

BATTLE 500

LINLITHGOW PRIMARY SCHOOL
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A town with stories to tell

Looking back, moving forward and celebrating the people who make Linlithgow thrive

This issue brings together the many threads that make Linlithgow such a distinctive place: a deep sense of history, an energetic community life and a determination to shape a strong future. From High Street memories and a long-overlooked battle to new ways of connecting and fresh invitations to get involved, these pages celebrate a town that never stands still.

We begin on the High Street, where One Linlithgow Business Improvement District takes us on a walk through the shops of years gone by, supported by evocative photographs from West Lothian Heritage Services. We also mark the retirement of Jean Wilson, who closed Wilson's Newsagent on 10 July 2026 after an extraordinary 60 years of service. Bruce Jamieson reaches further into local history to revisit the 1925 decision to end burials in the old Parish Church Cemetery - a decision that was not without dissent.

The past comes vividly to life as Linlithgow prepares to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge. Our coverage explores the tangled events surrounding the 1526 battle, a local family connection to one of its combatants and the investigations of pupils at Linlithgow Primary School. Look out, too, for details of the re-enactment and commemorative events from 4-6 September, along with a new book and a specially brewed beer from Strangers Brewing Co Ltd supporting the occasion.

There is plenty of forward momentum as well. Linlithgow Planning Forum introduces the Community Council's new website, designed to make local information easier to find and share. Linlithgow Rugby Club shows how it is building for the future across every age group, while strengthening participation and community values behind the scenes. Burgh Beautiful's volunteers tell us what inspires them to brighten the town - and warmly invite others to join the fun.

For those ready to lace up their running shoes, the Linlithgow 10K returns on 27 September with enhanced prizes, rewards for new course records, and T-shirts and refreshments for every finisher. Entries are rising quickly, but even if running is not for you, your support along the route will help create the atmosphere that makes the day so special.

And throughout the issue, YouthSpace asks a timely question: "Are you doing your bit?" It is a challenge that speaks to every story here. Whether we preserve local memories, volunteer, join a club, share information, take part in an event or simply cheer from the sidelines, every contribution helps. We hope this issue inspires you to discover something new, remember something cherished and find your own place in Linlithgow's continuing story.

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Every issue of Linlithgow Community Magazine is made possible by local subscribers and donors. Their generosity allows us to celebrate the people, places and organisations that make our town special - and to share those stories freely with residents and visitors.

The magazine gives local charities, voluntary groups, clubs and community organisations a trusted place to be seen and heard. It shines a light on the people who give their time and energy to Linlithgow, helps residents discover what is happening around them and provides an independent voice dedicated entirely to our town.

Subscriptions are deliberately affordable, so everyone who values the magazine can play a part in its future. Whatever amount you choose, your regular support helps us continue to print, inform, connect and champion the community we all share.

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BUSINESSES: PAST AND PRESENT

Following the two previous editions with themes that focused on the future of the High Street, One Linlithgow were asked to do a series about businesses that have gone and new businesses opening in the town. Not only the businesses, but the owners who have dedicated their working life to the town.

Extra, extra, Read all About It.

No doubt the retirement of Jean Wilson from Wilson's Newsagents after 60 years disseminating the news in print has given us all the opportunity to reflect. Happy retirement Jean, you more than deserve it.



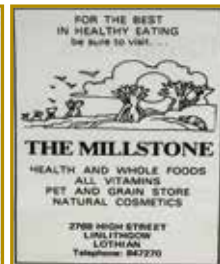
News travels fast along the High Street, and an old copy of the



Linlithgow & District Business Association 'pamphlet' from mid 1980's was handed in. The introductory paragraph set out the stall clearly as it

"aims to provide a selection of information useful to visitors and tourists in particular". The job of promoting Linlithgow, and all it has to offer, hasn't really changed that much really.

It was fascinating to go through the old adverts, when (01506) was just (0506) and some didn't bother with a telephone number. Hair by "Village Gossip" at 77 High Street made us smile; and it was nice to see some evidence of businesses still here, such as "The Millstone" at 276b High Street which is now "Complete Heath at the Millstone".



It was a simpler time with Clarendon Estates at 9 High St offering "No Sale - No Fee" to sell your home, with viewings by their own Sales Directors. They even offered mortgage facilities.

While researching about old businesses from the High Street, we managed to find some old images of businesses (**published with permissions from West Lothian Heritage Services**) such as the Linlithgow Gazette (1960) that's now Kapital Kilts, next to the "Auld Hole in the Wall" pub that's now Café 1807.



Linlithgowshire Gazette and the 'Auld Hole in the Wa'

SELENE HAIR STUDIO



Leah

Entrance

Inside

Leah's journey to opening Selene Hair Studio (264 High St) has been one built on passion, hard work and a love for making people feel confident. After opening her first salon in Bo'ness in 2018, she spent eight years building a loyal clientele and growing both personally and professionally. As the business evolved, she knew she wanted to create something that truly reflected her vision - a luxurious, welcoming salon where every client could relax, enjoy their experience and leave feeling their absolute best.

When Leah found the premises on the High Street, the transformation of the salon became a labour of love, with the entire fit-out completed by Calum and his team. Their craftsmanship, attention to detail and dedication have completely transformed the space into the beautiful salon it is today, bringing her vision to life in every corner.

The Past. The premises used to be the home of Boxx Hair.



'Furniture Bought, Sold & Exchanged' 249 High Street, Linlithgow

SAGE HAIR ALCHEMY

'Life is too short to have boring hair'



Eddie and Lisa sold their business to Mandy and Jill who took over in April last year. They are on a mission to help every client achieve their hair goals in a way that's realistic, nurturing, and true to them; taking the time to understand your needs, lifestyle, and budget. Their premises at 254 High Street has been re-named from the Chakir's Hair and Makeup.



The Gas Showroom and Duncan's Butcher shop in the 1960's.



Wm. Faichney Bakery and Confectioner, 1960's.

REFYNE HAIR STUDIO



Stephanie

Carla

The new Refyne salon (86 High St) brings together a talented and experienced team. Carla, who has been styling hair on Linlithgow High Street for the past 17 years, and Steph, who trained in Glasgow and has proudly worked in Linlithgow for nearly 10 years.

They have a passion for helping clients feel confident, refreshed and their absolute best. The Refyne team are looking forward to welcoming both familiar faces and new clients into their beautiful new salon space.

The Past.

In 2005 Centre Stage Dancewear used to trade from the address offering garments for all types of dancewear for ballet, tap, jazz and gymnastics.

THE BLACK ROSE TATTOO

The Black Rose Tattoo is a professional tattoo & piercing studio (207 High St) in Linlithgow. The studio re-opened in July following extensive internal renovations into a modern, clinical space for tattoos and piercings.



The studio was set up by **'tattoos_by_danielle'** [Instagram] and **mike.ford_tattoo** [Instagram] who joined forces to open up their business in Linlithgow.

An extract of Danielle's comment on Instagram said *"When the opportunity came up, it was one we just couldn't say no to. Now here we are, taking the biggest step of our careers together, and we're so excited for what's ahead. Before this new chapter begins, I just want to say a huge thank you to every single person who has sat in my chair at the funky buddha. Whether you came to me for PMU, SMP, or trusted me while I started my apprenticeship, every appointment, every conversation and every bit of support has meant the world to me. I honestly couldn't have got to this point without you all."*

The Past.

Previously the premises used to be Q Worth selling high quality clothing.



Hamilton's Lands, 48 High Street, 1929

2 FEET 1ST



Angela and her team have been fitting children's shoes at 73 High Street in Linlithgow for the last 10 years. Top quality kids' shoe brands such as Lelli Kelly, Ricosta, Start-Rite and more have been on offer along with a professional and experienced fitting service.



