

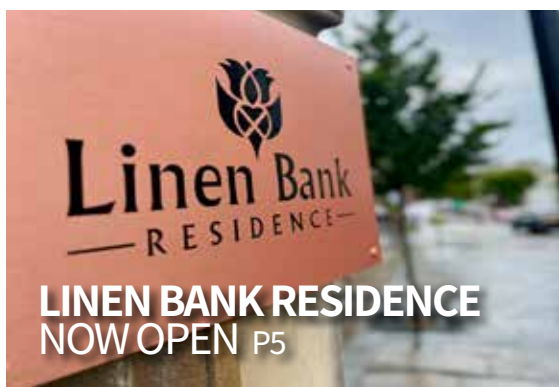
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STAR & GARTER HOTEL P17



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BRIDGE, 500TH ANNIVERSARY
SEE P12**

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LINLITHGOW COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

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ESTD. 2011

LINLITHGOW'S NEWS BY LINLITHGOW'S PEOPLE

BITCH

ISSUE NO.116
AUG 2025

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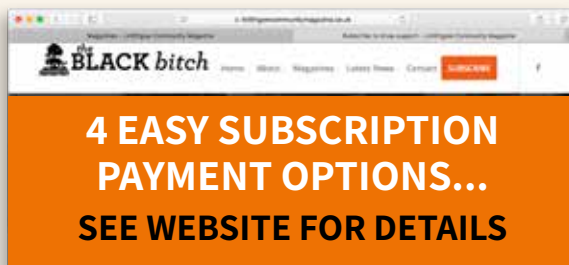
NEXT ISSUE COPY DEADLINE
17 SEPTEMBER 2025



CONTACT DAVID TAIT, EDITOR
on.a.lead@gmail.com



DAVID TAIT
EDITOR



**4 EASY SUBSCRIPTION
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I hope you have all been enjoying our good summer and have been out and about in Linlithgow soaking up the vitamin D. You may have spent some time along the High Street and noticed various changes. Two articles in this issue address why change is needed.

Also, two articles which should attract the attention of all those who enjoy living in Linlithgow – one relates to a short term change mostly impacting the High Street and the other to the long term success of the Linlithgow community as a whole.

The first of these is **One Linlithgow's article on page 4** introducing Professor Leigh Sparks of Stirling University and Chair of Scotland's Towns Partnership (STP). STP organises the Scotland Loves Local promotion of community activity all across Scotland and witnesses "transformational work" by communities "following decades of neglect".

Professor Sparks chaired the Review Group which produced the New Future for Scotland's Towns Report for the Scottish Government in 2021 and Scotland's Town Centre Action Plan and the creation of the Place Principle which prioritises individual towns where the majority of Scotland's people live. He is the authority to be listened to and, in the context of necessary change, to be followed and actively supported. In the article, he generates a feeling of optimism and progress based on results to date and the promise shown in towns across the country as businesses and communities take up the challenge to drive positive change.

Please read One Linlithgow's article on **page 4** and go on to think about the section on new business life on our High Street and the conversion by the Hay family of another prominent redundant High Street asset into a productive unit – all very much in the spirit of Professor Sparks proposals.

The second is of particular importance to those with an interest in Linlithgow's history and heritage. **The Planning Forum** relates the story of why there is a gap site in front of the Templars Court development. A story of shameful mismanagement of relevant legislation and process leaving the town with a "missing tooth" right at the centre of its principal Conservation Area opposite The Cross. Again taking our lead from Professor Sparks this is a situation that needs all interested parties to work together constructively to effect change before a decade of neglect becomes two decades of neglect. **(page 6)**

Continuing that theme of local action and engagement, **Linlithgow & Linlithgow Bridge Community Council** will hold its AGM in October when existing Community Councillors and prospective new Councillors can put themselves forward for election. There is clearly a pressing need for local people to engage with government at local level and the Community Council, as the only statutory body with statutory powers to deploy, is a good way to do it. Find out how to apply on **page 8**

New features include the first of what will be regular updates from **Linlithgow Academy** and **Linlithgow Bridge Primary School**. In this issue Linlithgow Academy Head Teacher Grant Abbot has provided an update **(page 16)** on its ambitious plans for the 25/26 academic year and LBPS, Class Teacher P7, Victoria Knox

reports on a new pupil-led project to encourage all ages up to P7 to develop a love of reading and writing. **(page 24)**

Folk Fae Lithgae (page 14) features Darren Wilson, born and bred Linlithgow, and recently appointed Team Coach at Rose FC working alongside Manager Gordon Herd. Together they have ambitious plans for the team in this their third season in the Lowland League.

Winning promotion from this League is no mean feat and Darren is looking to gain wide support from his home town to help them battle through. He is keen to encourage more young players to take up the game and more parents to come along to fill the terraces. To help a bit with that the magazine has started a new feature publishing The Rose club fixtures for upcoming games – helpful for those who manage to get through life without logging on to Facebook regularly.

The inaugural outing of a new musical event for **Linlithgow - Roots and Branches**, promoted by Low Port Music – was hosted at the Low Port Centre on 26 July 2025. Our reporter Toby Goodwin was there and he sets out his thoughts on a highly successful event on **page 25**. He's looking forward to hearing about plans for next year.

These are just a selection of articles but we have much more Linlithgow news besides – not least 3 new High Street Award winning businesses, a celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge, a whole series of autumn/winter Author events to look forward to and Bruce Jamieson's Linlithgow Inventor away ahead of his time plus all our regular features.

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

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LEIGH SPARKS: “WE’VE GREAT THINGS HAPPENING IN SCOTLAND’S TOWNS... WE NEED MORE OF IT”

Professor Leigh Sparks is in no doubt that transformational work is happening to make towns across Scotland better, reimagining and revitalising them following decades of neglect.

What he would like to see is more of it. And the highly-respected retail academic and author is certain that initiatives such as Scotland Loves Local – urging people to support local businesses and encouraging communities to work together to drive positive developments forward – have an important part to play.

As Chair of Scotland’s Towns Partnership (STP), the organisation which spearheads Scotland Loves Local, he has been involved with the campaign encouraging people to choose local since its launch as a coronavirus recovery initiative and has overseen its evolution into a platform to boost regional economies and the innovation which is forging a new future for them.

Speaking as Scotland Loves Local marks its fifth anniversary, Prof Sparks said: “If we look at individuals, look at community groups, local authorities and Business Improvement Districts across Scotland, we have a network of people doing great things around our town centres to drive them forward.

“It’s going to be different in different places. We shouldn’t expect it to be the same everywhere. Places are individuals and the people who make them up are individuals.

get everyone pulling in the same direction.”

Much of that work will be in the spotlight as part of Scotland Loves Local Week (August 23-30), as the personal determination which is driving change is recognised by its People Make Places theme. Achievements will also be celebrated as part of the Scotland Loves Local Awards, entries for which close on August 20.

But how can it be accelerated?

Prof Sparks, who authored the New Future for Scotland’s Towns report for the Scottish Government which was published in 2021, believes progress has been made through the establishment of Scotland’s Town Centre Action Plan and the creation of the Place Principle.



Linlithgow High Street, see QR code above.

He, however, believes that there is more that could be done to help communities achieve their aspirations.

“New Futures identified the need for improved policy and fiscal measures and for the continued need for investment into community wealth building, digital and town centre living, driving people back into the centre,” Prof Sparks said.

“We’ve done well on policy and investment. Where we perhaps have more work to do is on the fiscal elements.

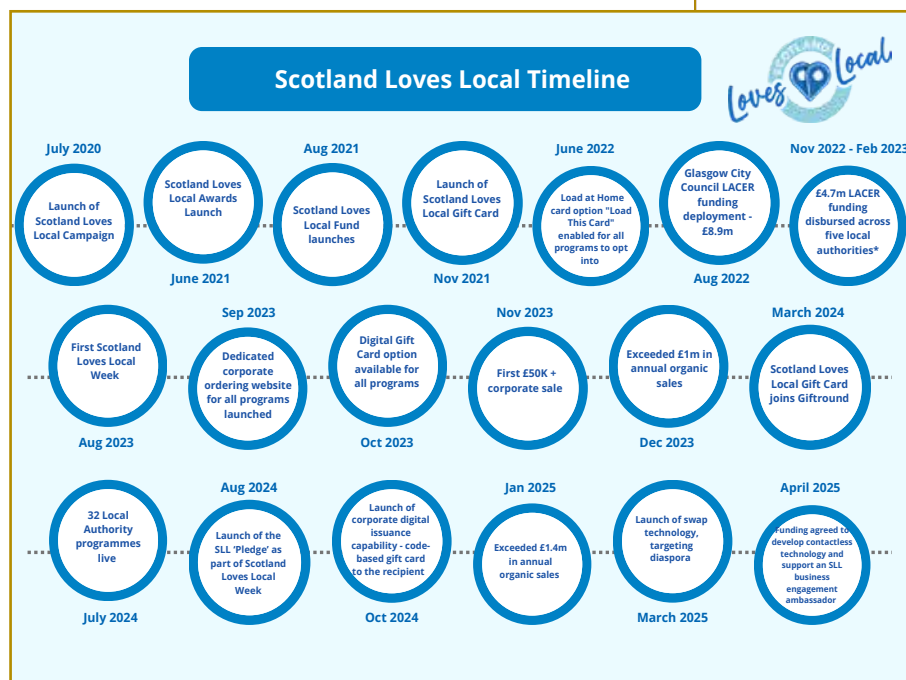
“We’ve got great things happening in lots of towns across Scotland – and great initiatives – but it’s almost in spite of the system, rather than because of it.

“If we could change the VAT system, if we could change the rates system and think about how we use taxation to stop things happening that adversely affect our places and to make it easier for organisations and businesses in town centres to do the work that they really want to do, I think we’d have more thriving town centres as a consequence.

“They’re going to be different. Town centres have been in evolution. They’re going to continue to evolve and change. But the way we’ve got things now, we could do a little bit better to help.”

You can read more from Professor Leigh Sparks on his blog, Stirling Retail.

And you can read inspirational stories of change in the Be Inspired section of STP’s website – www.scotlandstowns.org.



“There are so many good things going on that it’s trying to get more of that.

“We should be encouraged with what’s happening and we should be encouraging people more in the way that they do it.

“Town centres are great places. We’ve got massive innovation in lots of our town centres. We just need now to build on that, get more of it and

Sources

Leigh Sparks: We’ve great things happening in Scotland’s towns ... we need more of it

> By Scotland’s Town Centre Recovery Campaign > in Scotland Loves Local, Scotland’s Towns, Towns and Communities

BUSINESS CHANGES ON THE HIGH STREET

There has been quite a bit of business movement on the High Street in recent months and we have been out and about to take a closer look at some of the activity.

Firstly a warm welcome to **Chloe Mason (Mason Homes)** and **Claudia Kydd (CK Mortgages)** who have both taken the big step of setting up their own businesses.

MASON HOMES

(75 The Vennel - previously The Thread Counter)

Local born and bred, Chloe is the face behind Mason Homes, an independent sales and lettings agency based in Linlithgow. With a genuine passion for property and a strong connection to the community, Chloe is dedicated to helping local people buy, sell, and rent with confidence.



Mason Homes offers honest advice, in-depth local knowledge, and a truly personal approach, ensuring every client enjoys a smooth and stress-free property journey. With Chloe's hands-on expertise and commitment to exceptional service, Mason Homes is quickly becoming a trusted name for property across Linlithgow and the surrounding areas.

Contact: www.mason-homes.co.uk/
[chloe@mason-homes.co.uk/](mailto:chloe@mason-homes.co.uk)
01506 534 994

CK MORTGAGES

(48 High Street - previously A Wee Mindin')

Introducing CK Mortgages, a small business offering professional mortgage and protection advice.

"My name is **Claudia Kydd**, and I'm a fully qualified Mortgage & Protection Advisor with over five years of experience helping clients achieve their financial and homeownership goals.

I spent many childhood years visiting family in Linlithgow, so I am delighted to set up my business on the High Street.

If you are looking for any mortgage or protection advice, please don't hesitate to get in touch on 01506 242 243."



LINEN BANK RESIDENCE

(89 / 91 High Street at The Cross)

After a year of hard and careful work, **Jim Hay**, owner of the Court Residence, has completed the beautiful internal refurbishment of the former British Linen Bank building which faces the Cross. The perfectly placed Linen Bank Residence contains 18 aparthotel studios and rooms. A fantastic addition to the superb accommodation already available at the Court Residence - both buildings look stunning inside.

