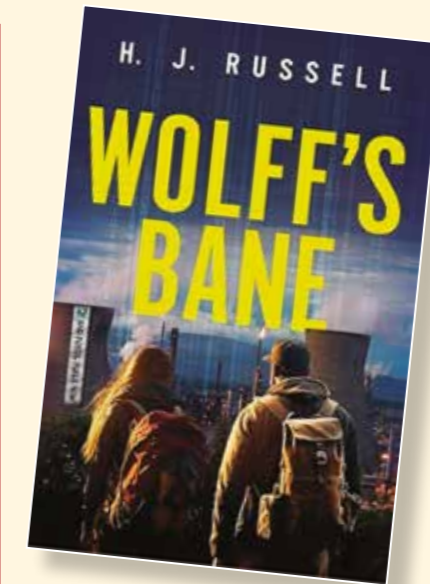
They're British Intelligence Officers

So how can you ever trust one of them?"

H. J. Russell is a Scottish author and screenwriter who lives in the picturesque town of Linlithgow. Her novel, 'Wolff's Bane', is the sequel to her gripping cyber-thriller 'Hell's Glen'. Both novels, which will form an eventual part of the Moniker series, follow the lives of Kathryn Sinclair and Jamie Denton, a cyberhacker and detective respectively, who both work in a world of secrecy and subterfuge for the government Security Service, commonly known as MI5.

The novel follows newly married Kathryn and Jamie as they navigate Jamie's directive to infiltrate an environmental activist group who, at the outset of the story, are attending a climate change protest in Manchester. The group are being led by Ethan Price, a seemingly charismatic, failed organic farmer who has come under the radar of the authorities for entering the site of a coal-fired power station in Kent and succeeding, alongside other activists, in shutting down its production.

By a twist of fate, Jamie has been assigned to work undercover for an unspecified length of time, tasked with gaining credibility as an environmental protester himself, in order to join the Climate Warriors group formed by Ethan. The group have recently risen on government radar as they were increasingly stepping away from the peaceful protest ethos favoured by groups such as Greenpeace, becoming more vocal and disruptive in their climate protest stance. Jamie's proficiency as an undercover detective is shown as he navigates the personal connections he must make to become a trusted and core member of the Climate Warriors group.



By contrast, within the central London MI5 offices, Kathryn is experiencing professional challenges of her own. Kathryn's route into MI5 has not been conventional. She is a vigilante hacker turned cybersecurity officer who most definitely plays by her own moral code. She has a unique way of getting results but is trying to work within the tight security measures of her employers. Under probation, Kathryn is fully aware of the need to present an approach to her job that elicits no unwanted attention from her superiors. Unfortunately, she finds herself in the midst of an uncomfortable investigation, and her urge to help Jamie in his undercover role is growing.

The novel is written as a combination of emails and narrative, alternating between Kathryn and Jamie's perspective, which drives the storyline forward in an interesting and strategic manner. Each chapter begins with a relevant quote relating to climate change, setting the scene for each segment of the narrative. There is much humour woven throughout the novel which adds to its appeal.

Writer H. J. Russell weaves a highly engaging, page-turning thriller, filled with suspense, psychology and daring. The novel has great pace and, after a career in cybersecurity, Russell brings her knowledge of the dark web, hacking, and cyber gangs to great effect in her writing. This is a dark, complex and edgy novel, expertly written to create intrigue, passion and suspense between the characters and within the plot itself. With well-developed characters and a fast paced, dramatic storyline - culminating in a dramatic climax at a Scottish oil-refinery - this is a gripping novel filled with clever plot twists that will keep you entertained until the final pages.

**Lisa Nettleton**

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



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**LINLITHGOW STRING ORCHESTRA PLAY**

The Linlithgow String Orchestra play the Burgh Halls on 21st April. With a jazz solo saxophonist playing saxo-rhapsody by Eric Coates

SUN  
21  
APR

## Learn about Solar with Linlithgow based GREENFOX ENERGY Linlithgow



Since summer 2023 Linlithgow's GreenFox Energy has been helping homeowners to better understand and take advantage of solar power, some for the first time, others by upgrading existing installations to higher standards with an enhanced return.