'Try (on) before you buy' has never been so important in a child's life than the correctly fitted pair of shoes in their early years. As the new school term is fast approaching, an appointment system is in place.

VETS FOR PETS



Entrance

Bobby Kirby

Reception

A new purpose-built Vets For Pets is now open in Linlithgow, inside Pets At Home in Stockbridge Retail Park. The practice is locally owned by Bobby Kirby who grew up and went to school in Linlithgow.

Services on offer include 24-hour emergency cover, health plans, in-house laboratory services, medication, microchipping, prescriptions, X-Ray & ultrasound and an operating theatre. As they are locally owned, the team review prices regularly to ensure they offer clients the best value for money.



MacNab's Dry Cleaners & Greig's Electrical shop, 1970's

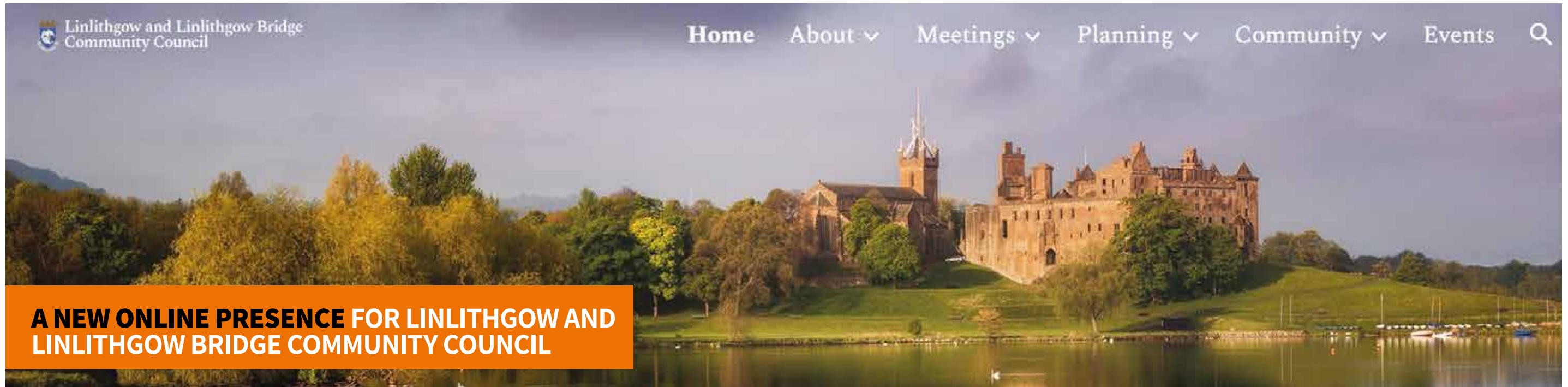


Stobie's shoe shop and D.R. Gordon Hardware Store

CALLUNA FAIR

Formerly known as 'Fair Tradewinds' at 131-133 High St, Sam has re-branded her ethical, Scottish gifts and houseplants emporium.





A NEW ONLINE PRESENCE FOR LINLITHGOW AND LINLITHGOW BRIDGE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

A community website is not something most of us think about every day—until we need a meeting date, a planning update, a road closure notice, or the background to an issue that suddenly matters. Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council has now relaunched its website to make that information easier to find, easier to share, and easier to keep for the future. The new site is designed to be practical and easily accessible for residents: a place for current notices, ongoing projects, meeting papers, and the local story behind decisions that affect the town.

From noticeboard to community tool

Local organisations began to build websites in greater numbers after about 2005 and, as an example, the Scottish Community Council website was launched in 2009. Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council followed in 2013, when a computer-savvy member created a WordPress site. At first, it was modest: a place for announcements, agendas and minutes. In truth, it was probably used more by Community Council

members looking for papers than by the wider public.

That began to change when another member showed how a website and Facebook could work together to reach residents more effectively.

As the website developed, it became more than a noticeboard. During West Lothian Council's 2017 Transforming Your Council consultation, the Community Council used it to help residents respond directly to local proposals. One online feature allowed people to email their views to West Lothian councillors with just a few clicks. When the proposal to close Linlithgow recycling centre appeared, more than 1,000 took advantage of just a few clicks to send their objections—enough to fill councillors' inboxes and cause some discomfort for the Council's IT department. That particular feature was never used again, but the recycling centre stayed open, albeit with reduced hours.

Why a relaunch was needed

After the webmaster resigned, the site gradually returned to a simpler role as a place for minutes and documents. Over time it became clear that the old website was too complex for the current Community Council to manage easily, expensive to host, and dated in places.

The launch of the Battle 500 website showed that a simpler approach could still be attractive, informative and

effective. After making enquiries, the Community Council commissioned the same web designer to replace the costly hosting arrangements with a smart, mobile-friendly, straightforward and lower-cost Google site. The new site, at <https://www.llbcc.org.uk>, has now been launched, although some headings are still being populated.

More than today's news

The aim now is to use Facebook for quick announcements to the Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge community, with the website providing the fuller story where more detail is needed. The new site is intended to do two jobs.

First, it will support today's announcements, projects and consultations. Secondly, it will act as the Community Council's institutional memory, helping new members and residents understand not only what the Council is doing, but how particular issues have developed over time. The current Edinburgh Airport Airspace Change Programme is a good example. The website includes information about the 2016 application, which was refused by the Civil Aviation Authority. That history is worth revisiting as Edinburgh Airport, now under new ownership, appears to be moving forward with proposals that look very similar to those refused ten years ago.

What residents will find on the site

In designing the website, the Community Council has focused on three practical needs:

- 1. Notifications of future events from road closures to major consultations and planning proposals,**
- 2. Ongoing projects with latest developments,**
- 3. Archives of completed activities from minutes of meetings to details, relevant documents and timelines of completed projects.**

The website is split into five sections comprising:

1. About. This section brings together the governance information behind the day-to-day operation of the Community Council, including membership, the constitution and relevant regulations. These documents may not be light reading, but they explain the Council's core role: to be an elected body responsible for finding out, communicating and coordinating the views of the community, and taking action to promote the community's interests.

2. Meetings. Community Council meetings are open to the public and are held monthly, except in July and December. Details of the next meeting are shown on the website and advertised widely, with the agenda published a few days in advance. Recent minutes are kept separately from the archive of past meetings, which forms part of the recorded memory of the Community Council. The archive goes back to 2013. It may not sound like the most exciting reading, but it is often revealing to see when issues affecting us today were first raised.

3. Planning. The Linlithgow Planning Forum is a committee of the Community Council which meets regularly to discuss current and future planning policy and also to consider those planning applications which impact the community as a whole. It will generally not consider planning applications which only impact close neighbours and will not in any way mediate neighbour to neighbour disputes. The membership of the Planning Forum is open to representatives from other Linlithgow organisations which have an interest in planning matters notably, the Linlithgow Civic Trust and the Linlithgow Community Development Trust. Meetings of the Planning Forum are held in private but minutes of the meeting, which include details of decisions and actions, are reported to the Community Council meeting and published on the website. The minutes archive is complete from the very first

meeting in 2013. The Planning Forum is also responsible for the Linlithgow Local Place Plan.

4. Community Matters. This section has details of issues which are currently of concern to the Linlithgow community and also an archive of past consultations and other matters. The archive is currently being assembled from past papers and correspondence.

5. Events gives details of events organised by the Community Council notably, the Advent Fayre and the Remembrance Sunday parade.

Google websites are searchable and it is anticipated that once the website has been in the Google domain for a few weeks that the search engine will become a very useful function.