Jim has explained that he wanted the Linen Bank Residence to have its own personality and that has certainly been achieved.

Contact: www.courtresidence.com/
[info@courtresidence.com/](mailto:info@courtresidence.com)
01506 538 687



MAC'S (73 The Vennel)

Congratulations to **Graeme Brough** and his team who won the **Confectionery Retailer of the Year** in June - "Huge thanks to everyone who voted for us and the nomination in the first place. Big thanks to all our wonderful customers from regulars to people visiting the town."



SKIN HAPPY (42 High Street)

Wonderful achievement by Tina Arnot who was awarded Skin Salon of the Year at the inaugural Scottish Salon Awards on Sunday 29th June 2025 (see feature article on page 21). Well done Tina.

Contact: www.skinhappy.co.uk/
[info@skinhappy.co.uk/](mailto:info@skinhappy.co.uk) 01506 888 138

TRULY SCRUMPTIOUS CAKE BOUTIQUE (Unit 5 Braehead Business Units)

Another big win for a Linlithgow business at the Scottish Independent Retail Awards 2025 in June when the husband and wife team of **Chris and Krysthel Nugent** from Truly Scrumptious scooped up the Bakery of the Year award. Chris explained that they had unfortunately not been able to attend the awards event but had no idea that they had been nominated in the first place! Top tier work from Chris and Krysthel. **Contact:** www.trulyscrumptiouscakeboutique.com/
[hello@trulyscrumptiouscakeboutique.com/](mailto:hello@trulyscrumptiouscakeboutique.com) 01506 671 133



TONY'S (6 West Port - previously Zio G's which closed in April)

Experienced takeaway business owner **Tony Cemicchiario** has opened a new outlet at the West Port. The wide ranging menu features fish and chips, pizzas, burgers, kebabs and much more. Tony who also runs takeaway shops in Livingston (Mama Mia) and Broxburn (Tony's Cucina) has arrived in town with his team to make the claim of being the best fish and chips takeaway in Linlithgow! The food looks good.

Orders can also be made online at: tonyslinlithgow.co.uk



THE THREAD COUNTER

(Low Port Centre - previously at 75 The Vennel)



The Thread Counter moved from the High Street to the Low Port Centre at the end of January 2025. Owner **Nici Martin** is happy to report that her new set up is 'working perfectly' and is able to offer even more classes than before. The increased space allows class work stations to be set up on a permanent basis.

Nici has exciting plans for next year when she hopes to offer 'craft holidays' for visitors from out of town.

Contact: the.threadcounter.co.uk/
info@thethreadcounter.co.uk

Lastly, thank you and farewell to:-

BANK OF SCOTLAND (Regent Centre)
BOXX HAIR (264 High Street)
LINLITHGOW TYRES AND EXHAUSTS (29 Blackness Road)
ZIO G's (6 West Port - now Tony's)



One Linlithgow
Email: office@onelinlithgow.com
Tel: 07708 194592

10 YEARS AFTER THE FIRST RESIDENT MOVED INTO TEMPLARS COURT THE BUILDING WORK REMAINS INCOMPLETE – IS IT TIME THE LINLITHGOW COMMUNITY TOOK CONTROL?

The project granted Planning Permission



"The story is one of poor decision-making, flagrant breach of planning and building control regulations and the power of big business over local communities" - Black Bitch Magazine No. 83, July 2021

The Templars Court story began in 2011. West Lothian Council received a planning application from McCarthy and Stone for the construction of 41 flats on 18 April 2011. On 27 May 2011, a letter to West Lothian Council outlined the discussion at a Community Council meeting three days previously which concluded that the Community Council was not opposed to the principle of the development but was opposed to the inadequate number of car parking spaces and highlighted the impact on Linlithgow Academy. (It was cited at the time that 50% of Kinloch View residents were previously residents in Linlithgow who had downsized, selling their family sized house which obviously impacted on the number of Linlithgow Academy pupils).

Confidential discussions between the planning department of West Lothian Council and McCarthy and Stone concluded with a minute of agreement signed by both parties on 11 March 2013 which included a £90,000 payment to West Lothian Council as a means of avoiding the

provision of social housing on the site. It is understood that the £90,000 was spent on social housing elsewhere in West Lothian, rather than in Linlithgow (contrary to the spirit of the relevant planning legislation).

On 8 May 2013, planning permission was granted by the Development Management Manager of West Lothian Council without referring the application to the Planning Committee. It should be noted that it is common, for planning applications for minor works to be dealt with by officers of the Council under the Council's scheme of delegation; but it is very rare for projects of the size of Templars Court not to be determined by the Planning Committee. Had the project gone to Planning Committee a representative of the Community Council would have had the opportunity to address the committee on matters of concern. One particular concern was the timing of the demolition of the frontage building (the existing bus station offices). The planning permission required

the frontage building to remain in place until a contract had been placed for the development of the whole site, including the replacement of the frontage building. The Community Council would have preferred the frontage building to remain in place until the completion of the 36 flats behind, or the new frontage completed first.

McCarthy and Stone submitted a building warrant application on 10 November 2011 for the demolition of the frontage building. This warrant application was refused but not until 14 August 2014. Without a building warrant, McCarthy and Stone had part demolished the frontage building during October/November 2013. During this demolition, the chimney of the neighbouring building began to move, and the demolition was halted until the chimney was stabilised. A section of the existing bus station office building adjacent to the neighbouring building was left in place. A few months later, the remaining structure was removed, and work began digging the foundation for the new frontage building close to the adjacent building which again moved. Timber shores were erected. West Lothian Council intimated that there was little they could do.

On 26 September 2017, an email received by the Community Council from agents acting for McCarthy and Stone stated, *"McCarthy and Stone has purchased the property affected by the construction work and has compensated the family concerned for their inconvenience and move to an alternative home a series of ground investigations have been conducted since spring this year (2017) and have now been completed. The results of this show that the extent of the underlying rock and the ground conditions mean it is very unlikely that construction can proceed on the front building"*.

On 13 October 2017, a meeting was held between McCarthy and Stone and the three Ward Councillors at which McCarthy and Stone presented a programme of works to repair the gable wall of the adjacent building with the remaining area grassed over. The Councillors informed McCarthy and Stone that this was unacceptable within the Linlithgow conservation area.

After demolition 2013



On 1 February 2018, representatives of the Community Council met with the Regional Managing Director of McCarthy and Stone. The Community Council were presented with the same options as the Ward Councillors. During the discussion which followed, the Community Council strongly urged McCarthy and Stone to complete the consented works as detailed in the planning permission which required, amongst other things, for McCarthy and Stone to *"protect the visual character and amenity of the Linlithgow Palace and High Street conservation area and protect adjoining listed buildings"*. However, the Regional Managing Director stated that the risks associated with the built solution as detailed in the planning permission were, in the company's opinion, now too great and therefore McCarthy and Stone would leave the site undeveloped. Subsequently, McCarthy and Stone made an offer to sell the site to West Lothian Council for £1.

So where are we now? In the past seven years, the Community Council

has pursued through a steady stream of correspondence various avenues to complete the frontage building in the form originally envisaged but including seven social housing flats for the elderly, unfortunately without any cooperation or encouragement from West Lothian Council. In an email of 27 May 2025 to the Community Council, the position of West Lothian Council was summarised as follows:

In terms of the McCarthy and Stone site you are correct that pre-covid there was an undertaking to contact the company but that didn't happen for one reason or another. Since then things have moved on a bit and the owner (presumably still McCarthy and Stone) has carried out some tidying up of the site. While it is clear that the landscaping of the site will never be as attractive, in townscape terms, as having a built façade on to the High Street, there is nothing, as far as I can see, which can be done to require this.

You refer in your email to the offer which is referred to on the developers website. For clarity the council has never received a formal offer from the land owner and, notwithstanding, I have discussed the matter with colleagues in Property Services who have confirmed that the council is unlikely to have any interest in acquiring the site, particular (sic?) given

the reported ground condition challenges which exist on it.

What was unknown to the Community Council at the time of the discussions with the Regional Managing Director of McCarthy and Stone was that the company had employed Blyth and Blyth, engineers from Edinburgh, to investigate the site and design a suitable foundation and structure solution. This was done and submitted to West Lothian Council on 17 February 2016. The design was approved by West Lothian Council and building warrants were issued. Had the Community Council known this we could have refuted the reason for not completing the frontage building which was nothing to do with the practicality of constructing a building but everything to do with the cost. The result is that McCarthy and Stone have their profit from the sale of 36 apartments, West Lothian Council have the £90,000 (which could and should have been spent on this site) and the Linlithgow Community are denied seven social housing flats and have to put up with a gap in the High Street. But at least we have a tidy frontage, thanks to the voluntary efforts of the residents of Templars Court.

Now that West Lothian Council has made clear their intention to do nothing to mitigate what could be considered a saga of maladministration, it is going to be up to members of the Community Council and the Planning Forum to make the next move. The most obvious route is to invoke the Communities Right to Buy Abandoned, Neglected or Detrimental Land under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. This is a right which allows the Community Council to apply to Scottish Ministers for consent to exercise a compulsory purchase of land or a building that is wholly or mainly abandoned or neglected. Not an easy process but, in the absence of any West Lothian Council interest in the site, could be a worthwhile venture (possibly along with the former Victoria Hall site) if we, the Linlithgow community, are willing to take the responsibility.

Planning Forum

McCarthy & Stone's "finished" project



LINLITHGOW AND LINLITHGOW BRIDGE COMMUNITY COUNCIL



The West Lothian community council 2025 elections are underway. Nominations are open until the 4th of September! If you're interested in joining or finding out more please get in touch at secretary@llbcc.org.uk

Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council is a statutory, voluntary body which gathers and acts on views and concerns of residents in Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge.

The Community Council has direct contact with Council Officers, Departments, Elected Members, MSPs, MP and other public sector, voluntary sector and third sector organisations.

The Community Council is represented on the Joint Forum of Community Councils of West Lothian which has direct contact with heads of services including Graham Hope, Chief Executive of West Lothian Council and the Assistant Area Commander of the Lothian and Borders Police force. Issues impacting Linlithgow can be raised at Joint Forum meetings.

Linlithgow Planning Forum

A sub-committee of the Community Council with representation from other Linlithgow organisations with an

interest in planning. It was established in 2013 to review, discuss and publicise planning matters, including major planning applications, related to Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge. Through the Local Place Plan the Planning Forum co-ordinates Linlithgow's input to the West Lothian Local Development Plan.

The Planning Forum has recently commented on:

High Street congestion and gap sites.

Proposed new development at Wilcoxholm Farm

Ensuring that 25% of all new development is social housing with recent examples at Springfield and Deanburn.

The developing West Lothian Local Development Plan as it affects all Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge residents.

Is Planning for you? Then joining Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council may be of interest to you! email your interest to: secretary@llbcc.org.uk and we'll be in touch!



Map Legend and Colour Key

Areas of Great Landscape Value	Tx Transport/Accessibility Proposals
'Green Wedges', Wildlife Corridors and Development Free Areas	Rd Road Links
Hx Housing Proposals	Sx TCx Proposals for Retailing and Town Centre
ESx Proposals for Environmental Sustainability	Rx Community/Recreation Proposals
Dx Proposals for Built/Architectural Heritage and Tourism	ED Education Proposal
Ex Proposals Relation to Business and Employment	HE Health Facility Proposal



Advent Fayre

The planning for the 2025 Advent Fayre has begun! This year will be the 28th Advent Fayre.

Planning started with a meeting of the Advent Fayre Committee in July. A sub-committee of the Community Council with representation from the Community Council, Linlithgow Athletic Club, Deacons Court, The Low Port Centre and more members and organisations.

Follow Linlithgow Advent Fayre on facebook to keep up to date with progress and details of events!



Remembrance Sunday

The Community Council has adopted the responsibility for organising Linlithgow's Remembrance Sunday procession through the town to St Michael's Parish church who organise the Remembrance service at the war memorial in the church.

Volunteer Visitor Team

Based in the reception area of the Burgh Halls aiming to welcome visitors and share the heritage of our town with visitors and residents alike is the Volunteer Visitor Team.