From thoroughly researching what would be best for their own homes, the team at GreenFox is now on a mission to give every homeowner the confidence they need to embrace solar power. Their approach is based on honest, expert advice followed by high standards of customer service and installation using their network of highly skilled and qualified solar engineers.

All of whom are accredited to the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS), giving their clients the confidence to invest in green technology with the comfort of knowing certified operatives are on hand to answer questions on installation, operation and maintenance to optimise performance and returns.

GreenFox Director, Eddie Curran, reports *"we've had a very good referral rate with neighbours sharing excellent experiences and encouraging friends and family to go solar."* For many homeowners it is a no brainer, as it pays for itself and is good for the planet.

A typical response from a convert to solar power is **Iain Wells, Kettilstoun Mains:** *"We opted for a solar system with battery storage facility to maximise the benefit. From start to finish the process was effortless with a real sense of customer service from all the staff at Greenfox. So if you are thinking of lowering your carbon footprint and going solar then I can thoroughly recommend GreenFox Energy."*

GreenFox clients also include existing solar users like **John Blackburn of Avonmill View**, planning to upgrade his system: *"as we already have solar panels operating successfully we wanted to install further panels and 2 batteries. Eddie and the team easily understood what I wanted and from start to finish my installation went smoothly, including setting up my control system."*

To follow up on their successful installations, the next stage for GreenFox is to spread the word by holding **"Learn about Solar" workshops** in the community to explain how carefully planned and optimised systems, which in addition to significantly reducing energy costs, can help create a greener, cleaner environment for us all.

The 'Learn about Solar' workshops will explain what a solar array and household system is made up of and how it works. GreenFox will offer insights around generation, savings and the practicalities of ownership – with first-hand accounts from Linlithgow-based homeowners who have gone solar with GreenFox by their sides. The workshop will also be an opportunity to meet an MCS certified installer who will be on-hand to answer questions and explain what the MCS standards are there for, and the pitfalls to avoid.



The **"Learn about Solar" workshops** will be held at **Linlithgow Rugby Club, 42 Mains Road, Linlithgow** on the dates below:

**Sunday 28th April, 09:15-11:00**

**Saturday 18th May, 09:15-11:00**

To book a place for any of these dates on Eventbrite go here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/learn-about-solar-with-greenfox-energy-tickets-837686461757>

You can also find the dates, further information and have any questions answered via the **GreenFox Energy website** here:

<https://greenfoxenergy.co.uk/news/learn-about-solar-with-greenfox-energy>



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Find out more at: [www.GreenFoxEnergy.co.uk](http://www.GreenFoxEnergy.co.uk)

## HOW TO START A VEGETABLE GARDEN – A 10 STEP PLAN

LINLITHGOW AND DISTRICT ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

As spring approaches, some of you may want to grow some of your own vegetables. Growing doesn't have to be tricky. The benefits far outweigh the effort. Homegrown crops taste so much better, particularly vegetables that are picked and eaten the same day. And we know so much more now about the physical and mental health benefits of growing and working with the soil. The questions to ask yourself are where to grow, what to grow, how to grow and how much time you have to do it. So here are ten pointers to get you started.

### 1. Find inspiration!

Take time to look at the internet, other gardens and magazines to help you think about what your ambitions are for your plot.

### 2. Pick a place to grow

You need a spot where vegetables will thrive. Sun for at least six to eight hours a day is best. Avoid too shady a spot. It is best if the site is level and out of strong winds. Easy access and near a water point are beneficial.

### 3. Start Small

Having a small space gives you a sense of satisfaction without becoming disillusioned by too large a plot. You can then learn how to grow and nurture and the time involved.

### 4. Check the soil

Good draining soil which is rich and fertile is ideal. If not, raised beds or containers can be bought or built, allowing you to fill with a good soil mix. They are also good for those with mobility issues.



### 5. No dig

The system that is now seen as beneficial is no dig. Plenty of compost laid on top of your soil or cardboard over a grassy area works well. Just plant into the compost.

### 6. Clear and weed

Prepare the area, weed, being careful to remove perennial weeds completely to stop them coming back.