Have your say

The Community Council's role is to ascertain, communicate and coordinate the views of the community, and the new website is one way of doing that better. If you have suggestions for improving the site, please contact the secretary at runaire.llbcc@gmail.com. Runaire is Gaelic for secretary; it is used here partly to reduce the volume of unwanted spam attracted to email addresses with secretary in the title.

John Kelly
Planning Secretary
Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council



Jean Wilson, 4th from right (1969)

GOODBYE JEAN WILSON (WILSONS NEWSAGENTS)

Very much the end of an era in the High Street when Jean Wilson closed her shop door at 1 The Vennel for the final time in July. In a short notice placed in her window, Jean thanked the thousands of customers who she served over the years –

Having been part of the Linlithgow High Street for some 60 years it is with some sadness that I am announcing the closure of the shop. I would like to express my gratitude to the many loyal customers who have supported the business over that considerable time period. It has been a privilege to count many as friends as well as simply business customers. The shop will formally close on 10th July.

Regards, Jean Wilson

When I spoke with Jean in early July, she explained that the original Wilson's newsagents shop was opened by her late husband **George** and his Mum and Dad at 222 High Street. The shop at 1 The Vennel was later set up in 1969. Jean still retains a copy of the Linlithgowshire Journal and Gazette (broadsheet size) from October 1969 which contains a full page advert and photographs to mark the opening of the new shop at The Vennel.

In the early days the shop sold a range of items including wedding gifts and stationery, puzzles, greeting cards and toys. George Wilson, who was a keen Elvis fan, also ran a record store on the first floor of the Vennel shop. Many will remember the life size cardboard cut-out of the American star which kept watch over all comings and goings for such a long time.

1969 - A TIME OF CHANGE

Jean Wilson's long period of service is a

remarkable achievement and certainly causes us to reflect on the passing of time. In 1969, Harold Wilson was Prime Minister, Decimalisation was being introduced and the first moon landing took place. Newspapers at that time were very much our main source of information and journalism embraced the art of the written word.

Today we have AI to tell us about different times - 'Tabloid circulation has fallen sharply since 1969. In that era, major British and international papers sold millions of print copies daily. Today, print sales have dropped by more than 80% from their peaks. Readers have moved to digital news, mobile phones, and social media. Journalism has shifted from a slow, centralised print and broadcast model run by professional gatekeepers to a fast, digital, and decentralised landscape where anyone can publish. Newsrooms now operate on 24-hour cycles, print has largely given way to multi-platform digital media, and audiences interact directly with the news.'

In the town, the 1960s brought significant change to Linlithgow with the demolition of many old and dilapidated buildings along the north edge of the High Street. The new (and visually controversial) Vennel area was designed by Rowand Anderson, Kininmonth and Paul, who were significant architects of their time.



Linlithgow High Street (1966)



The development won a Saltire Award the year it opened. The photograph shown below, from 1966 highlights a very big space to the west of the Cross.

FOND MEMORIES

Many people from town and beyond have posted their best wishes to Jean, who lives in Polmont, and shared their memories of the shop. Just a few listed here -

Diane Drummond - *Wishing you a very happy retirement Jean. Your shop is and will always be a Linlithgow institution.*

Nan Merry - *Happy Retirement Jean, we worked together in Cameron's Draper shop in Bathgate in the late 60's while the shop and Vennel were under construction. You must have been in the family business since around 1970. That is dedication!!! You have never changed!*

Bryan Allan - *I moved away from Linlithgow to live in Leeds in May, but I was telling someone down here just the other day about the wonderful Jean in Linlithgow, who has always served with a smile and brightened up so many lives. When I was hosting and promoting one of a number of Maggie's charity movie nights at the Hippodrome, Jean kindly inserted my flyers into all the newspapers that went out for delivery. An absolute star*

Murdie Kennedy - *I took on a paper round in 1972 to help pay for a school trip to France and Switzerland. My round took in Clarendon, Oatlands Park, etc. Sunday was a killer!! Lots of copies of the Sunday Times and Observer - all with colour supplements.*

Jim Brown - *Mid-C-Mod (78 High Street) - Getting up at 3:30am 6 days a week to serve Linlithgow, our longest running High Street shop.*

From the Black Bitch magazine, thanks Jean for serving the town of Linlithgow for so many years and best wishes in your retirement.

Ronald Hunter

A GARDENING VISIT TO YORKSHIRE...

We chose not to go to the continent for a break this summer what with the security problems and then the wildfires. So when planning our travel to Sandringham in late July to judge gardens at the RHS flower show we decided to break the journey in Yorkshire and do some garden visiting.



shrubs silhouetted against the blue sky, and the river of Blue Meconopsis curling up the hillside. Each ceramic flower unique and the result of a community project.

The Himalayan Garden & Sculpture Park near Masham, where we were staying, has been on our list of gardens to visit for ages. You know that we are suckers for art displayed in gardens and they have 91 permanent sculptures on display and this year 101 temporary sculptures most of which are for sale... we resisted! Set in a deep valley with mature trees all around you have to keep your eyes open so not to miss any pieces. Two of the most memorable for us were 'Juliet - Study of a dancer' flying above the



Lesley hadn't visited **Perennial's York Gate** garden for a few years so we popped in there one afternoon. A small gem of a garden in the arts and crafts style with many vistas and many different rooms and a wild plant meadow. Dougal knows it well as he is on their Garden Committee and was delighted to see it so well looked after despite the heat and rampant growth of all plants this year, the iconic trained Pyracantha on the gable end is looking forward to its annual trim.

Breezy Knees Garden near York was a new one for us. A huge 20 acre site full of hardy perennials in different themed areas. Lots of amusing large sculptures set off by lovely plantings. The picture frame set in a hedge looking out to golden Alstroemeria and a corn field influenced by Van Gogh, no doubt. Lesley posed



in front of these giant welly boots once we could get the other families moving out of the picture.

Our last garden turned out to be Lesley's high spot of the holiday, **Newby Hall**. We chose this garden because they have just opened their renovated rock garden, which is very impressive. We turned up to find thousands of visitors to a classic and vintage car rally with hundreds of cars on display. The house tour was wonderful, still lived in by the same family, but the blinds were down because of the sun so it was difficult to see the garden from the house, something we enjoy seeing. The long double borders were full of colour despite the heat and the drought, with Catmint, Campanulas, blue Perovskia and Purple Loosestrife standing out. But what crowned it

all for Lesley was the Giles Brandreth collection of teddy bears and the most spectacular display of dozens of Dolls Houses!



Dougal Philip and Lesley Watson
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A MATTER OF GRAVE CONCERN

Bruce Jamieson



In November 1924, several Linlithgow notables were summoned to the Sheriff Court (where Court Residence is today) to discuss the possible closure of St Michael's Graveyard. Previously, Linlithgow Academy Headmaster, James Beveridge, had been asked to look into the history of the cemetery and he had duly reported that there were probably at least 360 years of burials on the site.

He added that, in the early days of the church, it was believed that the only safe place to be buried was under the floor of the building itself or, if the burial had to be outside, close to the church walls. By the late 15th century, more space was needed to bury the burgh's dead so, in 1492, King James IV granted "mair grund tae expand the kirkyaird aroon the kirk."

The Reformation put an end to the practice of under-floor interment - one minister describing the space beneath St Michael's as "liken to a charnel house" (a vault full of accumulated bones). This increased the need for more burial space in the kirkyard and so, in 1620, a portion of the manse garden was added and later, after the manse had been demolished by Cromwellian troops, all of the glebe garden and the site of the dismantled minister's dwelling were added to the cemetery area. By 1834, there was a need for even more ground and so part of the land adjoining the Grammar School was incorporated. An application by the Kirk Session to take over a portion of "Palace Land" was rejected by the Crown.