Starting in 2023, VV continues to experience success with high numbers of visitors coming through the door.

If you have a couple of hours to spare during the week and are interested in Linlithgow's heritage get in touch with VV at: jill@maddingcrowdlinlithgow.com



JOHN SPENCE – A LINLITHGOW INVENTOR

Bruce Jamieson

The family of Spence has, over the centuries, played a large part in the history of Linlithgow. The family has produced local shoemakers, tanners, postcard producers, pharmacists and medics. Dr Robert Spence was an eminent local medical practitioner while his son, Linlithgow-born Dr Robert Wilson Christian Spence, was a surgeon at the Gretna Explosives Factory - a fact I discovered on a visit to the museum there which they have called, "The Devil's Porridge."



Dr Robert Wilson Christian Spence. He is recorded on the family headstone in Braehead Cemetery.



Spences have also filled the positions of Burgess, Town Councillor and Deacon of the Dyers and recently I came across yet another interesting member of the family.

In an early 19th century copy of the "Edinburgh Magazine", I found a reference to John Spence – a man born in Linlithgow in 1798.

*John Spence Shoemaker and Helen Higgens
Aged 8. John born June 28th 1798 July 1809*

John Spence's birth in the Old Parish Register of St Michael's Church.

I discovered on further research, that he went on to be a prolific inventor of many mechanical contraptions

including a very early pedal-powered "car" and a "perpetual motion machine".



John Spence was born at 176 High Street seen here before its demolition in the 1960s.

John was the son of a prosperous Linlithgow

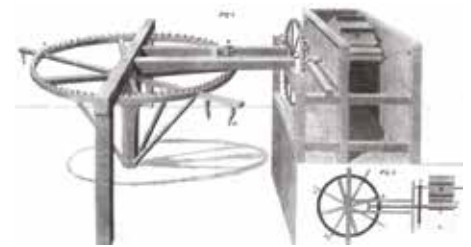
tanner (also called John) and Helen Higgens. He received a rudimentary education in the 3Rs (reading, writing and 'rithmetic) in an "independent school" - one of the privately operated educational establishments set up in owners' residences around the town. From a very early age, the young lad showed an unusual aptitude for things mechanical. He would spend hours staring at the cutting, pressing and rolling machines in the tannery which his father had built off the High Street, in a lochside rigg.



Machinery in a leather tannery.

John also loved to walk out to Linlithgow Bridge to watch the various contraptions in operation at the calico printing mill situated on the River Avon. He always claimed that reading about a machine and how it functioned meant nothing to him - he had to see it for himself to understand how it worked. He especially loved watching the newly invented agricultural threshing machines and would regularly go to see them at work on farms where they were used for separating the corn from the

stalks. He befriended the owner of one such machine at Gateside Farm, near Bridgend, where he was allowed to help oil the moving parts.



The earliest threshing machine was invented in 1786 by East Lothian millwright, Andrew Meikle.

At the age of 12, John's father signed him up as an apprentice to a local shoemaker. He proved to be a quick learner and especially enjoyed using the leather cutting machine situated in the High Street premises. However, after a few years, he tired of the work and for a short while he found employment in a textile establishment in Glasgow where he was employed as an engineer to maintain and service the power looms. His father was disappointed as he had always thought his son would join him in his tannery.



John Woods 1820 map showing the Spence tannery behind 176 High Street.

Returning to Linlithgow, the 20-year-old John put his recently acquired skills to use by inventing and constructing a mechanical loom on which he turned out cloth of an excellent quality. He next became interested in "propulsion machines" and constructed a crank-driven vehicle on which two travellers operated foot pedals to drive a chain which turned the four wheels. In 1818, it was driven from Linlithgow into Edinburgh - overtaking the mail coach on the way - and exhibited in the capital, to the amazement of many who had never seen such a contraption.



This pedal car dates from the late 19th century. John Spence invented a similar one 70 years earlier.

He then turned his attention to the possibility of a perpetual motion machine and entered a competition to produce one. It involved the use of magnetic force and a drawing of

it appeared in an 1820 edition of the "Edinburgh Magazine" - along with a detailed description of how it worked.

In his Linlithgow workshop, he went on to produce a succession of inventions, including a three-wheeled velocipede, driven by pedal-power and a wheeled vehicle driven by dogs!

An American dog-powered velocipede - invented 50 years after John Spence's invention.



He also planned and constructed a "portable house", three storeys high, which he built at Fountainbridge - then a suburb of Edinburgh. He moved his family there: his several children and his wife, Jane Brown, who set up a fruit-selling business from the wheeled dwelling. The Spence "House on Wheels" was once moved six miles to a new site - a feat witnessed by many astonished onlookers.

During his two years in the moveable home, another baby was born - the youngster's place of birth always a subject for family dispute, for the boy (one of six sons) was born while the mobile dwelling was on the move. Luckily, registration of births was not compulsory in Scotland until 1854 so an exact place of birth was not needed.

John loved his large family - often inventing toys and playing equipment for them. He constructed a pair of roller skates and one of his sons became very skilful in their use - keeping up with his father on his velocipede and reaching speeds of up to eight miles an hour. The skates have not survived but an illustration shows a wooden base and leather straps obtained from the Spence tannery.



Spence's patented roller skate.

Unfortunately, and to his wife's considerable disappointment, John never made much money from his many imaginative devices and he had to go back to his old trade of shoemaking to earn an income. But he never gave up inventing, producing, for example, a horse-pulled grass mower and a live-capture mousetrap.

John was regarded as a "plain but shrewd Scotsman of sober and industrious habits" but a bit of an eccentric - a reputation he also had acquired in Linlithgow where, as a young man, he was often to be seen walking round and round the Cross, deep in thought, no doubt thinking up some mechanical device.



The Cross in the early 19th century.

His ingenuity and amazing mechanical mind came to the attention of the Edinburgh Phrenology Society

whose members believed that the measurement of bumps on the skull can predict mental traits - based on the concept that the brain is the organ of the mind, and that certain brain areas have localised, specific functions. John Spence's own skull was duly measured and it was reported that a "bump" relating to his "organ of constructiveness" was unusually large.



A phrenology head.

In addition, when measured by a set of compasses, the distance between his eyes was unusually

wide - a sure sign, apparently, of his inventive abilities.

He died of "apoplexy" (a stroke) in Glasgow on January 4th, 1866 while he was visiting his sister. And so passed a remarkable native of our burgh.



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500 YEARS SINCE THE BATTLE OF LINLITHGOW BRIDGE – COMMUNITY GEARS UP FOR SPECTACULAR SERIES OF COMMEMORATIONS



BATTLE
500
LINLITHGOW BRIDGE 1526

A year from now marks 500 years since the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge and to commemorate it a group of local community groups have joined together to create a series of special events.

From battle re-enactments to a huge parade, performing arts to academic talks, all washed down with a special beer, the organisers of Battle 500 are anticipating interest from across the country.



The aim of Battle 500 is to raise the profile of the battle and the battlefield which saw the Earl of Lennox routed by the Earl of Arran's army in what was the bloodiest encounter in the aftermath of the death of James IV at the Battle of Flodden.

The amazing spectacle across the town is the brainchild of **Sally Pattle**, owner of the **Far From the Madding Crowd** bookshop and **West Lothian** councillor, and **Mike Dunning**, convenor of the **Linlithgow Civic Trust**.

Sally said: *"We are really excited with all the events we are planning – there really is something for everyone."*

"So, if you like a big parade or a battle re-enactment, a play or some music, as well as a fantastic show by the town's historian Bruce Jamieson, it is coming your way."

"The big idea is that anyone and everyone, from anywhere and everywhere is welcome and can get involved."

With that in mind Sally and Mike have brought together a wide range of groups and organisations and are putting in place events for young and old alike.

Eminent historians will be giving a series of talks through the year, exploring the significance of the battle. This is your chance to go along, ask questions and find out what actually happened – how did they raise their armies and where are the bodies?

All the schools will also be involved, working with **Historic Environment Scotland** to deliver learning packages

from the start of primary to the later years of the Academy.

And, Linlithgow Players and the Linlithgow Arts Guild will be putting on battle-themed performances, bringing an artistic view of the bloodshed.

Battle 500 will have a presence at all the events across the town through the year, from Artisan Markets to the Advent Fayre, to a float or two on Marches Day, and at the Children's Gala Day. You can meet the team, buy merchandise and find out all you need to know about the events.

They will also be at the Spectacular Jousting extravaganza at Linlithgow Palace and there will be a special exhibition next year at Linlithgow Museum in a dedicated space with plans for a model of the battle, allowing visitors to see how it played out.

The organisers decided that a good, local beer was needed to help the commemorations go with a swing. So they teamed up with **Strangers Brewing Co** to create a special ale which you will soon be able to pre-order on the Battle 500 website. You can also pre-order at the Battle 500 stalls at the town events through the year.

You will also be able to enjoy some great rugby and a taste of the ale at next year's **RedsFest** where a keg or two will be available.

Full details of all the events will be announced in the coming months but plans are already underway for a parade

from The Cross to the battlefield site on the 500th anniversary of the battle – **September 4, 2026**. This will involve groups and schools from across the town, as well as visitors from across the UK.

Following this, plans are under way for two days of battle re-enactments, complete with a medieval camp and demonstrations of 16th century cooking and weaponry. Step back in time and experience the events and way of life of 500 years ago.

Bruce Jamieson, well known to many in Linlithgow, will also be using his expertise as a historian to deliver two illustrated talks at St Michael's Parish Church. These will be ticketed and they are expected to sell out fast, so keep a look out for announcements on how to secure a seat.

Mike Dunning has been delighted with the response to the plans so far. He said: *"We started working on this last year and were thrilled with how many different folk and groups want to be involved."*



"The battle is often overlooked but was seismic in the way Scotland evolved when James V was a teenager, and therefore unable to hold all the reins of power. The battle also helped shape the Royal Burgh of Linlithgow."

"To mark this properly the Linlithgow community and other groups across Scotland are coming together to organise a series of exciting, fun and special events."

"So, it is great to raise its profile, as well as have a great time with the whole community."

To find out more and keep track of all the plans go to www.battle500.org.uk



BATTLE PANEL

After the death of James IV at Flodden in 1513 Scotland found itself in the middle of a power struggle involving the wealthiest and most influential families in the land.

King James V ascended the throne aged just 17 months and at first his mother, **Margaret Tudor**, the sister of England's King Henry VIII, was his guardian.

She, however, remarried which meant the role of who protected the young King became disputed. He passed first to John Stewart, 2nd Duke of Albany and ultimately to his stepfather, **Archibald Douglas, 6th Earl of Angus**.

The Battle of Linlithgow Bridge was fought between another John Stewart, the 3rd Earl of Lennox, and James Hamilton, 1st Earl of Arran on September 4, 1526.

Lennox was marching from Edinburgh with around 10,000 men to try to free the 14-year-old King James V from the control of Angus when he encountered an army of some 2,000 men under Arran at Linlithgow Bridge.

Arran was then joined by re-enforcements of up to 3,000 men based on Pace Hill (nowadays Avontoun Park and Mill Road to the south of the Edinburgh-Glasgow railway line).

This height advantage is believed to have more than made up for the lack of numbers in the pro-Douglas force and their pikes led to a swift slaughter of Lennox's men, driving them back across what is now Kettil'stoun Mains field and the lagoon, to the River Avon at Manuel Nunnery.



Lennox was wounded and then captured. The chronicler Robert Lindsay of Pittscottie records that he was led to a point behind the lines where he handed his sword to the Laird of Pardovan, a member of the Hamilton family whom he recognised and trusted. It was then that James Hamilton of Finnart stepped forward and cut Lennox down. Finnart then mercilessly led the pursuit hacking down all that came within sword reach.



AFTERMATH OF BATTLE

On hearing news of the battle, the young King is said to have ordered **Sir Andrew Wood of Largo**, his trusted if somewhat elderly admiral, to ride hard for the battlefield and try to save as many of the rebels as he could.

However, Wood arrived to find the Earl of Arran standing over the body of Lennox and declaring that 'the stoutest man, the hardest man that ever was bred in Scotland was slain today'.

It is almost impossible to come up with an exact figure of how many died but historians estimate the figure to be at least 2,500 killed on the Lennox side alone.