### 7. Decide what to eat and to grow

Grow a few of your favourite vegetables and herbs to start with that are easy to grow, e.g. lettuce, rocket, radish, spinach, beans (a climbing French bean called Cobra grows well here), potatoes, peas, beetroot, leeks, sweet corn, courgettes (if you have the space) parsley, chives, rosemary and thyme. You may need to limit what you are growing if you are starting with a small area.



### 8. How to grow

Many plants can easily be grown from seed and sown directly into the ground, e.g. lettuce, rocket, radish, beetroot, spinach peas and beans but for others, to start with, buy them as small plants from garden centres. Following the instructions on the seed packets is the best place to find information but remember we are a few weeks behind the South so don't start sowing too quickly. Watch the weather! Pick when the crops are at their best. We are always tempted to wait until the crops are bigger and better!

### 9. Crop rotation

If you continue to grow vegetables in the same space, consider crop rotation. It can help fertility and minimises soil borne diseases. There is plenty of information on the internet about what this is and how to do it.

### 10. Keep maintaining your plot

Keep an eye on the weeds and watering over the growing season. Weeds can smother small plants and lack of water can quickly cause plants to die. But don't over water!

### ABOVE ALL ELSE ENJOY YOUR GROWING!

For those who have an established vegetable garden and want information about what to do each month we have a post on our website that gives growing information, month by month. **Our website address for LADAS is [linlithgowallotments.wordpress.com](http://linlithgowallotments.wordpress.com)**

### IMPORTANT NOTICE:

Unfortunately because of the demand for plots we have decided to close our waiting list for the moment. We will let everyone know when the list reopens again.

Val Corry,  
Chair LADAS



## EMERGING BANDS AND MUSICIANS GARY CLINTON

Recently I reached out via social media on the lookout for emerging bands and musicians in and around Linlithgow. In fact I'm looking for anyone who is doing something with music locally and thus far the variety of individuals and groups that have got in touch has been great. From the Linlithgow String Orchestra, to local punk rock bands, to guitar restorers - I'm very excited to share it all with you all over the next few instalments of our local magazine. Now, without further ado the first group I am featuring are West Lothian's Coda.

### CODA

Fronted by smart-casually dressed vocalist and songwriter Gordon Irvine, West Lothian's 5 piece band Coda do seem less bothered about style, mostly sporting hoodies, jeans and t-shirts, and more interested in creating well thought out and cleverly crafted music which has the charm and organic roots of early REM and Simple Minds; but also ventures into instrumental soundscapes similar to the cleaner side of Mogwai and Godspeed You! Black Emperor. Irvine's vocals are heartfelt



#codabandscotland on facebook to find out more

and smoothly delivered but he can also bring a tenor like power, similar to that of Simon Fowler (Ocean Colour Scene), which fuels the band's big choruses and finales as Allan Snelling's keyboards and synths give a solid foundation for Nico Adie's soaring and effects drenched guitar. This musical marriage of clean, bleepy, chiming synths and gritty, ferocious guitars, that sounds like a synth gone mad, brings an interesting electronic, Boards Of Canada style branch to Coda's melodic and anthemic sound.

The band first graced the stage in Edinburgh at Bannermans Bar in summer 2022 and

that was followed up by a show at the Purple Orange Grass-Rootenanny festival at the Regal Theatre in Bathgate where they are due to play again on Saturday 23rd March. Coda are currently in the process of creating video and artwork to support their debut releases - 4 singles in 2024 - and expect to have a completed album by early 2025. And talking of artwork design I now have someone to introduce who knows how to design a guitar...

### SCOTT HYSLOP GUITAR RESTORER

Self-employed in property management and grounds maintenance, 59 year old Philpstoun resident Scott Hyslop reached out to me via Facebook regarding a hobby that is right up my street. Scott buys mainly vintage guitars that are in need of repair and or a facelift and goes about turning them into something 'awesome'. Check out his fantastic work below.

### What's your musical background?

"I started playing guitar as a teenager when I formed a band with friends. I had no formal tuition, learning how to play from my friends and working things out myself.

I built my first 'flying V' guitar when I was 16yrs, using a piece of driftwood and parts from another guitar. It was awful."



### Why did you start fixing up guitars?

I am married and have 2 grown up children and 2 years ago I started buying old guitars which needed some work to make them great again. I began experimenting with different methods to paint them because they were often dull, boring and in poor condition.