An early print shows very few headstones.

In the late 18th Century, the Kirk Session relinquished its control of the kirkyard to the Town Council and, in 1844, increased need for proper regulation of burials saw an emergency Council committee in session. It established that there were 557 known lairs in the cemetery and it duly set about trying to trace who owned them. It also commissioned a local workforce to tidy up the area. A huge quantity of piled up soil and rubbish was removed, the cemetery was levelled and some headstones were relocated and placed into neat rows - often not situated in exact relationship to the actual burial beneath.



The 1844 plan of kirkyard lairs.

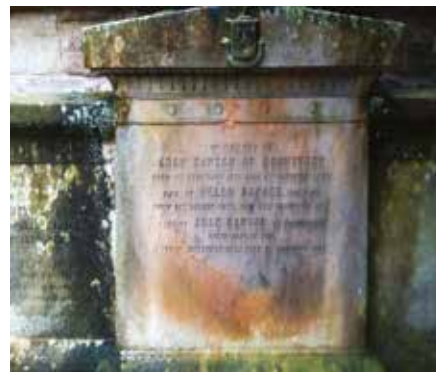
Some table-top grave markers were positioned in an upright position to save space and it was decreed that in future "flat headstones" were to be discouraged and that all further grave-markers had to be approved by the church authorities. A further regulation forbade all private burials and declared that, in future, graves could only be prepared by the official gravedigger and not by family or casual labourers. Posters bearing the new regulations were printed and posted throughout the town.



The 1844 Regulations poster.

The rationalisation and regulation of the kirkyard was not pleasing to all - especially when it was announced that, because many locals had been putting in false claims of a right to a lair, in future, all claims had to be proved in writing and also that no one living outside the burgh could automatically be buried in the graveyard. It was

further ordered that no burials were to take place within six feet of the church walls and that all memorial plaques on the external walls were to be removed and no more were to be affixed.



Provost Adam Dawson died in 1876 and a memorial plaque was fixed to the North wall of the church!

In order to prevent the schoolboys from the grammar school climbing into the graveyard and playing there, the wall around the school was to be heightened and strengthened. Adam Dawson records in his book 'Rambling Recollections of Past Times' that on one occasion some schoolboys had found a skull and used it as a football.



A Victorian glass lantern slide showing the graveyard and the school on the right.

The committee also ordered the removal of the watchhouse which had been set up some 25 years before to house an overnight guard, positioned there in order to deter grave-robbers. This removal enabled two more lairs to be created.

These arrangements helped for a while but, by 1884, it was obvious that the kirkyard was reaching "saturation point" and the church authorities declared that no new lairs were available and that only existing burial plots could be used.

Fourteen years later, Braehead Cemetery was opened and the immediate pressure was taken off St Michael's burial ground, although interments in family lairs continued. By the 1920s, the situation was getting more serious with horrendous overcrowding in the kirkyard and so a petition was placed before the Sheriff to get permission to close the cemetery completely. Provost Hebson and the town magistrates duly wrote to the sheriff to arrange a meeting to discuss the situation.



Provost Hebson, the town magistrates and guests at St Michael's on Marches Day 1924.

Evidence was given by James Russell who declared that, in his 27 years as Town Clerk, he had attended many burials and, on every occasion, human remains had been encountered as the grave was being dug.

Burgh Surveyor Robert Sword agreed, asserting that between 1921 and 1924 there had been 20 burials and, in every case, human bones and skulls had been unearthed - mostly found less than three feet deep. He went on to say that such remains were always gathered up and hidden until after the funeral when they were reburied in a suitably prepared space.

The evidence given by gravedigger Patrick Moran, who stayed at Number 1 Kirkgate, was even more gruesome and focussed on the times he had come across many skulls (13 during one particularly harrowing occasion), countless human bones and coffins which had to be broken up to provide a decent depth for a new burial.



Number 1 Kirkgate in the 1920s.

Mr Moran recounted, in particular, the time he had dug a grave for Past Provost Gilmour when he died in 1910. While digging into the family plot, he had come across the coffin of the Past Provost's son. On breaking it up, he had discovered that the body had not completely decayed and he related that the smell had turned his stomach.

Apart from the obvious affront to human decency, Medical Officer of

Health, Alexander Robb, stressed the threat to public health as rainwater from the cemetery flowed downhill to the High Street.

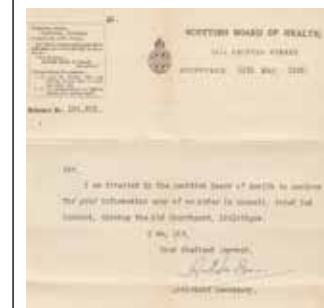
The case was firmly made and once again posters were displayed across the town, this time declaring that the cemetery

would soon close. Notices were also posted in the Linlithgowshire Gazette and such announcements brought in several objections, with some locals vociferously complaining and asserting their right to be buried in their family lair. Family lawyers duly wrote official letters declaring the insensitivity and illegality of preventing residents from using lairs which their ancestors had paid for.

Some of the correspondence was particularly heartfelt: "Miss Liddle wishes to be buried with her two departed sisters." "Mr Law is not expected to live much longer and wishes to be laid to rest with his father." "Sheriff Maconochie wishes to be buried in his portion of land around which he has removed the unsightly iron railings in preparation for his interment."

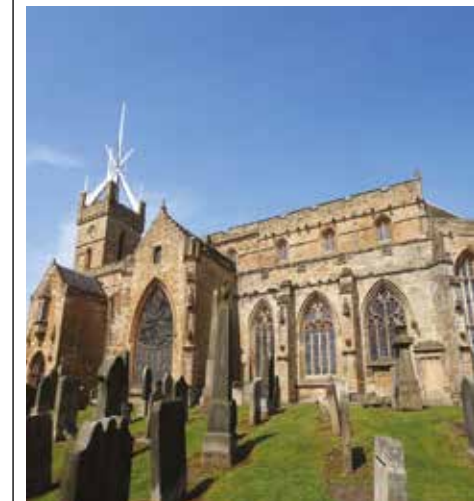
Other claims asserted that there was still plenty of room in their family lair. However, after these lairs were "pierced" it was discovered that all

were indeed full. There was really no alternative and so, in 1925, Royal Assent was granted and St Michael's Kirkyard, where generations of locals had been laid to rest, was finally closed.



The official Board of Health "closure letter" of May, 1925.

Although no longer in use, the Kirkyard of St Michael's provides many interesting headstones bearing information on over 1300 interments.



KING JAMES V and the BATTLE of LINLITHGOW BRIDGE



In September 1526, an attempt was made to rescue the 14-year-old King James V from the clutches of the Earl of Angus. An army in support of the King's mother, Margaret, led by the Earl of Lennox, met the opposing forces along the River Avon at Linlithgow Bridge. The result was a victory for Angus - and a death toll of 3,000 Scottish soldiers.

From 7.00pm on September 4th & 5th, these historic events will be dramatically portrayed in St Michael's, Kirkgate in a multi-media presentation featuring over 160 large-scale, specially-created images, live narration, recorded voices and sound effects, and live music from the Linlithgow String Orchestra.

The event is masterminded by local historian Bruce Jamieson, who has written and presented several highly-acclaimed productions in St Michael's - a building which played an integral part in the build-up to the battle, and its aftermath.