The lords who fought for Lennox were summoned to appear before Angus over the ensuing months. Many forfeited their lands and rents to appease Angus. Each swore allegiance to the King and his keepers.

It was not until 1528 that the King finally fled his captors, arriving at Stirling Castle in disguise. There he met with his mother and her loyal lords. They in turn marched on Edinburgh one more time. This time however they had the King at their head.

Douglas was bottled up at Tantallon in modern-day East Lothian but survived a half-hearted siege, before slipping away to exile.

To read more about the battle you can buy **The Heart & The Rose** by battlefield historian Jon Cooper from **Far From the Madding Crowd**.

Nick Draine

Strangers Brewing Co has created a Battle 500 ale which is available to pre-order as a pack of two bottles with a commemorative glass.

To visit the Battle 500 website – where you will soon be able to pre-order – follow the QR link below, or look for the Battle 500 stall at September's Artisan Market.

It will also be available to try at **RedsFest**, held in May at Linlithgow Rugby Club.





Folk Fae Lithgae **Darren Wilson**

As a young boy growing up in Linlithgow, Darren Wilson would go along to the Rose games with his pals. He was one of the few youngsters who had a Rose replica shirt, and he was regularly called upon to be the mascot at games.

His dad **Gordon** joined the Rose committee, and Darren would travel with him to away games on the team bus. He remembers soaking up the atmosphere in the company of club legends, such as Davie and Alister Roy.

Darren dreamed of being a professional footballer but was released by St Johnstone at the age of twenty-one. He developed his skills as a coach at Hearts, where he obtained his Elite Youth, UEFA Advance Adult and Advanced Children's licences. He later coached at Dundee United. Following a very successful spell as manager at Whitburn, Darren was recently appointed as Head Coach at the Rose and is now working alongside the manager, **Gordon Herd**,

who Darren used to watch from the terraces. He told me it was an opportunity he couldn't resist:

"When I decided to leave Whitburn, I didn't really know what I was going to do next. I had thought about going back to working with youth academies. Gordon suggested that I come in and work with him. He offered me the opportunity to take on those aspects of the manager's job that I had most enjoyed at Whitburn, like the training, the structure of play and the style of play. Gordon prefers to do the other side of management that I didn't particularly like, so it was an opportunity that, being from Linlithgow, I couldn't turn down. I would never have forgiven myself if I hadn't given it a go."

Darren is looking forward to the challenge of his new job:

"It comes with immense pressure because I'm from the town. It's a huge club, but it's a club that I have grown up with and it matters a lot to me. I grew up regularly watching the Rose and it was always a luxury to

go and watch Hearts, my favourite 'big team.' I want every young person to aspire to play for Linlithgow Rose. The reality is that not everybody can be a professional footballer, but there's an opportunity locally for players to achieve something with the Rose and I am keen to see that pathway being further developed. I always supported the Rose and dreamed of playing for them one day. Unfortunately, that never happened, so to be Head Coach at the club is massive. It's a huge honour."

The Rose have moved into their third season in the **Scottish Lowland Football League (SLFL)**, which is the fifth tier of Scottish football, made up of eighteen clubs competing to gain promotion to SPFL League Two. Darren is under no illusion as to the size of the task:

"It's a very challenging league and we need to be realistic. It's going to be a difficult year. Any team can beat any other team and there are several ambitious clubs who want to progress. Of course, we are also ambitious, but one game at a time is probably the right way to go."

Darren is very keen to see far more people of all ages coming along to support the Rose:

"The footballing side is great, the set-up is great, but we need to get the town to back us. We need people to come along to the games, sponsor players, buy season tickets and merchandise and help the club as much as they can. The club is a huge part of the local community, but we need help if we are to move forward."

"I'm excited and I think the town should be excited about the club they've got. I don't think people realise how good it is. There's a great environment at the Rose for all ages and it would be tremendous to see more people coming along."



Murdoch Kennedy





Forthcoming fixtures for Linlithgow Rose

The Rose have moved into their third season in the Scottish Lowland Football League (SLFL), which is the fifth tier of Scottish football, made up of eighteen clubs competing to gain promotion to SPFL League Two.

An encouraging start has seen the Rose win two of their three opening games, with eleven goals scored and three lost.

There are some tasty fixtures coming up in the coming weeks, including an away trip to Civil Service Strollers on Saturday August 23rd and a visit to Prestonfield by old rivals, Bo'ness United, on Saturday September 6th.

Fixtures to 1st October

AUGUST

23 AUG Civil Service Strollers
(A) KO 15.00

30 AUG Cumbernauld Colts
(H) KO 15.00

SEPTEMBER

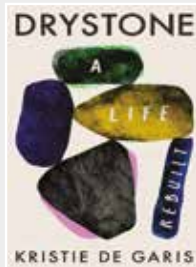
6 SEPT Bo'ness United
(H) KO 15.00

19 SEPT East Stirlingshire
(A) KO 19.45

30 SEPT Albion Rovers
(A) KO 19.45

AUTUMN AUTHOR EVENTS FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

Linlithgow's award-winning bookshop, Far From The Madding Crowd, has programmed an amazing array of author events this autumn and winter – something for everyone to savour!

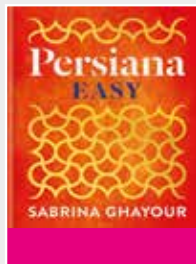


The season starts in **August** with debut author Kristie de Garis, whose memoir *Drystone* is as beautifully constructed as the craft that saved her life.



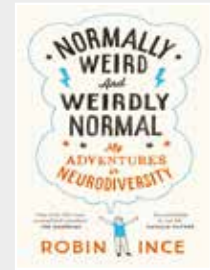
In **September**, James Oswald – a firm favourite at the shop whose bestselling Scottish crime novels are usually written on his tractor while he's out tending his animals!

Len Pennie – a Scots poet at the absolute height of her powers – is visiting in the same week as Sabrina Ghayour, author of the mouth-watering *Persiana* series of cookbooks; amongst our most sauce-



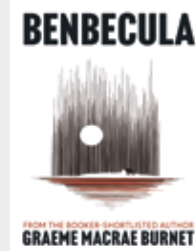
spattered recipe books at home. Both Sabrina and Len have built up huge followings online and we can't wait to meet them in real life!

In **October** Ann Cleeves will be welcomed back to Linlithgow for the first time in eight years, celebrating the return of her beloved Shetland detective Jimmy Perez, who's now solving crime on Orkney. Robin Ince, comedian, actor, writer and broadcaster is also making a



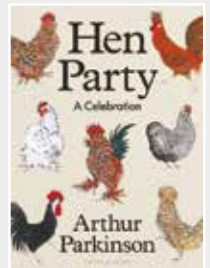
welcome return to Linlithgow in October and Lesley McDowell will be bringing *Love & Other Poisons* to town.

Finally, in **November** we are absolutely thrilled to announce that Booker shortlisted author Graeme Macrae

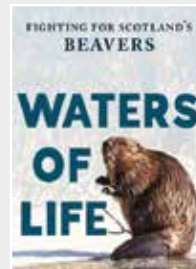


Burnet is coming to talk about *Benbecula*, his latest novella which forms part of the *Darkland Tales* series. And to finish off this jam-packed season of events two non-fiction

authors are heading our way. Arthur Parkinson is coming for a *Hen Party*



and Tom Bowser is bringing the story of beavers in Scotland. Arthur is a noted horticulturalist who now devotes his life to chickens and all things fair and fowl,



Tom runs the Argaty estate which is home to red kites, goshawks and beavers.



All events are ticketed and are happening in a range of venues across Linlithgow. For more information on dates, times and locations, please visit www.maddingcrowdlinlithgow.com or of course pop into the shop at 20 High Street, Linlithgow.



LINLITHGOW ACADEMY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2025 / 2026



Linlithgow Academy – School Improvement update 2025–2026

Together We Thrive

A New Academic Year with Ambitious Goals

Linlithgow Academy has outlined its key priorities for the 2025–2026 academic session in a new School Improvement Plan, setting out how we will continue to ensure all young people thrive, academically, socially and emotionally. Under the school's vision, "Together We Thrive," this year's strategy builds on existing strengths, introduces focused areas for growth and celebrates some national recognition.

Key Priorities for 2025–2026

The School Improvement Plan focuses on three core areas:

1. CORE Teaching and Learning

Improving classroom experiences through consistent, high-quality teaching supported by shared approaches and collaboration.

2. Inclusion, Wellbeing & Equity

Creating a culture of care, inclusion and respect based on the principles of GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child).

3. Progression & Assessment

Ensuring every learner follows a challenging and coherent curriculum with meaningful, supported progression. You can view our detailed school plan via this QR code or visit our website.



Follow all the news and events at Linlithgow Academy:
<https://linlithgowacademy.westlothian.org.uk/>

National Recognition – SCQF Gold Ambassador School

Linlithgow Academy is proud to have recently been awarded SCQF Gold



Ambassador School status, only the 25th school in Scotland to achieve this. It is a prestigious national recognition of our commitment to supporting a broad, flexible and inclusive school curriculum. This award highlights our efforts to:

Celebrate wider achievement

Enhance Senior Phase learner pathways

Promote equality between vocational and academic qualifications

We would like to thank the many organisations and individuals who support our curriculum development some of whom are on the image above.

Student Leadership in Action



Our young people play a vital role in shaping the future of the school through our Pupil Parliament, a group of over 100

learner representatives who actively contribute to:

School improvement discussions

Wellbeing initiatives

Decisions that affect day-to-day school life

The Academy continues to place learner voice at the heart of its decision-making, recognising that our young people are more than just participants in education.

Building on What Works

This academic year Linlithgow Academy will also consolidate effective practices in:

Health & Wellbeing

Equality & Diversity

Use of our CARE reporting system for learner support and safety

Additionally, the school is exploring:

Improving communication with families
Supporting staff wellbeing and professional growth

Thank You & Get Involved

Linlithgow Academy wishes to thank all parents, carers, families and community members for their ongoing support, generosity and involvement. Whether through fundraising, volunteering or sharing time and ideas, your contributions truly help our young people thrive.

Want to get involved?

Support school events

Volunteer your time

Contribute to fundraising initiatives

Sponsor a school activity

Then please contact the school office in the first instance or contact our Parent Council fundraising team at linlithgowacademypc@gmail.com or connect via the Linlithgow Academy Parent Council Facebook page.

Look out for the chance to purchase Linlithgow Academy Lottery tickets, where lucky winners have supported the school & won some money back in their pocket. Across August & September you can also use your blue token in Linlithgow & Bo'ness Tesco to vote for Linlithgow Academy to access funding. Previous fundraising has allowed the school to purchase a number of items for various faculties. We are now identifying some options for the coming year so any financial support is always very much appreciated!

Looking Ahead



As Linlithgow Academy enters the 2025–26 school year, there is a real sense of momentum. With national recognition, strong learner involvement and

clear improvement priorities, the school is focused on creating an environment where all young people are supported to thrive.

The recent SCQF Gold Ambassador award reflects a wider commitment to valuing different learner pathways, academic and vocational and celebrating success in all its forms.

Linlithgow Academy is extremely proud to be part of this vibrant town and welcomes continued support from the wider community as it works to deliver positive outcomes for its young people.

Grant Abbot,
Head Teacher



OTHER NEWS FROM THE HIGH STREET Ronald Hunter



STAR AND GARTER (1 High Street)

Some potentially exciting news about our long loved Star which has been closed since December 2022.

The **Scottish Business Agency** (SBA) who have been marketing the Hotel issued a Facebook statement on 23rd July 2025 to report that a new tenant has been found.

The SBA added - 'It was always going to be a challenge, leasing a property built in 1759. There were numerous opportunities to have a deal agreed earlier in the process, however having the right tenant and longevity for the Landlord is crucial for a property of this age and scale.'

Standing at the gateway to the town, we will all be following the regeneration of the Star with much interest.

A WEE MINDIN' (Previously 48 High Street)

After 13 years on the High Street, owner **Yvonne Sherratt** closed the shop in March 2025. Yvonne explained that changing customer trends after Covid and rising costs meant that a High Street presence was no longer affordable.

The good news is that Yvonne continues to run her business online and has provided some insight into her continued time on the High Street -



Yvonne Sherratt

'In addition to my on-line presence I am also doing "pop up" shops in Linlithgow High Street. So far I have had two "pop up" shops in The Crannog Cafe, one in May and another one yesterday. We will also do another one there at the Late Night shopping in November on the Thursday before the Advent Fayre.