I use spray paint and paint pens, but my favourite is called Hydro-dipping. This is using special paints that float on the water surface, when you dip the guitar in the water, the paint coats it. I use this method for scratchplates too.

### Are they available for sale?

I really need to start selling some as my collection is growing too big so anyone interested can contact me via email: [schyslop@hotmail.com](mailto:schyslop@hotmail.com)

### What's your favourite guitar?

My favourite is the blue/white/red Yamaha that I spray painted, it plays and sounds great. It is fun to fix up these old guitars and make them as good as they can be, trying to keep them as original as I can but replacing parts that are needed.

### Who are your favourite artists and do you stream music or listen to physical copies?

I listen to all types of music, my favourite genre is blues, particularly the guitarists from the old days. I stream all my music now, and have learnt so much about guitars from YouTube videos.

## WHAT'S ON?

Get Tae Funk are a five-piece funk and soul band based in West Lothian who cover classics by genre legends such as Diana Ross, Stevie Wonder and Aretha Franklin. They regularly perform live and are available for hire for parties, functions and weddings. Catch them at The Tower Bar (The Mall, Livingston) on 9th March and The Dugg House in Dunfermline on 30th March. In their own words "If music be the food of love Get Tae Funk is a munchie box". For bookings contact Glen Logan: [glenlogan@gettaefunk.band](mailto:glenlogan@gettaefunk.band) or via Facebook/gettaefunk.

## NEW RELEASES

**Echo Machine** - Accidental Euphoria (Assai Recordings)

Dundee based noisy pop group contain a solid Linlithgow rhythm section comprised of born and bred residents Heather and Hannah McKay on bass and drums respectively. The band's debut record "Instant Transmissions" went top 20 in the Scottish album and UK record store charts and led to a massive European arena tour with goth icons Placebo. Album launch single "Last Action Hero" was released Friday 12th January and Accidental Euphoria drops Friday 15th March.

**Little Yak** - Amateur Status EP (Self Release)

Those of you who partake in underground music may recall Linlithgow's very own atmospheric rockers, Penguins Kill Polar Bears. Well former member John Irvine and comrades Jordan Anderson, Craig Lawrie, and Bryan McPhail have formed Little Yak to make angry, politically driven post-rock, mixed with shoegaze and good old fashioned rock, to vent their frustrations at online discourse and the general state of the world. Available now on Spotify.

**All local musicians and musical groups:** feel free to send me your upcoming gigs and news to [gary@garyclinton.com](mailto:gary@garyclinton.com)



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





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  - > It can reduce red stretch marks.
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  - > Suitable for anyone who is 18+ years old of any skin type and colour.

**How many treatments are required?**  
A course of treatments between 4-6 is normally required to achieve the best results. Intervals between each treatment is 4-6 weeks on the face and 6-8 weeks on the body.

### Downtime

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# LAMP WILL SHINE IN BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Team LAMP

FROM 2 APRIL

## A TALE AS OLD AS TIME COMES TO LIFE IN LINLITHGOW

This April, the Linlithgow Academy Theatre is set to transform into a magical world where tales of enchantment, friendship, and love transcend the ordinary. The Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions (LAMP) Children's Theatre proudly presents Disney's 'Beauty and the Beast,' a musical extravaganza that promises to enchant audiences from the 2nd to the 6th of April, with nightly performances at 7.30pm and a special Saturday matinee at 2.30pm.

Staying true to the beloved Disney animated film, this production features a talented cast of children aged 8 to 16, who bring to life the story of Belle, the Beast, and a castle full of enchanting characters. The lead roles of Belle and the Beast are portrayed by seasoned LAMP performers Niamh McDonald and Jack Wallace, marking Niamh's first principal role with the company and showcasing Jack's versatility, transitioning from the rugby field to the theatrical stage.