TICKETS: Adults £15 - Under 15s £12 - available from Far From The Madding Crowd and at battle500.org.uk/whats-on

All proceeds go to the Battle500 Project and St Michael's at Linlithgow and Avon Valley Church





NEW SEASON UNDERWAY

After what seems like a very short off-season, the Rugby Club has kicked off the new season, with training underway at all levels from the pre-school Tiny Reds (Saturday mornings at 9-45am), through the Wee Reds Micros (P1 to P3) and Minis (P4 to P7), then the Young Reds (S1 to U18), through to the Reds senior teams and finally the Vintage Reds (Walking Rugby group). The Club is also growing a Girls' squad from a strong nucleus through the School of Rugby at Linlithgow Academy. To find out how to get involved as a player, coach or other volunteer, scan the QR code above - we'd love to have you join the team!

Development Team Changes

Linlithgow Rugby Club employs two Development Officers, both part-funded by Scottish Rugby, to carry out rugby development work at Linlithgow Academy and other local schools and in the Rugby Club, working with the 40 or so volunteer coaches.

This year it's all change though, with both Dougie Thomson and Euan Mochrie moving to promoted rugby development posts in Glasgow and Edinburgh respectively. While they go with our best wishes, both will still be involved with the Club - Euan as a player in the Reds team while Dougie will continue in a coaching role with the senior squad. Euan left at the end of last year and his replacement **Grant Haggart** was recruited earlier in the summer. Dougie, who has been employed by the Rugby Club for 14 years, moves to a well deserved promoted post this August and the Club is already advertising for a replacement in the role as Rugby Development Manager.

Rugby Summer Camp

Dougie and Grant were instrumental in organising and running the Club's week

long Rugby Summer Camp, attended by around 100 youngsters. Dougie has been involved in running summer camps since he first started in 2012 and this year's version was again an outstanding success. Support was provided by part-time Community Development Officers, who have been developed internally through our Youth Development programme.



Young Leaders identify Values

Last season, one of our youth coaches, Greg Cann undertook a piece of work with our U18, U16 and U15 teams. The purpose behind this was for the Club to engage more with our older youth players and give them an opportunity to learn more about the Club and to have a "voice" within the Club.

As part of this, we asked them to work together to develop the core values for their and our Rugby Club. Up until now our core values closely reflected those of Scottish Rugby and subsequently our code of conduct closely reflected that. Whilst we continue to support those values, we felt it was important for our young people to take time and reflect what it might mean for them, in terms of how they saw the club standing in the community.

As a result, Greg held workshops with them and also with our senior squad which resulted in a new set of core values and behaviours which reflect the thoughts of our players both

off and on the pitch.

On review, a set of 8 values were identified, specific to the club & its position within the local Linlithgow community, and these were assigned to 2 acronyms: REDS & AURA.

Reds reflects the club in on the playing field: Respect, tEamwork, Determination & diScipline.

Aura reflects the position within the community: engAgement, commUnity, home-gRown & pAssion.

Behaviours associated with each value have been identified and have been shared with all age group coaches already. This list is not exhaustive and it is hoped that the coaches will share the values with both players and parents and identify specific associated behaviours that are linked to age grouping.

Work with all coaches, parents and Young Leaders will look at these **Values** at specific times through the year to ensure they are adhered to and if any amendment required.

This has been a great piece of work and from this we are looking to extend this work to support developing young leaders within the club.

Continuing Community Commitment

As with previous seasons, the Club will continue as a hub for certain community activities from the Town Fireworks Night (this year on Friday 6th November) to the RedsFest in May 2027 and the subsequent Civic Festival in the temporary Marquee Indoors.



Fly Half
www.linlithgowrugbyclub.co.uk

BANKING HUB

Linlithgow Banking Hub opened at its new permanent location at 30 The Vennel in June. But there's still a lot of confusion about what a banking hub does and how it differs from a bank branch. Here we try to shed a little light on the latest addition to our town centre.



How does a banking hub work?

Linlithgow Banking Hub is made up of two sections, the cash counter and the community banker meeting rooms.

Cash counter

This is the bit you see when you walk in! We are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, operated by Post Office staff.

Here you can:

***Withdraw cash.** Although there is an ATM outside open 24/7, you can still come in and withdraw cash in the hub. Inside you'll be under cover (out of the rain - or sun!) and not out in the street; served by a friendly human rather than a machine, giving you complete privacy and peace of mind; and able to take cash out in whichever combination of notes or coins you need. All you need is a debit card for a UK bank account - we can process withdrawals for all the major UK high street banks - and your PIN

***Pay in cash (notes and coins)**

***Check your balance**

***Pay in cheques**

***Pay some barcoded bills**

***Access change-giving services (for registered businesses)**

These services are available for the majority of high street banks. Please come in and ask us for more information.



Meeting room

This is a private space where you can speak to a community banker (an employee of the bank) who can access your account details. We have bankers from different banks in each day. No appointment is necessary, just drop in. Our community bankers take a lunch break and the meeting room will be closed at these times. We have community bankers in from these banks on the following days:

Monday **Santander**

Tuesday **Barclays**

Thursday **Royal Bank of Scotland**

Friday **Bank of Scotland**

Are you a Post Office?

Although the cash counter is operated by Post Office staff, we can only offer banking services at the hub and do not offer the full range of Post Office services. See above for what we do offer at the banking hub cash counter.



Can I use the cash counter services when it isn't my bank's day?

Yes! We provide cash counter services for most high street banks, Monday to Friday 9-5. To find out which services your bank offers at our cash counter check www.postoffice.co.uk/everydaybanking

Can I pay in coin here?

Yes! So long as it is in coin bags, separated by denomination, you can pay coin into your current account with your debit card.

You have an empty slot on Wednesday, which bank is going to use that day?

We are very much hoping that slot will be filled by a bank - we'll let you know as soon as we do!

What services can the community bankers provide?

Each community banker is able to provide different services, as determined by their bank. If there's a specific service you're looking for, pop in and have a chat with the community banker for your bank - they'll keep you right.

When is the community banker available?

Our community bankers are available 9 - 5 (Barclays 9 - 4:30) but they do each take a lunch break and will be unavailable at that time. Different community bankers take their lunches at different times.

Who operates the banking hub?

Banking hubs are run by Cash Access UK, a not-for-profit organisation funded by banks. For more information, visit www.cashaccess.co.uk

Where can I find out more?

Come in and see us! We have handy leaflets with at-a-glance guides to which services we offer for which banks. Or follow us on Facebook: @LinlithgowBankingHub



ROSE SEASON GETS OFF TO A HISTORIC START!

PHOTOS BY ANDREW WEST

It's been a very exciting start to the season for Linlithgow Rose and the club has made a bit of history in the opening fixtures. Now the players are getting down to league business as they strive to defend the Lowland League title they won in such dramatic style on the final day of the last term.

As Lowland League champions, the Rose received an invitation to play in the opening round of the Premier Sports Scottish League Cup. This was a historic first for the club and meant a change to their normal pre-season programme, as club President, Jon Mahoney, explained:

"Our pre-season fixtures reflected the standard of the sides we would be up against in the League Cup and we had a strong series of games against teams who are currently playing in the SPFL. We won well against Spartans F.C. in the delayed East of Scotland cup final at our own ground and that set up us nicely for our visit to Greenock Morton on July 11th. A wonderful performance saw us beat the Championship side one-nil. The win was absolutely merited in the context of how the game went. We had no right to expect points from the group, so to take three in the first game against a full-time team from tier two was an outstanding achievement for the players and the management team"

The trip to Greenock was quickly followed on the Tuesday by the visit of St Johnstone to Prestonfield for the first-ever competitive game against a top-flight team since the ground opened in 1949. The Rose players were resolute and acquitted themselves well, but St Johnstone won by two goals to nil. Their fans were full of praise for the professional set-up at the Rose, both on and off the park, and the addition of an Indian street food wagon by local restaurant, Delhi's Winter, proved very popular with the visitors from the Fair City. It was even mentioned on Radio Scotland's 'Off the Ball' by well-known St Johnstone fan, Stuart Cosgrove.