I have also had a pop up in The Bield at the West Port at the beginning of July for residents who can't get out to the shops. I was also asked to do a stall at The Fashion Show in June at The Rugby Club to help raise funds for the Marches.

I will continue to have "pop ups" joining with any other Independents on the High Street who wish to invite me. Our next one is in Mason Homes (used to be the Thread Counter) on Saturday 6th September. So, as you can see, we haven't quite left the High Street completely. (I enjoy seeing

my customers too much to leave completely)'.
Contact : www.aweemindin.co.uk
/ yvonne.sherratt@outlook.com



J WALKER CARPETS (2 The Vennel)

Jim and Eleanor Walker recently announced - 'As of 30th July 2025 the gift shop side of the business will be closing after 27 years on the High Street. We would like to thank all of our customers who have supported us over the years. The carpet and flooring side of the business will stay open as usual'. Contact : jwalkergifts.co.uk / Eleanor.walker@titanplus.co.uk / 01506 670 777



SOAPY SUDS AND SCENTS (175 High Street)

Owner **Emma Gibson** closed the shop in July but continues to trade online and at markets.

Contact : scentsandsodapsuds.etsy.com
/ soapysudsandscents@outlook.com
/ 07714 265 893



LIDL

In last month's edition of the magazine we mentioned that Lidl have plans to open a store in Linlithgow (as advised by West Lothian Council on 28th April 2025). There have been no further updates on this one.

SPARROW'S FALL H.J. RUSSELL

“In the high stakes world of international espionage, every move counts – and love can be the most dangerous game of all.”



Fans of local Linlithgow author H.J. Russell will be delighted to know that the latest installment of the Moniker series, **Sparrow's Fall**, was released early in June this year. In keeping with the previous books in the series, it is a slick, well-written and fast-paced novel steeped in mystery, romance and cyber intrigue.

We rejoin Jamie Denton and Kathryn Sinclair at a difficult period of their personal and work lives. Professionals

at the top of their game, they are both struggling to balance home life with the demands of their roles. Kathryn, now a new mum during a period of maternity leave, is struggling to maintain her identity and adjust to the rhythm of family life. Both Kathryn and Jamie are acutely aware of the importance of their skills and intelligence to matters of national security.

In stark contrast, the life of Chinese woman Mei takes a sudden and shocking turn. When we first meet Mei she is betrothed and excited about her upcoming nuptials. As a member of the Uyghur population, Mei lives under constant restriction. However, one event in the Xinjiang region, involving a member of her family, throws many lives into disarray, and Mei proves herself resourceful, determined, and strategic under intense governmental pressure. While readers come to realise that Mei is but a pawn in a much bigger game, she is a wily and worthy opponent, and not to be underestimated.

“She [...] may be mere pawns in this game but – as in chess – when played with skill, these pieces can determine the ultimate outcome. Mei also understood the importance of knowing when to sacrifice them.”

There are many parallels between the characters Kathryn and Mei, not least their commitment to acting with integrity under pressure, and their dedication to friendship and family. H. J. Russell has carefully crafted strong female leads at the centre of her interconnected storylines.

“Gazing at the brooding sky, Mei knew exactly what she needed to do to exploit this, and the thought filled her with despair. But if she failed her task, it would be her family that suffered the consequences. [...] guilt licked at her conscience as she scripted the lines she would use to prod the chinks in his armour.”

H.J. Russell writes with the kind of assurance that only comes from lived experience. With over three decades spent working in cybersecurity as a software developer and technical writer, she channels this expertise into gripping narratives populated by hackers, digital espionage, and the underworld of the dark web.

Whether you're a fan of high-stakes thrillers or drawn to character-driven drama, *Sparrow's Fall* delivers a compelling and timely read that lingers well after the final page.

Lisa Nettleton

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



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“COME AND MEET THE CHOIR”

After a wonderful last season, Linlithgow RFC Male Voice Choir is already planning ahead for their 2025/26 programme. If you enjoy singing, great camaraderie and raising funds for good causes – now would be the perfect time to join!

Why not come along and meet us at either our first Practice session on Monday 25 August or our Open Night on Monday 8th September. (see details bottom right).

Last season saw the choir perform both locally and much further afield and ended with a wonderful tour to Denmark in May. The party of 52 singers and supporters visited the beautiful town of Svendborg to sing with the local Septimuschoir in the Gold Hall of the town's splendid Bergerforeningen Theatre. After a Civic Reception hosted by the town's Mayor, the Concert - advertised as “Where Scottish charm meets Danish choral tradition” - was totally sold out and a huge success. Chris Thomas (Events Co-ordinator) commented:

“It was great to be touring overseas again and our first visit to Denmark was truly memorable. The friendships and memories generated will stay with us all for a long time”.

Jim Carlin (Choir Chairman) is overseeing plans for 2025/26 and advised “the programme is still being firmed up but will include performances at the Linlithgow & District Day Care Centre's annual Carol Concert, the Festival of Christmas Trees at St. Michael's Parish Church and a fund-raising event for CHAS (Children's Hospices Across Scotland). After Christmas the Choir hosts and performs at the Linlithgow Rugby Club's Burns Supper and the plan for an end of season finale is a joint Concert with a visiting Choir from France. Other events are being considered for the early Spring, so it will undoubtedly be another very exciting year, which will be extremely enjoyable and benefit many worthwhile causes.”

So why not join us – new members are always welcome and we're a very friendly bunch!



Enjoying the Danish sunshine pre-Concert.

“it will undoubtedly be another very exciting year, which will be extremely enjoyable and benefit many worthwhile causes.”

Jim Carlin (Choir Chairman)



**MON
25
AUG**

Monday 25 August (7.45pm)

Practice resumes at Linlithgow Rugby Club (42 Mains Road, Linlithgow EH49 6DB).

**MON
8
SEPT**

Monday 8th September (7.45pm)

“Meet the Choir” Open Evening

Alternatively, if you wish to have an initial chat before coming along, call:

Chairman Jim Carlin on 07743 410591 or Secretary Gerry McLean on 07722 107067

SUNSHINE SINGALONG FOR MEMORY

When you're smiling, when you're smiling, the whole world smiles with you

The words of this song are a good introduction to what the Sunshine Singalong for Memory is all about. Now in its ninth year, our aim is to seek to improve the quality of life for people living with memory loss and their carers, within our church family and our local community, through fellowship and music. Research has proven that the singing of favourite songs can stimulate memory and even prompt speech in those who find it harder to communicate. In addition, there is a feel-good factor when singing with others. It is wonderful to see how music brings life, pleasure and, in the words of the song above, smiling faces to those who attend.



of ice cream, always well received. Our volunteers set up the tables, welcome guests as they arrive and serve food, tea and coffee. The colour scheme on the tables is dementia-friendly, red and yellow, which also helps create a bright, welcoming scene in the hall. We are grateful to those who provide the much-admired flower arrangements for the tables; these are given to some of our visitors to take home. Lunch lasts around 40 minutes and is a perfect way for those attending to get to know one another. There is no charge for lunch, but we are grateful for any contributions to the donation baskets on the tables.

Lunch is followed by approximately 50 minutes of quite wonderful singing.

There is a theme to the songs each month, which is often reflected in the food and the flowers. Our bank of over 200 songs includes Scottish songs, songs from musicals, films and shows, music hall songs, wartime songs, Beatles and Elvis songs and love songs. We are accompanied by Helen Gait, our wonderful pianist, and the singing is supported by a small group of singers. In addition, we have a wide variety of musical instruments carefully chosen and incorporated into the programme of songs. The instruments bring a great deal of pleasure and a sense of achievement to our visitors as they enthusiastically play them. **Words of songs are projected in large print onto a screen, leaving everyone hands-free and able to follow the actions to the 'exercise' songs halfway through the programme, such as a sitting version of 'The Hokey Cokey' and 'One Finger, One Thumb keep moving'!**

Living with memory loss is a frightening and isolating experience for both those affected and their carers. By opening our

doors to the vulnerable in our community and welcoming them warmly, we are showing that as a church we care. We aim to provide a safe place once a month where people living with memory loss and their carers can socialise with others who share similar challenges. Not only are we providing warm fellowship over lunch, but we are also creating a stimulating environment prompting memories and speech through the singing of well-known songs. It is very humbling to hear how much this monthly gathering means to our visitors. Music is one thing dementia cannot destroy, and this can be clearly seen in action at the Sunshine Singalong.

If you feel you would benefit from joining us on the second Thursday of every month or you know of anyone you think might benefit, please pass on our details to him or her or bring them along. You will see a banner advertising the Singalong hanging from the windows of Cross House during the week when the Singalong takes place.

I will leave the final words to our visitors:

'I just love coming here. Everyone is so friendly.'

'It's the highlight of the month. It cheers me up.'

'This is a happy place.'

'Can I come back again tomorrow?'



For further information, please contact Val Wood at the church office on val@linavonchurch.org.uk or telephone 01506 842188



The Singalong takes place on the second Thursday of every month from 12 noon until 13.30 in St Michael's Kirk Hall. Around 60 visitors attend, about half of whom are visitors who attend independently with a carer. The remainder are clients of Linlithgow Day Care Centre and residents of Linlithgow Care Home. There is a happy, joyful atmosphere where both those with memory loss and their carers can socialise and relax among people with similar challenges, in an environment where they feel very welcome and valued.

We start at 12 noon with a delicious light finger lunch efficiently organised by the ladies from the Fellowship Team. Sandwiches, sausage rolls and lovely home baking, kindly donated by a team of willing bakers from the church, are offered along with tea or coffee. In the summer months, Mannerstons kindly donate tubs



I'M HERE TO HELP
YOU FEEL CONFIDENT
CAREFREE AND
SKIN HAPPY.



ONE WOMAN, ONE CLINIC, ONE INCREDIBLE WIN!

I'm absolutely delighted to share some incredible news, on Sunday 29th June, **Skin Happy was awarded Skin Salon of the Year** at the inaugural **Scottish Salon Awards!**

To have been shortlisted among so many talented professionals was already such an honour, but to go on and win the award was a truly overwhelming and emotional moment. **It's a privilege to be recognised at a national level, and even more special to be the first ever winner of this new Scottish accolade.**

The Scottish Salon Awards were created to spotlight excellence in the hair and beauty industry and it's inspiring to see an organisation championing independent practitioners and celebrating the passion, skill and commitment that goes into building and running a clinic. To be part of that community, and now to hold this award, is something I'll always treasure.

The past five years have been a whirlwind filled with growth, challenges, and plenty of lessons. Like many small businesses, I faced the near-impossible task of surviving COVID-19 just as I was getting started. There were moments I wasn't sure Skin Happy would make it through. But with the unwavering support of my family and sheer determination to keep going, I did.

Running a business single-handedly is never easy - it's long hours, hard graft, and endless commitment behind the scenes. From staying up to date with clinical training, to managing every aspect of the business myself, it's full-on but it's also the most rewarding job I could imagine, and I do it because I truly love helping people feel confident and carefree in their own skin.

And that brings me to the heart of this win - my amazing clients.

This award is dedicated to each and every person who has walked through the door of my clinic. Your kind words, your loyalty, your continued trust, and the beautiful reviews you've shared. They've all played a huge part in this recognition. Most of all, I want to thank everyone who took the time to vote for Skin Happy. I'm deeply touched by your support.

It fills me with joy to share this achievement with you. Helping you transform your skin, your confidence, and your self-belief is such a privilege and to now call Skin Happy an **award-winning clinic** is a moment I'll never forget.

Here's to the next chapter -To glowing skin and grateful hearts.

With love and thanks to you all,

Tina xx
Skin Happy
Skin Salon of the Year 2025



THE SCOTTISH GARDEN

The calmest corner at New Hopetoun Gardens is the **Scottish Garden** and during our art in the garden event this summer you can sit on the lion bench in dappled sunshine and listen to poems being read by Lewanna Moontown, a Scottish artist and occasional poem working in Berwick Upon Tweed. The poems are also presented on boards around the garden.



We run the event to encourage folk to explore our little gardens and the art installations displayed in them. In our Bright Shade Garden we present some of Liz Bertram Gossan's ceramic pieces.



They are fired to stoneware temperatures in her kiln so they are frostproof and safe to be displayed outdoors.