With twenty new members joining the seasoned cast, the stage is set for a blend of experience and fresh talent including the principal cast; Dane Brown, Joseph Gall, Izzy Holmes, Euan Campbell, Charlie Fleming, Harry Fleming, Luke Van Der Walt, Freya Duncan, Amy Arnot, Ella Pryde, Elizabeth Lozinski, Jessica Corr, Alice Redding and Isabella Wilson. This dynamic group has dedicated nearly 100 hours of rehearsal since November, tackling complex numbers like the opening 'Belle' (which includes a further ten soloists!) and the toe-tapping 'Gaston' pub scene, culminating in the epic 'Be Our Guest' complete with dancing cutlery!

Audiences can expect a visually stunning experience, with a spectacular set design enhanced by a video wall, and costumes of the highest quality, ensuring that every scene bursts with colour and vibrancy. The dedication to creating an immersive world is evident, promising a show that will remain in the hearts of audiences long after the curtain falls.

LAMP's productions are a testament to the power of community theatre in bringing high-quality, affordable entertainment to Linlithgow. Beyond the spectacle, the show offers young performers an



invaluable platform to develop teamwork, confidence, problem-solving skills, and a sense of belonging within the 'LAMP Family.' These experiences shape not only their artistic journey but their personal growth, fostering a nurturing environment that celebrates creativity and collaboration.

The anticipation for 'Beauty and the Beast' is building, with the community eager to support local theatre and witness the magic that LAMP consistently brings to the stage. The production not only promises a night of enchanting entertainment but also highlights the importance of supporting local arts, ensuring that the spirit of theatre continues to thrive in Linlithgow.

Tickets for this magical production are available via the LAMP website, offering families and theatre enthusiasts the chance to be part of a timeless story that celebrates the beauty of kindness and the transformative power of love. Join us at the Linlithgow Academy Theatre for a show that promises to leave you singing all the way home.

### Beauty and the Beast

Tuesday 2nd April to Saturday 6th April

Nightly at 7:30pm, Saturday matinee at 2:30pm

Tickets £16 full, £14 concession (for under 18s and over 65s), NEW family ticket £55

Book via the website; [www.linlithgow-musicals.co.uk](http://www.linlithgow-musicals.co.uk) or using the QR Code.



Booking QR Code:



Images: Rebecca Holmes Photography

# LINLITHGOW 41 CLUB MINI BURNS SUPPER

Linlithgow and District 41 Club's tribute to our national bard took the form of a 'Mini Burns Supper' held at the local golf club. Doug McEwan gave the 'Selkirk Grace', Robin McAdam 'Addressed the Haggis' and Andrew Blake, accompanied by his guitar, entertained members with a couple of Burns songs. While Findlay Erskine excelled with his rousing rendition of 'Tam O' Shanter', James McCallum presented 'To a Louse' and Martin Burns, in a short talk, made comparisons between Burns and Mozart.



Findlay Erskine getting right into character for Tam O' Shanter as 41 Clubbers enjoy his recitation

The evening was further enhanced by members of the Rugby Club Choir leading the group in a sing-a-long. The Vote of Thanks by Chairman, Alan Evans, was made to all those who contributed to the evening and he was gushing in his praise of what turned out to be a great night. Thanks to Linlithgow Golf Club for hosting.



Rugby Club choristers leading the Burns 'sing-a-long'



Robin McAdam - Addressing the Haggis



## LINLITHGOW STUDENTS WIN FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Five schoolchildren from Linlithgow have made an 'eye-opening' short film about older people and loneliness and won an award of £3000 for a local charity.

The fourteen-year-olds – Alice Redding, Aaron Wilson, Charlene Chan, Eliana Smith and Emma McInnes – from Linlithgow Academy were invited to a regular tea party run by charity Re-engage, which helps those aged 75 and over who may be isolated.

"Before we got involved we just didn't realise how loneliness affects older people," said Charlene. "It's really opened our eyes and we want to highlight the problem. We don't want it to be overlooked."

The third-formers won the award through the Youth Philanthropy Initiative, which is run by the Wood Foundation in Scotland. Since the initiative started in 2008 over 300,000 young people have been involved, helping distribute £6.8m to charities.

The annual programme is designed to raise awareness of social issues while helping students develop skills and confidence.

Alice, Aaron, Charlene, Eliana and Emma decided to focus on older people after learning that some members of their own families suffered loneliness. Then they discovered that Re-engage was dedicated to fighting the problem in older people and asked if they could see the charity in action and make a short film.