The Delhi's Winter delights were also available, along with the usual pie and Bovril, the following Saturday, when

Lowland League winners 2026



Rose's Paul Kennedy in action



Inverness Caledonian Thistle from the Championship came to call. Again, the Rose gave a good account of themselves, before the men from the North ran out two-nil winners. The league cup fixtures concluded the following Tuesday with a visit to East Fife, who play in League One. A strong first half showing saw the Rose take the lead, but the Fifiers eventually went on to win three-one.

Reviewing the League Cup experience, Jon Mahoney told me:

"We had four games in ten days against full-time teams from several levels above us and that's really intense, but it's what you want to be doing. We aspire to be playing in these competitions and to get that experience will help us to understand the demands the next time round, whether it's in that competition again, or in another format. It lets us see what is required. There's no doubt that the intensity of these games is something we've not had to deal

with as a club, both on and off the pitch, in previous seasons, and we can only learn from the experience."

There are some tasty fixtures coming up for the Rose in the coming weeks and everybody at Prestonfield hopes the community will rally round and support the team. Season tickets are still on sale and full details are available on the club website and social media pages. Hospitality packages are also being offered for most home games. Please check for availability.

Murdoch Kennedy

ROSE FIXTURES TO SEPTEMBER 26TH

SAT. AUG. 22ND. LOWLAND LEAGUE V LOCHEE UTD. AWAY. 3PM

SAT. AUG. 29TH. LOWLAND LEAGUE V COWDENBEATH. HOME. 3PM

FRI. SEPT. 11TH. LOWLAND LEAGUE V EAST STIRLING. AWAY. 7.45PM

TUESDAY SEPT. 15TH. LOWLAND LEAGUE V DUNIPACE. HOME. 7.45PM

SATURDAY SEPT. 19TH. LOWLAND LEAGUE V BROXBURN. AWAY. 3PM.

SATURDAY SEPT. 26TH. LOWLAND LEAGUE V BO'NESS UNITED. HOME. 3PM.



LINLITHGOW
BURGH TRUST

HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF Linlithgow's HERITAGE

Linlithgow's heritage is one of its greatest assets. It is valued by many, yet its rich history and significance are not always widely understood.

Since 1971, Linlithgow Civic Trust has worked to protect and promote the town's history, character, and environment. In 2017, the Civic Trust became part of Linlithgow Burgh Trust SCIO, alongside Burgh Beautiful and, more recently, the Linlithgow Community Magazine, collectively continuing that commitment to preserving and enhancing the town for future generations.

We are now looking for new volunteers to take part in this important work.

WE NEED PEOPLE WHO:

- Have an interest in Linlithgow's history and heritage
- Understand the town's unique character and value its future
- Want to help safeguard and develop it for generations to come

Whether you have professional expertise or simply a passion for Linlithgow, your contribution could help ensure that its heritage and environment continues to be understood, appreciated, and protected for generations to come.



To find out more about volunteering with Linlithgow Burgh Trust, please get in touch:

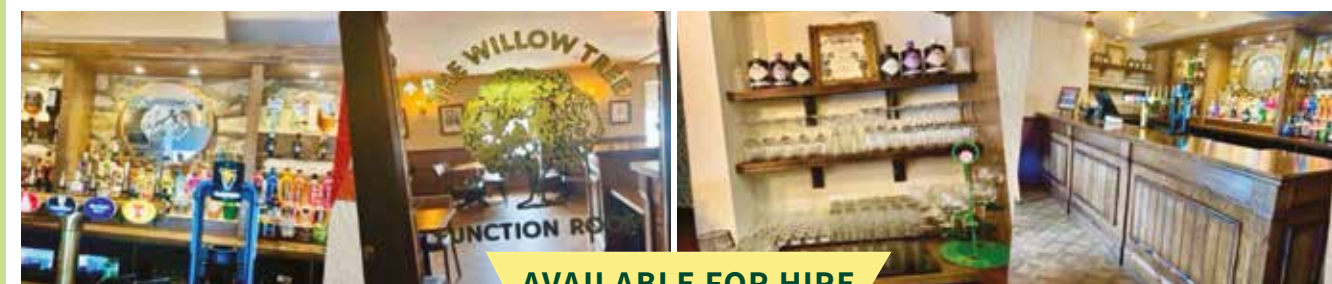
welcome@lbt.scot



TOGETHER WE PROTECT, ENHANCE AND CELEBRATE LINLITHGOW
for today and for future generations



Be part of something that lasts.



AVAILABLE FOR HIRE

The Willow Tree Live Entertainment



Friday 8-late
28th August - Jamming with Acoustic Bruce

Saturday 9-late
22nd August - Francesca Gray
29th August - Gerry's Karaoke
5th September - Angela Minty
12th September - Kris Blak
19th September - Banksy
26th September - Gerry's Karaoke

Sunday 5-8pm
30th August - Will Treeby

The Willow Tree Function Suite Available For Hire



Far From The Madding Crowd Bookshop



NEW SEASON NEW AUTHORS



Far From The Madding Crowd Bookshop is welcoming an outstanding number of talented authors of both fiction and non-fiction (plus one large Gruffalo!) to Linlithgow this autumn. In fact, there are so many events happening that we've split this article into two – so look out for more in the next edition of the Black Bitch!

We start our new season with one of our favourite authors, Mairi Kidd is well-

known as a writer of historical fiction, bringing into the light the hidden lives of Scottish women. Newes of Witches is set in 17th century Highlands and examines the fallout after a young serving girl is accused of witchcraft, richly detailing the paranoia and fear that touch every part of the

community. Mairi is appearing in St Peter's Church on Wednesday 19th August at 7pm.

We're very proud to welcome Amy Abdelnoor to Linlithgow for a free event in Far From The Madding Crowd Bookshop on Monday 24th August at 6pm. Amy is a British Arab author who lived in the occupied West Bank. Those experiences helped shape her debut novel, Ever Land, a powerful exploration of grief that sheds light on the ongoing occupation of Palestine.

Another debut is Rachel Wood, hailing from Edinburgh with a sparkling retelling of Jane Austen's beloved Emma, set in the corporate world of big tech companies. A whip smart comedy of errors with romance and hugely likeable characters at its heart, Rachel is joining us in St Peter's Church on Wednesday 26th August at 7pm.

Anna Deacon will be well-known to many as a champion for wild swimming and the healing power of being outdoors. Her latest book, Wild Fix Scotland, celebrates just that and she'll be here helping us all to find our own way on Wednesday 9th September at 7pm in St Peter's Church! Calling all cat lovers! The best-selling author of Ghost Cat and Library Cat, Alex Howard has a new book out and he's heading this way to tell us all about it! The Ship's Cat has been described as The Odyssey for felines, so join us for this epic tale on Wednesday 30th September at 7pm in St Peter's Church!

And finally, a reminder that both Ian Rankin and the Gruffalo are visiting Linlithgow in the first week of October: not together, though that would be fun! Tickets are selling fast for both, so please get yours quickly to avoid disappointment!

Tickets for all our events are available in the bookshop, or online at: www.maddingcrowdlinlithgow.com



ALLOTMENT IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

LINLITHGOW AND DISTRICT ALLOTMENT SOCIETY



This summer has produced a bumper crop of fruit and vegetables. The warm weather followed by the rain at the beginning of the month has been so beneficial. The weeds are also doing well! 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 their 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 - 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 August

> 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.