Folk are sometimes surprised to

learn that glass is frostproof, so long it isn't in the form of a jar or vase full of water that will expand at low temperatures and shatter the vessel. Lizzie Paton's Colour and Light Standing feature, using burnt wood and stained glass, needs to be positioned with the sun behind it to really see it's colours sparkle. Where you place art in your own garden is really important: will you see it from inside or perhaps from your patio;



how will the changing light catch it, both during the day and in the changing seasons. Lizzie lives and works in Linlithgow and her husband looks after our website under the name speedypancake!

Metal is fine in the garden, either galvanised and painted or allowed to slowly rust. These rusty hearts in the Scots Pine Corner were created by Graham Monteith of Monte Engineering in Dechmont for his neighbour's daughter's wedding in a field on their farm. It's lovely to come across them when exploring the gardens, a romantic statement in another quiet corner.



traditional statue posing under the arch.

These paintings of Medusa and Athena are by Joanna Westwater, an artist based in Edinburgh. She uses acrylic paint on rough wooden boards and her inspiration comes from nature and particularly a holiday visit to Crete. They add powerful details here in one of our small avant gardens, alongside a more



Stone is completely safe to display outside and this piece is by Jackie Perkins, a letter cutter, carver and stone conservator based in Dalkeith. This is a slate piece, although she uses sandstone, limestone and wood.

You can explore our art in the garden until the end of August, open every day and always free entry. Contact details of the artists from the garden centre.

NEW
HOPETOUN
GARDENS

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

so much more
than just a
garden centre

www.newhopetoungardens.co.uk

NEW
HOPETOUN
GARDENS

**WE HAVE OUR BIGGEST CHOICE OF SPRING
FLOWERING BULBS AVAILABLE NOW!**

ONCE THE GROUND GETS WETTER AND SOFTER IN SEPTEMBER IT IS EASIER TO PLANT BULBS IN BORDERS. WHEN PLANTING IN POTS USE PEAT-FREE MULTIPURPOSE WITH ADDED JOHN INNES COMPOST.



ANDREW'S PHOTOS MAKE MEMORIES COME ALIVE



Andrew West can be seen with his camera at all the significant local events. For many years, he has been the official photographer for the Riding of the Marches and the Gala Day, and he takes thousands of photos of both events. Always keen to try innovative approaches and angles. Andrew makes a huge effort to capture people of all ages in the crowd, whether this be friends gathered together or family groups. This echoes the practice of former years, when roaming photographers would take snapshots of the people lining the route and then make these photos available for sale by displaying them in the windows of local newsagents, such as Sandy Dalrymple's and Wilson's. The local 'Gazette' provided a similar service.

A lifelong supporter of Linlithgow Rose FC, Andrew became the club photographer after he developed a groundbreaking website for them in 1998. That's when he bought his first digital camera, so he could put photos straight on to the website. You can still find him in his customary stance on the touchline at all Rose games, home and away.

Andrew's involvement with the Rose

led him into covering professional football, as he explained:

"For seven years, I worked on a freelance contract for SNS Group - Scotland's largest visual communications agency. The role took me from sparsely attended lower league matches to Champions League nights in Glasgow - each with their own story to tell. I was proud that my photos made the back cover of 'The Times', the front cover of the pullouts in the 'Daily Record', as well as numerous other national newspapers."

Andrew is also heavily involved in photographing music events. He is an accredited photographer at Linlithgow's music festival, 'Party at the Palace' and covers a wide range of rock music events around the UK and Europe for Rockfiend Publications, providing photos and reviews. Their website says: *"Since buying 'Number of the Beast' too many years ago, Andrew has been a Rock and Metal fiend and loves nothing more than being in a pit, capturing bands on stage."*

Living in Linlithgow, Andrew takes full advantage of the wonderful opportunities for taking landscape photographs. He told me:

"Whether it's a summer's evening at the side of the Loch, or the Palace in the snow, the town offers up fantastic scope to capture its soul on camera."

The local landscape is often

incorporated into his wedding photographs, or the family album shots he organises for events such as Mothers' Day and special birthdays.

Andrew has recently taken early retirement from his job as a local authority lorry driver, due to ongoing issues with his eyes. He has also had to give up his car, although he can still pursue his passion for photography. He explained:

"My eyes will never get any better, but I was lucky that I invested a lot of money last year in new cameras and lenses. With the adjustments in them, I can still take pictures. They are called 'mirrorless'. It's a wee screen you look at, not actually through the lens, so I can adjust that wee screen to see the image."

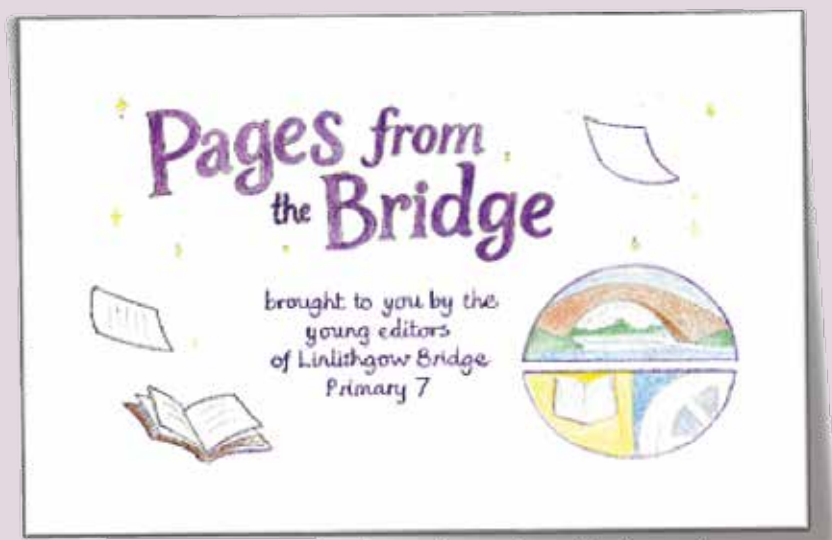
Having an extensive portfolio of Marches and Gala Day photos on his website, going back as far as 2005, Andrew is keen to generate more sales. He is inviting people to look through the various galleries and find photos which will help them to relive their memories. All photos can be provided as prints or in a digital format.

The photos can be found on the website www.andywestpix.co.uk, which has the strapline "capturing the moments of today that will wow your heart tomorrow."

Murdoch Kennedy



PAGES FROM THE BRIDGE <https://linlithgowbridgeprimary.westlothian.org.uk/>



We are delighted to announce a brand-new ongoing feature led by our enthusiastic Primary 7 pupils, celebrating the world of reading and writing across Linlithgow Bridge Primary School. Starting next issue, you'll find a regular page dedicated to showcasing the fantastic literacy work happening in classrooms from our youngest learners right through to Primary 7.

This is a pupil-led project, with Primary 7 curating content, gathering stories and sharing highlights from

across the school. They'll be giving readers a window into the creativity, imagination and hard work that goes into developing a love of reading and writing.

This initiative is part of our school's journey towards achieving the Scottish Book Trust's Gold Reading Schools Award. We're proud of the progress we've made so far and community engagement plays a key role in this. By sharing our literacy journey with families and neighbours in Linlithgow, we hope to spread the joy of reading and celebrate the voices of our

young writers.

We're also excited to be working with our local library, who have been supporting our campaign. This collaboration has helped us bring books to life in new ways—through shared reading events, themed displays and opportunities for pupils to explore a wider range of texts. These partnerships are a vital part of our efforts to connect learning in school with the wider world.

By sharing our pupils' voices and celebrating their achievements, we hope to inspire others in the community to pick up a book, share a story, or even put pen to paper themselves. Whether it's a poem from Primary 2, a gripping story from Primary 6, or a thoughtful book review from Primary 7, there will be something for everyone to enjoy.



We are a **Reading School**

Silver



Victoria Knox
Class Teacher P7
Literacy Lead

ZOOM PRESENTATIONS 2025 Bruce Jamieson



Bruce Jamieson will once again be delivering four, fully illustrated Zoom Presentations on Linlithgow's fascinating history.

The first, on Friday, September 26th is
 >> **"LINLITHGOW AT THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION"**

This will be followed by
 >> **"LOOKING AFTER LINLITHGOW'S POOR"**

>> **"LINLITHGOW'S ENTREPRENEURIAL EMIGRANTS"**

and finally

>> **"TRAVELS WITH MY TEACHER".**
 A review of over 30 years of Educational Excursions abroad with students from Linlithgow Academy.

For full information contact
bruceajamieson@yahoo.com



ROOTS AND BRANCHES A REVIEW BY TOBY GOODWIN

Saturday 26th July saw the inaugural Roots and Branches Festival, hosted by Chris Corry of Low Port Music. A really smashing day in the Linlithgow town centre.

Firstly, let's talk about the atmosphere. Coming up to the entrance of The Low Port Centre we were greeted by the glorious smell of Pizza Piaggio, a gorgeous little Italian takeaway operating out of this tiny Piaggio Apé three wheeled van (a cousin to the famous Vespa scooter). Past the pizza van and up the stairs, we were in the ticketing/drinks area, where Black Dog Coffee and Strangers Brewing Co. were punting their refreshing local wares (the Lithgae Lager proving to be a personal favourite).

The venue itself was done up to the nines, with an impressive stage, black curtains backing it and a series of moving lights and shimmering back bulbs. Sunshine shone through the row of square windows near the roof, and rows of seats sprawled across the middle of the hall. Festival staff were buzzing about in yellow tee-shirts, and the audience was a mix of families, Linlithgow locals and friends – mostly made up of tenured music aficionados, generating an atmosphere of warm appreciation and good humour.

THE MUSIC

There was a great sense of variety in the musical acts, but with a consistent level of quality – as you might expect from a show put on by a record store, and Fraser & his sound tech team did an excellent job with the space. In between acts there was plenty of room to enjoy a beer, or some food, and people seemed happy to stretch their legs and take in the mood outdoors and in the foyer.

First up, we had **KIN**, a brilliant fiddle and electric guitar father-son duo from the local area. Their music was very atmospheric, bringing cowboy movies to mind. It was full of intensity and melancholy, with discordant themes between the driving guitar and fiddle.

Secondly was **GOLDFINCH**, (joined by Graeme Duffin). This music was uplifting, gospel-like and with a really engaging stage presence. Mr Duffin shredded out a couple of really nice solos, and the rest of the band

showed their class to match.

Next up were the local band, **BARRANQUISMO**. These guys were definitely one of my favourites and a perfect midpoint band. A group of young guys with a lot of energy, driving snappy bass, tight drumming and great vocals. They reminded me of the Police a little bit, (partly because of the bass-vocalist combo).

Following the local boys was the famous **GRAEME DUFFIN** one more time, playing some solo Spanish guitar. Some of this was from his new album, *Spain*, and others were covers made his own (Cherokee on the Hofner being the highlight). It was a real treat to see the **WET WET WET** guitarist in his element, and it made for a nice jazzy reprieve between two high energy acts. The man himself was full of banter and great technical skill. For a much-demanded encore, he did the opening track from *Spain*, saying *"This is really an arrangement for two guitars. If you hear any mistakes, it's the other guy."*

It must have been very hard to follow that, but done with epic oomph, up next was **CALUM INGRAM AND BAND**. Singing and playing the tiniest electric cello in the world, Ingram whipped out a blistering set that was rocky, punchy and truly unique. Every member of the band played incredibly well, with poppy bass, Zappa-esque psychedelic keyboard antics, thunderous drums and phenomenal showmanship all around.

At this point in proceedings I was obliged to fetch some venison ragu from the Pizza Piaggio and I spent the next two hours in culinary and sonic bliss.

Second to last were **NERVOUS PASSENGER**. These guys got back together just for this gig, for the first time since the 90s. There was a great back and forth with the audience about playing songs that they had written as teenagers, and many members of the audience looked on quite enraptured and misty-eyed. With a sigh of relief, perhaps two decades in the making, the front man finished their opening track with a, *"That feels better. Yes, we are from the 90's and yes, we are this old."* The music itself was fabulous, a complete bop from start to finish, as well as being very genuine and emotive.