Lorraine Colquhoun, who runs free monthly tea parties for Re-engage in Armadale, Almond Valley/Livingston,

Bathgate and Whitburn, was more than happy to accommodate them and invited them along to West Calder.

Alice said: "They really gave us a warm welcome. They all looked very happy and were enjoying themselves. It was like one big happy family and the volunteers were really nice.

"But Lorraine did explain that some of them were lonely and it was often hard to reach older people like that because they are often isolated."

Eliana said: "Going to the tea party made us very aware of how older people might be feeling if they're lonely. Until then I didn't realise that about my grandmother so now I'm trying to visit and talk to her more."

And Aaron added: "It's reminded me to engage a lot with my grandparents. We'd also like to keep in touch with Re-engage as it's doing such an important job."



The charity, which started in 1965, runs a call befriending service as well as the monthly free tea parties. It has also started

activity groups where older people can do chair yoga, tai-chi or carpet bowls. It currently helps around 60 older people in the West Lothian area.

Lorraine, who has volunteered for Re-engage for more than twenty years, said: "It was lovely to have the students at the tea party. The older people really enjoyed their company. And it was an absolutely delightful surprise to learn we had been given £3000.

"It's going to ensure that we can

continue to have great occasions when all four of our tea party groups get together once a month. We'll be able to have a good Christmas lunch, a trip on a steam train, go to a panto, or all three!

"We'd like to thank Alice, Aaron, Charlene and Eliana for coming along – and winning us the money."

Lynn Raynal, programme officer for YPI, said: "The students gave an absolutely fantastic presentation at the academy. And the fact they had attended one of the tea parties obviously gave them the confidence to speak so passionately.

"They re-enacted how an older person might feel lonely, spoke about how this could affect their relatives and gave details of the work Re-engage does before showing the short film made at the tea party, complete with sub-titles. They feel quite strongly that this is a social issue that is overlooked.

"It really was lovely to watch and impressed everyone – the judging panel and hundreds of students and teachers. It's clear that they have really engaged with the charity and will continue to do so."

The cheque will be presented at a ceremony at Perth Concert Hall on June 12th.

WED  
12  
JUN

Sarah Carney, Head of English at the Academy, said: "They did exceptionally well as there was stiff competition with all 280 students in year three taking part in different groups. But they absolutely threw the kitchen sink at it. It was a fabulous presentation."

Last word came from Alice, who said: "I can imagine myself going to a tea party when I'm older. They're great events."

Re-engage

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# LOW PORT SCHOOL MARKS A MILESTONE YEAR



**1974:**  
ABBA won the Eurovision Song Contest, Harold Wilson was the UK

prime minister, everyone was wearing flared trousers and Low Port Primary School was working through its first school session, which started in August 1973 and continued until June 1974.

The school actually first opened its doors in June 1973 and then closed them a few weeks later for the summer holidays. In August that year, the first session got underway for the new school in the building at the Low Port that had been occupied until 1968 by Linlithgow Academy.

Low Port teachers, staff, students, and families are celebrating the school's 50th anniversary throughout the current session



SAT  
9  
MAR

50TH ANNIVERSARY

and they have asked legendary local quizmaster **Davie 'Deep Sea' Paterson** to host a special quiz to mark the occasion.

Davie was a pupil at the school in the 1970s, and he says:

*"Any former pupils of Low Port Primary, please try to be involved on this special occasion. It'll be a cracker of a night and it's open to everyone - you don't have to be associated with school to take part. I'm delighted to be helping my old school."*

As well as celebrating a milestone anniversary, the quiz will also help to raise funds for a brand-new STEM area at the school.

If you want to join in with the celebrations, come along to the Linlithgow Rose Club on Saturday March 9th.

The quiz starts at 7.30pm, for teams of four or five, and the entry fee is £5. There's a star prize for the winning team, sponsored by professional chef Tony Orr, and there are lots of fantastic raffle prizes up for grabs. See [www.facebook.com/FriendofLPPS](http://www.facebook.com/FriendofLPPS) for full details. As Davie Paterson says - *everyone's welcome!*

**Kate Sleight**, Trustee Friends of Low Port Primary School



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6th April - Kenny Alexander  
13th April - Ana Muñoz

**Sunday 5pm-late**

31st March - Pure Malt

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## The Housing Market

Rightmove are reporting an early 2024 buyers boost housing market, but price sensitivity remains.