> Harvest fruit e.g. apples, pears and plums as well as autumn raspberries.



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

Val Corry
Chair LADAS



IMPORTANT NOTICE: There is a waiting list for plots. Please contact us using the CONTACT US page on our website.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO [SUBSCRIBE](#) AND CONTRIBUTE TO SUPPORT FOR YOUR COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

THE BATTLE OF LINLITHGOW BRIDGE 1526

How do you re-enact a battle in which thousands died with hundreds of spectators watching your every move?

Arran Johnston has the answer. As well as being Director of the Scottish Battlefields Trust he is also a member of the Lothian Levy re-enactment society and the organiser of a dramatic recreation of the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge this September.

These free, ticketed events will be a real highlight of the Battle 500 commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge, supported by the Linlithgow Burgh Trust, Alan Steel Asset Management Ltd and Far From The Madding Crowd Bookshop, alongside two multi-media presentations at St Michael's Parish Church created by Bruce Jamieson and Bill Stevenson on 4 (the actual date of the battle) and 5 September.

BATTLE
LINLITHGOW BRIDGE 1526

Arran said: "The big difference is that we are not actually trying to kill each other, although we will be keeping the public a safe distance from the fighting."

"But we do want people to get close to the soldiers and their weaponry - closer than in a museum."

All the re-enactors are members of societies from across the UK who take their preparation extremely seriously. Arran added: "They are also trained to make sure we have the same number at the end as we did at the start."

The battledress is made immaculately, using historical sources and museums as part of extensive research.

Wool and linen form the basis of most clothing, as well as some of the armour. Arran said: **"It is not only the look and shape of the garments, it is what they are made of."**

He added that it was a **"colourful, vibrant time on the battlefield"** and badges and banners will also be faithfully reproduced.

The weaponry such as pikes will be faithful replicas of those used 500 years ago. There will also be two cannon. These were the new technologies of the time, and still exciting to see and hear in action.

The Linlithgow Players will also be performing their playlet, While The Battle's At The Brig, and Harry Millar of the Linlithgow Angling Club will be on hand to offer guided walks around the extended battlefield site.

During the day there will also be a time for reflection, remembering the thousands who died in the battle. Arran said: **"It is important to remember that although history is fascinating there were many killed and their honour should be respected."**

Attendance at these exciting re-enactments is free, but tickets must be pre-booked via Far From The Madding Crowd's event website: www.maddingcrowdlinlithgow.com

***Please note that parking for the battle re-enactment is at Linlithgow Academy, except for blue badge holders.**



Arran Johnston has organised re-enactments of many battles but is particularly excited about the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge.

He said: **"It is not very often we get to re-enact this period of history. We will bring elements of 1526 to life - it is going to be colourful, bright, and a little gruesome as well."**

"You will be able to see the soldiers and how they dressed and lived before battle commences. This means heraldic banners, equipment, armour and weaponry."

The old maxim that an Army marches on its stomach will also be shown by the forces of the Earl of Arran and the Earl of Lennox. Medieval encampments will be erected with authentic food - from basic vegetable soups for the lower ranks to roast beef for the higher echelons.

And there will be command tents in place where the public can go and see commanders planning their battle approach and tactics.

Each day will end with a full re-enactment - without death and injury of course - but with all the other components in place.



For two days, on September 5 and 6, a field outside Xcite Leisure centre will reverberate to the sound of pikes clashing, soldiers brawling, and the thunder of cannon.

LINLITHGOW FAMILY'S DIRECT LINK TO EVENTS IN 1526

The name of one of the protagonists in the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge rang a bell.

The Earl of Angus, victor in the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge in September 1526, had featured in a story embedded in my family history, but I had not made the connection until the planning for commemorative events on the Battle started featuring in the Black Bitch Magazine.

Through my maternal line, I'm descended from the Horsburgh family, who originated from Northumberland and settled in the area around Peeblesshire. The family seat was the Barony of Horsburgh and Nether Horsburgh near Innerleithen. Alexander 'Baron' Horsburgh (1555-1620) was High Sheriff of Peeblesshire.

The Battle of Linlithgow Bridge was one of a series of battles fought around the rights to the guardianship of the young King James V; who had ascended to the throne as an infant after his father King James IV was killed in the Battle of Flodden in 1513.

Whosoever was guardian to the King, effectively ruled the country and whilst the guardianship was supposed to be held in rotation, The Earl of Angus (one of the Douglas clan) simply refused to hand the guardianship over when his turn was up, sparking more of the internal

squabbling and feuding which has dogged civic Scotland through history, from its formation to arguably the present day.

Throughout Scotland there were various attempts to wrest control of the young King from the Douglas hands, and history records that an earlier attempt in 1526 was made when, in July of that year, the King travelled through Peeblesshire and the Border country on the way back to Edinburgh from administering a justice ayre in Jedburgh.

It was as they approached Melrose that my ancestor Alexander Horsburgh (1478-1527) joined with hundreds of others, and led by Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch, to intercept the young King's party. The King himself had requested the intervention; keen as he was to become free of the Douglas's control - as he was later to achieve in 1528.

However, as at Linlithgow Bridge later in that year, Scott's forces were beaten off, and Alexander was not only imprisoned but was one of a number accused of murdering one of the Douglas supporters, called Andrew Kerr, at the Battle of Darnick Moor. Fortunately, Alexander was pardoned before he died the following year. The battle of Darnick Moor marked the first serious attempt by King James to free himself from the confines of his enforced guardianship.

This connection with Battle 500 is one of a number of reminders accompanying my family history research that our ancestors were not just affected by history, but

also, in many cases, active participants in making it.

Further descendants of Alexander Horsburgh seem to have done reasonably well. His grandson Alexander (1532-1603) was to end up married into the Stewarts in 1553, thus linking the author with the former High Steward of Scotland at the time of the Battle of Falkirk - but that's another story.

Alexander's great great grandson William Horsburgh (1632-1682) was a supporter of Charles II and was a member of the Restoration Scots Parliament in 1660. However, by then, the Barony of Horsburgh and Nether Horsburgh had been mortgaged to the Stewarts for 36000 merks in 1617.

Subsequent Horsburgh descendants of various trades and professions hung around East and Midlothian in places such as Innerleithen, West Linton, Lasswade, Bonnyrigg and Loanhead until a David Horsburgh (a stonemason) married a Sarah McQueen, from Dundee. Their daughter, Sarah, was my great grandmother.

Those familiar with bus services around West Lothian will be familiar with the Horsburgh surname. I have no doubt that that branch shares origins with my own, but not directly through my maternal line. Anyone connected with them may have similar histories and recollections of those who found that their ancestors were on the 'losing' side.

But who said that history was only written by the victors?