Finally, on came the headliners, **HELD BY TREES**. After some heartfelt thanks from Chris Corry (and the audience showing their wild appreciation) these guys started with gusto. The sun was just threatening to go down through the overhead windows, the lights were smoky and atmospheric, and the anticipation in the room was palpable. This band has a very powerful sound that hit like

a wall. They built up a fuzzy backdrop of sustained guitar, double bass and drums – and on top, emotive keys and saxophone danced together into this incredibly impressive soundscape.

This was an excellent day out with some good people doing what they love, and it was clearly put together with a great deal of passion, skill, and community. As a newcomer to Linlithgow, I felt very privileged to have been invited to this event and really look forward to seeing what the team at Low Port Music will do next.



Nervous Passenger



Barranquismo



Held by Trees

Photo credits: Ron Russell

LOCAL ROTARY CLUB DONATES AMBULANCE FOR FRONT LINE USE IN UKRAINE



Past President **Ian Gibson**, who organised the event, also provided extra drams from his own personal collection. Guests gave generously to the raffle and by the end of the evening the committee thought they had made an amazing £2500 towards the purchase of the Ambulance. However, a few days later two extremely generous benefactors, who were also present at the event, topped that up to £6500, which was the total cost of the ex NHS vehicle.

President **Colin Watson** and members of our International Committee were very impressed at the condition of the vehicle considering its age. They are seen here presenting the ambulance, full of other useful aids, to **Oleg Dmitriev** of Sunflower Scotland, who delivered it personally to Ukraine shortly afterwards.

Sunflower Scotland is a local registered charity run by Ukrainians **Oleg and Elvira Dimitriev**, operating out of the village of Torphichen. They deliver aid directly to people who struggle the most in Ukraine's frontline villages, including orphans and vulnerable kids with Down's syndrome. They also support rehabilitation centres for amputees, frontline medics to save lives, and deliver supplies to front line hospitals. They do this using 4 x 4 vehicles, ambulances and vans which they donate in Ukraine. For more details see their website at <https://sunflowerscotland.co.uk>

The International Committee of the Rotary Club of **Linlithgow & Bo'ness** recently held a Special Whisky Night in the drawing room of Champfleurie House, courtesy of the **Laird Ricky Kerr and his family**.

This turned out to be very special indeed, not only did the 25 guests enjoy some of the very best whiskies, the committee were also able to purchase an Ambulance for the local charity **Sunflower Scotland**, which is now helping save lives in the Kherson war zone in Ukraine, where it is now.



The Special Guest on the evening was **Stephen Rankin**, **Master of the Quaich** and **director of Gordon and MacPhail**, the worlds leading single malt whisky specialists. Stephen brought some amazing whiskies for guests to taste, as well as providing an excellent presentation. Stephen Rankin is a fourth-generation member of the Urquhart family that owns Gordon & MacPhail, embracing the knowledge and expertise in whisky maturation passed down through the generations. For over two decades, he has built his understanding of whisky and the wider wine and spirits industry, through a range of advanced qualifications with the globally recognised Wine & Spirit Education Trust.

Stephen was appointed the company's first Director of Prestige in October 2017. In this role, Stephen identifies and forges relationships with lovers of the finest whiskies across the globe. He uses his passion and knowledge to introduce discerning whisky drinkers, collectors and investors to Gordon & MacPhail's unique range of single malts, focussing on the rare and aged expressions.

Recognised for his contribution to the whisky industry, Stephen is a Master of the Quaich and a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Distillers in the City of London. Walpole recognised Stephen in the 2021 "Power List" as one of the 50 most influential people in British luxury.



Stephen Rankin,
Master of the Quaich



Drams
by the
FIRE

A Personal Invitation
from
The Laird of Champfleurie
and the International Committee
of the
Rotary Club of Linlithgow & Bo'ness
to a
Very Special Whisky Tasting

Special Guest
Stephen Rankin
Master of the Quaich

Mine Host - **IAN GIBSON**

Five Exceptional Drams
you are unlikely to
ever taste again

Limited to 25
In the Drawing Room of
Champfleurie House
Thursday 3rd April 2025
7 for 7.30pm

Surprises and Raffle

*A night to remember

LINLITHGOW FILM SOCIETY NEW SEASON

We are now in our 51st year of providing community cinema in Linlithgow, and look forward to welcoming new and returning members to the start of the new season on

MONDAY THE 6TH OCTOBER
7.30pm - THE ROSE CLUB

This season's films include:

Conclave- The Penguin Lessons

A Complete Unknown - Touch

It's a Wonderful Life-

The Miracle Club- Juror No 2

FROM
6
OCT

.....
Emilia Perez-Last Breath-

Lee Miller - Bridget Jones
Mad About the Boy

Come and join us, any enquiries to :
gkylochend@gmail.com

Maureen Sellers



LINLITHGOW SINGERS ON TOUR WITH LIONS CHOIR

While eight of Scotland's finest rugby players played with the Lions in Australia last month the country was also represented off the pitch by two Scottish choristers.

As part of a long standing tradition the Lions squad was supported by the Lions Choir before each of the three test matches in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney. Made up of 60 singers from Scotland, England, Ireland and, of course, Wales, the choir was joined by **Quentin Allardice** and **Colin McGill** who have been singing with Linlithgow Rugby Club Male Voice Choir for a good few years.

As well as supporting the team at all three test venues in the pre-match 'Lions Den' they also sang in a number of venues with the Wagga Wagga choir including at a sell-out concert in Brisbane Cathedral and with the Australian National Choir in Sydney Opera House.

As a member of the bass section, Quentin explained: *"We had heard about this choir from other members of our Linlithgow choir who had been on tour in New Zealand prior to covid and they had enjoyed the experience immensely. It was hard work learning a whole batch of new songs, not least a couple of Welsh standards that have to be sung in Welsh."*

Colin added: *"We attended four rehearsals in Cardiff during the last six months before the event and the team we were singing with were amazing; as you would expect from a bunch of Welsh guys who are rugby mad and steeped in an extensive choral history. We just hoped that, along with the singers from the other countries, we could perform up to standard."*

The Lions Choir met up in Brisbane before the first test match on July 19 and travelled together to Melbourne for the second test the following Saturday and then on to Sydney for their concert in the Sydney Opera House and the final test on August 2.





JOE MOON: UPCOMING PLACEMENT IN HONDURAS WITH PROJECT TRUST

My name is Joe, and I'm 17 years old. Starting in January 2026 I'll be volunteering with Project Trust in Honduras, where I'll be teaching English as part of an 8 month-placement. This will be an exciting and challenging experience, but hopefully one that is also very rewarding!

I have always wanted to volunteer and travel, so when I heard about the Project Trust programme from a couple of friends who have just recently completed their placements, I decided to sign up. I've now deferred my place at university, and I'm well on the way to starting my volunteering experience.

Between now and then my main focus is on fundraising to secure my place, and learning enough Spanish to get by in my first few weeks!

Who are Project Trust?

Project Trust is a Scottish charity which has been supporting international volunteering placements for 17-25 year-olds since 1967. Operating in many countries throughout Africa, Asia and Latin-America, their volunteers live and work alongside people in local communities.

About Honduras

Honduras is a diverse, Spanish speaking republic in Central America. With both

Atlantic and Pacific coastlines, the country is known for its stunning landscapes and its sub-tropical climate. It has a population of about 9 million people, and is roughly half the size of the UK.

Despite a growing economy, it remains one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. Over half of Hondurans live in poverty, and the problem is more extreme in rural areas. There is also widespread inequality across the country, with access to healthcare, education and employment the main barriers to the disadvantaged.

What I'll be doing in Honduras



I expect to be placed in a local primary school to teach English, but I don't find out the exact location of my placement until October. This will be challenging, but massively rewarding and I look forward to getting to know all of the students.

I will be based right in the heart of a community, and there is a good chance that I will be living with a local family, which is a great opportunity to help me find my feet with the language, the customs, and of course the food!

Project Trust always sends volunteers in pairs, so my partner and I will be able to help each other, as well as benefitting from the experience and support that Project Trust provides on the ground.

I'm both incredibly excited and a little nervous about this opportunity – Honduras will be a completely different environment to the one I have known all my life in Linlithgow, and the 8-month placement will be a long time to spend away from friends and family, but I'm excited for all of the benefits it will bring. As well as benefitting the local community through my teaching, I hope to make friends and have fun, but also develop important life skills such as confidence, perseverance and problem solving. It will be a completely novel experience but I am sure it will help me develop as a person before I come back to start university.

Next Steps

I need to raise a total of £6,850 before I start my placement in January. This is quite a daunting figure, but I am trying to go about it one step at a time, with the support of friends and family.

I have been contacting numerous Charitable Trusts, focusing on local organizations, whilst I also have fundraising events planned later in the year, including a wine-tasting evening (stay tuned!).

The next fundraising event I have planned is a coffee morning at Cross House on Saturday 23rd August. If you are in town that morning I would be really grateful if you could come along and enjoy the cake selection!

To follow my fundraising and volunteering journey, please check out my Instagram @joe.projecttrust and my JustGiving page at the link justgiving.com/page/joe-project-trust.



THE ORIGINAL CHARITY BEER FESTIVAL RETURNS TO LINLITHGOW – OCTOBER 4TH



The much-loved Linlithgow RoundTable Beer Festival is back on Saturday, October 4th, bringing together great drinks, good food, and a fantastic cause in one of the town's most anticipated charity events of the year.

Often copied but never matched, the original Linlithgow Beer Festival has become a standout

event in the local calendar — and 2025 promises to be the biggest yet.

Chairman Gary Laing explains the inspiration behind the festival and the work of Linlithgow Round Table:

"After the pandemic, we were keen to introduce a new and engaging way to raise funds for our Community Fund. With the diverse skills and knowledge within the group, we launched a beer festival – and it quickly became a local favourite."

Having outgrown its previous home at the Masonic Halls, the event now takes place in the larger **Burgh Halls**, allowing us to expand the drinks range, reduce queue times, and enhance the overall visitor experience.

This year's lineup includes:

20+ craft beers

Lager, cider, gin, rum, prosecco, and non-alcoholic options

Locally made pies from award-winning Boghall Butchers

Live music from local Artist Dan Quilty

Entry: £5 at the door — includes a souvenir pint glass to take home.

All profits from the festival are donated to the **Linlithgow Round Table Community Fund**, which supports individuals, local groups, and initiatives. The fund is also bolstered by the Table's annual Santa Sleigh in December and Funday in June.

In recent years, contributions from the fund have supported:

Local primary school playground equipment

Wheelchair basketball teams

Youth football kits

Cycling Without Age

Scouts, Linlithgow Ladies Choir, and more

Linlithgow Round Table is part of a national organisation for men aged 18–45, offering a mix of friendship, social events, and community impact. Members enjoy a wide range of activities — from go-karting and surfing, to escape rooms, business dinners, and visits to Royal Navy ships and RNLI stations. The group also proudly takes part in Linlithgow's historic Marches each year.

"Round Table is about giving back, meeting new people, and having fun along the way," says Gary. "Whether you're new to town or just looking for a new challenge, it's a brilliant way to connect with like-minded people."

Get Involved:

For more information on the festival, sponsorship opportunities or learn more about joining, visit **Linlithgow Round Table on Facebook**.

SAT
4
OCT



Falkirk Fiddlefest

Are you interested in taking part in a day of fiddling fun and expert tuition being offered by the Falkirk Fiddle Workshop?

We are running a one day "Falkirk Fiddlefest", with world class tutors Gavin Marwick (Firelight Trio) and Rua MacMillan (Blazin' Fiddles) at Larbert Old Church Hall on **Saturday the 20th September 10am-4pm**.

The day will be suitable for intermediate and advanced fiddlers interested in learning some traditional tunes, and playing them together.

With a strong contingent from Linlithgow, Falkirk Fiddle Workshop meets weekly throughout the year to enjoy fiddling and learning together. This is a chance to find out more about the group and who knows, you may want to get involved if you enjoy your day.

Tea, coffee and baking will be provided, but you are asked to bring your own packed lunch.

Tickets £25 for non members, £20 for members available from <https://wegottickets.com/event/672106>

For more information contact: Mary MacRae at m.macrae21@gmail.com



Fancy a Cuppa?

Linlithgow Link is looking for volunteers within the Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge area.

Can you spare an hour or so a month to be a friend to someone nearby who is feeling isolated - a shared cuppa and a chat are easy to give and can make a huge difference to someone who is feeling lonely through age or ill health?