We've seen some positive activity in the property market in the past couple of months. Buyer activity is busier than this time last year, and January was a record-breaking month for people requesting home valuations.

This echoes what we have experienced here at Paul Rolfe Sales & Letting, with January 2024 being busier than January 2023 in terms of new properties coming to market.

What happens in the first couple of months of the year is often a good indicator for the year ahead. A year ago, we were seeing a much cooler market than usual. With mortgage rates at historically high levels, many home-movers put their plans on hold.

But by the end of 2023, mortgage rates were edging down consistently, and a record number of homes were listed for sale on Boxing Day.

While these were all positive signs, it wasn't clear whether housing market activity would keep its momentum into March. We're able to see

what's happening in the property market in real time, and can see that this increased level of demand has remained, with lots of people determined to make 2024 the year they move into a new home.

Rightmove property expert, Tim Bannister, says: "There continues to be reasons for cautious optimism as we settle into 2024, with encouraging activity levels from home-movers and a more stable housing market. While some would-be buyers will continue to be affected by elevated mortgage rates and major affordability constraints, many other prospective buyers who can afford to do so, have acted fast and demonstrated their belief that 2024 is their year to get moving."

These elevated activity levels are translating into 7% more properties coming onto the market than at the same time last year, and the number of buyer enquiries to estate agents has also seen a 7% increase compared to 2023. And this is all converting into the number of agreed sales in the first six

weeks of 2024 being 16% higher than over the same period last year.

### Scottish Rent Cap Legislation

Current rent caps introduced as part of the emergency Cost of Living (Tenant Protection Scotland Bill 2022) are due to come to an end on the 31st March 2024. The legislation has been regarded by some within the industry as largely ineffective in stopping or reducing upward pressure on rents for a number of reasons.

Continued strong demand from prospective tenants coupled with a lack of supply has seen Landlords increasing rents at tenancy changeovers to cover their increased costs and risks.

The current administration is committed to introducing more permanent rent controls in future and is consulting with various parties on the ways to proceed with this.

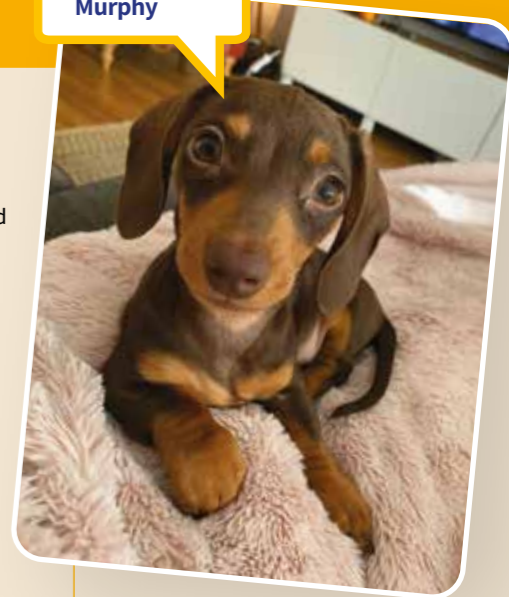


**PETS' CORNER**



Westport Vet's Pet of The Month is Simba Murphy. Simba is a 4 month old Miniature Dachshund puppy.

Hello I'm Simba Murphy



Simba's owner describes her as a feisty little princess who always gets what she wants. Full of fun and mischief!

Simba makes her owner smile as she loves to steal objects that are a lot bigger than she is, and drags them along the floor. You can see what she's dragging before you can see her!

She loves sleeping, often sleeping 10 hours through the night and has multiple naps throughout the day. Her heated blanket is her favourite place to cuddle up for a snooze. Her owner says she has loads of cheeky habits. She bites the end of your nose when she gets excited to see you! She also steals a bite of whatever you're eating, she's almost on the plate with it most times! She smiles all the time, always looking cheeky.

She loves soft toys and teething toys. Her favourite game is to try and run up the stairs chasing Molly, their 4 year old Poochon. She also loves dangling off of Molly's ears, although Molly is not such a big fan. Her favourite place to be is anywhere warm! Either on an electric blanket or under a duvet.