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OAKWELL ALLOTMENTS IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

LINLITHGOW AND DISTRICT ALLOTMENT SOCIETY



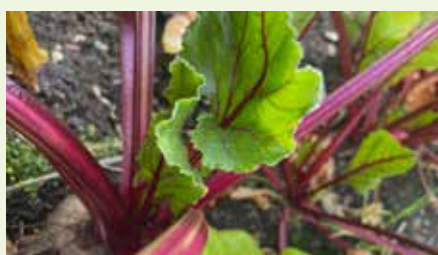
At this time of year the main tasks are harvesting and weeding, and watering during dry spells. Leaving the weeds to grow can take nutrients away from any plants you are growing. When small just hoe the annual weeds off on a sunny day and let them dry out. They will add some nutrients to the soil.

After harvesting crops it is best not to leave the ground empty. Consider growing some green manure. Green manure retains nutrients in the soil and the root systems prevent erosion by wind in dry weather and rain in wet. It is simply a case of sowing the seeds, following the instructions on the packet, and when the green manure is ready it can either be dug into the soil to rot down, which adds organic material to the soil, or harvested to provide compost material. Here is a good place for advice <https://www.allotment-garden.org/composts-fertilisers/green-manure-guide-to-sowing-growing-green-manure/>

What to do in August



> Harvesting: Summer cabbages, broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, courgettes (there always seems to be a glut!), peas, French beans, runner beans, spinach, carrots and beetroot.



> First and second early potatoes are

in storage and main crop potatoes can be lifted at the end of this month and into September. Eating steamed freshly dug potatoes at this time of year is a great pleasure, especially when served with butter and mint. If you want a few new potatoes at Christmas, they can be planted in a large tub at the end of August and protected from frost by keeping in a greenhouse or sunny porch.



> Garlic, onions and shallots should be kept in a dry place to let them dry out for storing.



> Hopefully there will be enough warm, sunny weather to ripen the sweetcorn and squash. Feeding will help the growth of sweetcorn and squash.



> Continue to work out what you can do to fill empty spaces if you are not growing green manure: either quick growing crops - lettuce e.g. tom thumb, and radish. This is a good time to sow pak choi and spinach to produce a late summer crop. Spinach grows easily from direct seeding. Winter Spinach gives a steady supply of tender leaves. Spinach grows well in containers or even in small patches in the flower border, where the shade from other plants will help keep it cooler.

> Sow vegetables for overwintering - salad onions e.g. apache; spinach e.g. giant winter, broad beans, e.g. aquadulce claudia, spring cabbage e.g. wintergreen (these can be started in modules before planting out. It is best to give them some protection with fleece or cloches during the winter and to give them a high nitrogen feed such as bloodmeal in the spring).

> Spring onions are also useful as a catch

crop - filling any gaps between other slow growing crops, but given their own position they prefer a rich, well-drained soil. It's a good idea to give some general purpose fertiliser, such as Growmore or blood fish and bone, a week before sowing and rake the soil into a fine tilth.

> Cut down to ground level the stems of summer raspberries which have borne fruit this year. They will look brown and will show signs of having carried fruit.

What to do in September

> Stake Broccoli and Brussels Sprouts to prevent them from being blown over by the winter winds. As with Spring Greens, net them to protect the plants from birds.

> Lift any remaining potatoes.

You can plant Garlic from this month and into November. Check to see that the variety is suitable for autumn planting. Garlic cloves can be planted directly into the soil although some people like to start them off in modules and plant them once they have developed a bit of a root system.

> Plant overwintering Onion sets in mid-September.

Harvest sweetcorn and squash. To test whether Sweetcorn is ripe for picking, peel back the leaves covering the top of the cob and poke your thumbnail into one of the kernels; if a milky fluid comes out, it is ready. The sugar in sweetcorn soon turns to starch so to get the best taste boil the cobs within an hour of picking if possible. Cobs can also be frozen for using later. They keep for up to a year and are delicious steamed.

> Plant out Spring Cabbage sown last month for overwintering.

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. This is on the left hand side of the home page.

Our website address for LADAS is 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



INCREASED CAPACITY FOR THE FOODBANK GARDEN PROJECT AT ST MICHAEL'S RC.



The Saint Vincent de Paul charity Garden project aims to supply fresh fruit and vegetables to the West Lothian Foodbank depot at Bathgate. This involves collecting excess produce from local, private growers e.g. LADAS (Linlithgow And District Allotment Society) local schools and children's nurseries (the children also help at the project). However the principal sources of food are the allotment beds situated at the back of St Michael's RC Church on a disused tennis court.

Last year the total project delivered food to the equivalent of >1100 meals!

This year the project has:

Moved water butts and added more to be closer to the growing area

Plumbed in a water supply to the butts and the plot in general

Obtained 6 new beds FOC

Been loaned 2 beds from "Linlithgow Farmily"

Obtained a grant from West Lothian Climate Action network (WLCAN) to pay for 3 tons of additional compost

We also used our own, home produced, compost for the first time

WLCAN also gave us 2 Apple, 2 Pear and 2 Plum tree saplings to plant, for spring

Many individuals donated seeds, seed potatoes, potato grow bags and plants


With this additional capability and growing capacity we are looking forward to a record year of food for the Foodbank and wish to thank all our volunteers and partners (WLCAN, LADAS, Linlithgow Farmily, Linlithgow Primary Nursery, St Joseph's Primary, Grow Wild Organics).

Jerry O'Dwyer

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Simply Mo - 6th September
Sol Christie - 13th September
Kris Blak - 20th September
Gerry's Karaoke - 27th September

Sunday 5-8pm
Killing Floor Blues - 31st August
Under Cover - 28th September

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What to consider when thinking of installing an air source heat pump.

According to Renewable Heat based in Falkirk, a heat pump is only as good as the system that supports it. If poorly designed or badly commissioned, what should be an efficient, future-proof heating solution can become an underperforming liability, costing you comfort, money, and peace of mind.

A heat pump isn't a like-for-like replacement for a boiler. It works differently. While boilers produce short, high bursts of heat, heat pumps operate at lower temperatures over longer periods. This means everything from pipework to radiators to controls must be carefully calibrated for your home.

System design is the foundation. It determines the correct heat pump size (bigger isn't always better), the type of emitters you'll need (radiators, underfloor, or a mix), flow temperatures, and heat loss calculations. Commissioning, meanwhile, ensures the system is installed and configured to run exactly as intended. You want the right amount of heat, in the right place at the right speed for maximum efficiency and savings.

When either step is skipped or rushed, performance drops, and problems begin. The consequences of a poorly designed or commissioned heat pump:

1. Underheating or inconsistent comfort

If your heat pump is undersized or radiators aren't matched to lower flow temperatures, your home may never reach the desired temperature, especially in colder months. This leads to constant tinkering with settings,

discomfort, and disappointment.

2. Excessive electricity use

An incorrectly designed system often runs harder and longer than necessary. The compressor may short-cycle (frequent starts and stops), reducing lifespan and increasing wear. The result? Higher electricity bills and a frustratingly inefficient system.

3. Reduced efficiency and COP

The Coefficient of Performance (COP) is the key efficiency metric for heat pumps. A well-designed system can achieve a COP of 3–4 (i.e. 3–4 units of heat for every unit of electricity). Poor design can cut this significantly, undermining the financial and environmental case.

4. Noise complaints and mechanical stress

Overworked or incorrectly installed systems may generate unwanted noise from the outdoor unit or internal components. This is not just annoying; it can be a symptom of deeper mechanical stress and eventual breakdown.

5. Poor integration with solar and battery systems

If you're planning a fully electric home with solar PV and battery storage, the integration must be carefully designed. An inefficient heat pump can negate the benefits of your solar generation or drain battery reserves faster than necessary.

6. Voided manufacturer warranty

Many manufacturers require evidence of proper commissioning, including key performance data and flow

temperature settings. If these aren't properly recorded, you may struggle to claim on a warranty if something goes wrong.

Insist on a full heat loss calculation and understand the assumptions. It should be done room-by-room and include building fabric, window performance, and ventilation losses. It's also important to understand and be clear about what assumptions have been made in order to create your quote and propose a design.

Work with certified professionals. We suggest you choose an installer certified by recognised schemes like MCS (Microgeneration Certification Scheme) professionals who can demonstrate the technical knowledge, experience, and compliance required to install renewable systems safely and effectively.

Request a commissioning report. You should receive clear documentation of system setup, flow rates, temperatures, and performance expectations. Don't consider the heat pump in isolation. Consider your home's insulation, hot water needs, and whether smart controls or zoning would enhance performance.

A well-designed, expertly commissioned heat pump could deliver good performance, comfort, and savings for years to come. But cut corners, and what should be a smart, sustainable investment can quickly become a source of stress, spiralling costs, and long-term inefficiency.





June and Angie are rescued Greyhounds who've found their forever home in Linlithgow.

Found as strays in Northern Ireland, they were taken to Dogs Trust Ballymena, then to Dogs Trust Glasgow. However, they were sadly returned from their initial re-home, and without getting any interest as a pair, were at risk of being separated to successfully find them homes.

They initially arrived at Dogs Trust Glasgow the week after their owners, Lee-Ann and Kevin, had lost their previous Greyhound, Lass. Angie and Lass look identical. After the dogs had been returned to rescue, they decided to foster them so they could stay together - quickly becoming 'failed fosters' as they decided to adopt them both!

Lee-Ann says:

"When we first brought them home, I did wonder why they had been paired as their energy levels are polar opposite but as we got to know them, you see the subtle clues that they are very bonded. Wee check-ins after getting lifted into the car, nose touches if either of them are unsure about something when out on a walk. It's very sweet. They have settled in well to their new Linlithgow life."

They describe June as a firecracker! Full of energy and unlike any Greyhound they have ever known! She is very smart so she needs the enrichment and physical exercise to

keep her happy. If she needs more attention, she will let you know! June is a sweet girl though, she seems full of confidence but she's just a worried little soul deep down. Angie is the opposite of June, much more the 'typical' Greyhound - a placid, couch potato! Though she is nervous and shows it. She doesn't like strangers at first, luckily June is there to be the centre of attention! Angie has historic injuries that haven't healed properly so you just wonder what they have both been through. Angie is coming out of her shell more and more which is lovely to see.

They have been making their owners smile everyday. June is happy to roach away on her back, long legs everywhere! Angie will dig up her bed to make sure it's just the right level of comfort before flopping down on it.

June only has cheeky habits! She'll bark at Angie for no reason, Angie pays her no attention when she does this. Angie likes to check the kitchen worktops and is getting very inquisitive which is lovely to see as her personality shines through more everyday. They both like to follow their owner around which has resulted in having to stay in one place longer than they'd like! June also loves a zoomie in the garden. Angie gets so excited for walks, she adores them! She acts like a spring chicken - not an 8 year old! June loves a ball, she cannot get enough of them. They are both very food oriented so their reward

based training is going well!

What are you most looking forward to doing together?

"We are really looking forward to taking them to the beach. We are doing some recall training just now with long leads so fingers crossed we can get them to the beach soon."

Have you got any advice for people considering foster and/or rescue?

"I would say that people shouldn't assume they know a breed or type and their traits. Just because you have experience with that breed/type, it doesn't mean your next one won't have their own unique personality and traits - every dog is different. We thought we were going to have two placid greyhounds and we got June who is an adorable rocket!"

"People should also anticipate disrupted nights as your dog settles into their new home and environment. They will have come from a kennel environment which was most likely loud so even quiet will be disconcerting for them. We don't know if June and Angie had been in a home before, so every experience is brand new. June especially grumbles during the night so we have to get up to calm her. The issue is now she has learned that she gets patted drifting off to sleep if she barks during the night, she's a smart cookie!"

"People should also make sure they consider their capability of looking after a dog for the

duration of the dog's life. Every time a dog is rehomed and returned, that decreases their chance of being successfully rehomed in the future."

Lee-Ann makes excellent points! Dog ownership is a big responsibility and a decision to add a canine companion into your life is not one to be made lightly.

Dogs Trust are always in need of foster homes - fostering is an excellent way to share your home to a dog in need, when you may not be able to own one permanently. They also have a foster programme which supports owners experiencing domestic abuse, and are urgently needing volunteer foster carers who can look after a dog while their owner finds freedom. Information on becoming a volunteer foster carer on their website: <https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/support-us/volunteering/roles/foster-carer>

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