We asked her owner what made you choose a mini Dachshund?

Simba's owner says:

"They're so cute! We wanted a dog who loves to chill and have a cuddle. She doesn't require a great deal of walking but she loves to have zoomies and then chill for a good period of time."

Like Simba's owner has done, it is important that owners understand a breed's temperament and care needs.

Adding a pet into your life and family is a big decision. An animal's breed is key to understanding what these requirements may entail. Temperament will vary per individual, however their breed will give you a good guide. It is vital to understand your lifestyle and that an animal's needs are a suitable fit. Many breeds have specific 'breed traits' which, if these natural behaviours are not met, can be detrimental to the welfare of the animal.

In terms of care requirements, the PDSA has a great system to work this out: **Think P-E-T-S = Place, Exercise, Time and Spend.**

Never go to 'look' at prospective pets unless you are certain they are the right fit for your lifestyle, cos let's face it, not many people can go meet a puppy or kitten and not be inclined to bring it home! When faced with puppy dog eyes all rationale tends to go out the window!

Consider additional care requirements, such as care cover for booked holidays, or daily care requirements. Good dog walkers, pet sitters and kennels are booked far in advance, and good groomers have lengthy waiting lists - ensure you can manage to fulfill your future pet needs.

Everyday things like insurance, food and toys to unexpected vet bills is a financial commitment. Some pets may cost a few hundred pounds a year while others can cost thousands, so make sure you factor in how much your new pet will cost you.

Research your sources! Ensuring that any breeders are reputable, licenced and accountable. If you consider rescue, please ensure to go through official rescue organisations. Making a list of questions to remember what details you should be asking, and taking notes when things are discussed with you is advisable.

The internet hosts so many pet scams and bad breeding and can be a minefield of unauthorised animal sales. Please be very careful you don't get caught out. If something doesn't seem quite right, trust your gut and walk away.

Owning a pet is a fabulous and rewarding experience. But every animal and their needs are different. The Westport Team can help guide you and answer any questions if you are unsure what may be the most suitable for your family and if you need guidance on where to start.

If you have any concerns about your pet contact **Westport Vets 01506 844165**. To book a health check or any enquiries email: [surgery@westportvets.com](mailto:surgery@westportvets.com)

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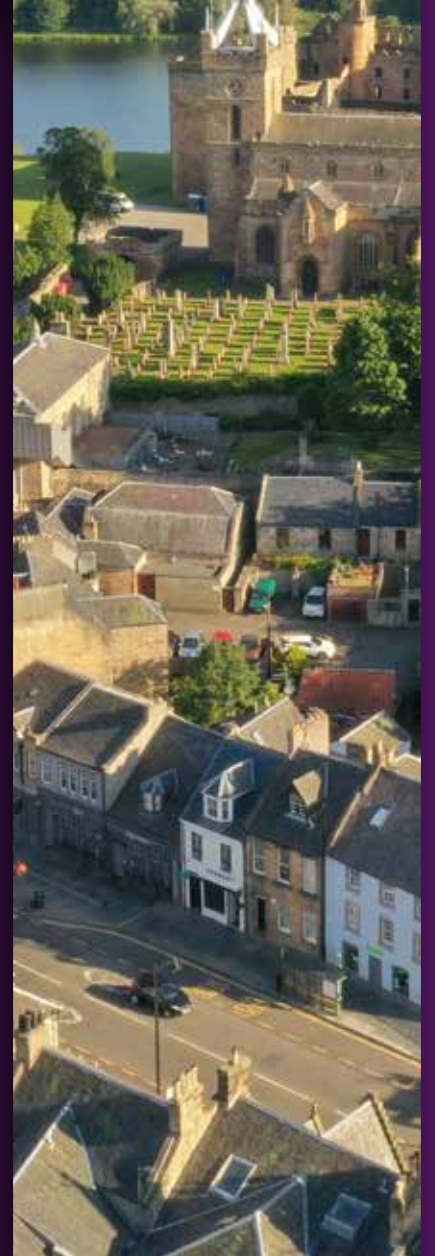
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