Robert Martin

The Timetable of Events

Friday, 4 September

7.00pm - James V and the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge. A multimedia presentation in St Michael's Parish Church created by Bruce Jamieson and Bill Stevenson featuring over 160 large-scale, specially created images, live narration, recorded voices and sound effects, and live music from the Linlithgow String Orchestra. (tickets available online at www.battle500.org.uk and in person via Far From The Madding Crowd Bookshop)

Saturday, 5 September

9.00am - Free guided walk starting from the Lennox Cairn (please book your spot by emailing: harry.millar@live.co.uk)

10.00am - One day exhibition in The Hub including information on the

battlefield site and a tabletop display of the battle itself created by the Falkirk & District Wargamers Club

11.00am - Living history camps open (event arena at Xcite)

11.30am - Drill practice (at camps of both Earls of Arran and Lennox)

11.30am - Free guided walk starting from the Lennox Cairn (please book your spot by emailing: harry.millar@live.co.uk)

12.00 noon - Negotiations and battle plans (at Arran's camp)

12.30pm - Kit and clothing talk (at Lennox's camp)

1.00pm - Infantry display

2.00pm - Firepower display

2.30pm - Playlet, While The Battle's at the Brig, performed by the Linlithgow Players

3.00pm - Full re-enactment of the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge

4.00pm - Camps close

7.00pm - James V and the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge. A multimedia presentation in St Michael's Parish Church created by Bruce Jamieson and Bill Stevenson featuring over 160 large-scale, specially created images, live narration, recorded voices and sound effects, and live music from the Linlithgow String Orchestra. (tickets available online at www.battle500.org.uk and in person via Far From The Madding Crowd Bookshop)

Sunday, 6 September

As for Saturday, except for an additional guided walk at 2.00pm and the tabletop display of the battle created by The Falkirk & District Wargamers Club will be on display at the battle re-enactment at Xcite Linlithgow. **Please note, there will be no multimedia presentation on this day.**

A special Battle 500 treat for beer drinkers ...

Join us in commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge by sampling our specially brewed 'Pikestaff' ale, created locally by the Strangers Brewing Company of Narrowboat Farm, Linlithgow. It is a traditional Scottish ale, with an ABV (alcohol by volume) of around 4.2%, with malt flavours, heather and elderflower in the recipe to give it a 16th century character. It is similar to an 80-shilling beer, but lighter in colour.



The Pikestaff beer is available in an attractive cardboard carrying case, containing two 500ml bottles and a commemorative glass chalice, at a cost of just £20. Come along to our stalls at the Battle Re-enactment event and monthly Artisan Markets at The Vennel, Linlithgow and buy a pack or two for use as gifts, or simply to give yourself a well-earned treat!

Events Programmes

These souvenir programmes will be available at our stalls and main events, at a cost of £2.



Other Battle 500 Merchandise available ...

We are also selling an attractive range of Battle 500 merchandise (T-shirts, hoodies, tote bags, mugs, stickers and pouches), to raise funds and to allow you to show your support for the Battle 500 project! These custom-made products are available only via our website: www.battle500.org.uk



All proceeds from the sale of the beer and other Battle 500 merchandise will be devoted to the Battle 500 project, administered by Linlithgow Burgh Trust.

THE BATTLEWOOD - Be a part of the legacy of Battle 500, sponsor a tree to be planted in the Battle Wood, located near Xcite Linlithgow. The trees will be supplied and planted later this year by local nursery, Darroch Nurseries. If you sponsor a tree, your name will appear on an interpretation board at the wood, as a lasting memory. Every year, around 4 September, supervised maintenance of the Battle Wood will take place. For information on how to get involved, please visit our website: www.battle500.org.uk

YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO SPONSOR/SUBSCRIBE TO THE BURGH TRUST'S NEW BOOK: 'THE BATTLE OF LINLITHGOW BRIDGE'

The Battle of Linlithgow Bridge took place on 4 September 1526. As part of the preparations for the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of this battle, Linlithgow Burgh Trust will be producing a special souvenir book detailing why the battle took place, what happened on the battlefield and its aftermath.

The generously illustrated book will also include sections on the battle's impact on the local community, changes to the landscape since the battle and the planned commemorative events, while a present-day walking route will be described.

The book will be created by Ron Smith, convenor of Burgh Beautiful (who has already produced several local books for the Burgh Trust), with the co-operation of other authors, principally Jon Cooper who is a recognised authority on the subject.

All interested are invited to sponsor or subscribe to the new book. If you order in advance, your name can be listed in the book. There are 3 categories of support for this fund-raising venture:

1. As a **subscriber**, at a cost of £15 per copy **OR**
2. As a **private sponsor**, costing £75 for 5 copies **OR**
3. As a **corporate sponsor**, at a cost of £300 for 20 copies.



How to Order

You can order online by emailing bbl.chair@bt.scot and listing the following details:

1. Name and address (for delivery)
2. Whether you want to be a subscriber, a private sponsor or a corporate sponsor
3. How many copies of the book you require
4. How much you have paid by bank transfer to **Linlithgow Burgh Trust** (Account Number **16008960** and Sort Code **80-22-60**, using the Reference **BATTLE BOOK**)
5. How you want your name(s), or those of others receiving a gift, to be printed, eg 'John & Mary Brown, Linlithgow' or the name of your business.

If you are unable to order online, please phone 01506 670758 with the above details.

In order to guarantee the inclusion of your selected names(s) in the book, all orders must be received no later than 5pm on Monday, 7 September 2026.

All support for the publication of this book will be very much appreciated, and all proceeds will be devoted to the commemoration of the battle.

Linlithgow Burgh Trust is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, no SC047211.



The pupils of Linlithgow Primary School have had a fantastic time learning about the **Battle of Linlithgow Bridge** and participating in a range of exciting activities around this topic!



Some quotes from the pupils in P1B:

'The Battle of Linlithgow Bridge was five hundred years ago. King James V was a prisoner.' *Struan*

'King James V was only fourteen. His stepdad held him as a prisoner. There was a big battle at Linlithgow Bridge and Lennox was killed.' *Georgia*

'King James V escaped when he was sixteen and he sent his stepdad to England.' *Murray P*

'They had fancy parties in Linlithgow Palace.' *Maisie*

P2A have really enjoyed learning all about the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge. We loved our trip to the Linlithgow museum, hearing stories about the battle and creating our own family shields. We also went to Linlithgow



Palace and enjoyed exploring all the places where kings and queens

lived. We imagined ourselves as kings and queens and what we would do if we lived in a palace - it was so much fun!

Primary 2B have also been busy learning about Scottish Kings and Queens. We loved our trip to Linlithgow Museum where we spent time learning about the battle, creating our own family shields and taking part in a scavenger hunt which allowed us to explore many different artefacts. We then went for a visit



LINLITHGOW PS BIG BLETHER.

Exploring the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge



to Linlithgow Palace and we were surprised to see so many rooms!!



P3 have thoroughly enjoyed learning about the key events leading up to and taking place during the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge. We developed an understanding of what a monarchy is and explored this by designing ourselves as a king or queen during the time of King James. We also created drawings to illustrate where the battle took place and to show the different groups involved. In addition, we strengthened our information-finding skills by researching and reading about the battle.

P4 have enjoyed learning about the different kings and queen in Scottish history. We have loved researching different monarchs and their life events; we displayed this learning in a fact file. We also had fun creating an accurate role play of the main events of the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge, making sure to include both sides in the battle.

Battle 500, a poetic version, written by Quinn Duffy, P5B

Two strong armies, big and small, Came together, but who would fall? Arran and Lennox, two big names, Ready to have some fun and games.

Pikes in hand, the men walked more, Ready to settle a massive score, The noise of the armies, ready to fight, It was a very frightening sight.

The water beside, flowed rapid and fast, Many men did not make it past, Lennox's army, the biggest of all, They were poked and prodded, doomed to fall.

The boy was not saved, hope was lost, The deadly battle came at a cost, Margaret Tudor did not succeed, While the Earl of Angus did indeed.

We enjoyed learning about life in the 1500's. We learned about the differences between living conditions for poor and rich people. Poor people lived in small stone cottages with thatched roofs whereas the rich



people lived in giant stone castles with maids and servants to help them do chores. There was no electricity and they ate food that

they could grow or catch, such as fish or pheasants. Children had to fetch firewood and help look after the animals. *Reported by Amy and Finlay, P6A*



From heraldic shields to our own re-enactment - our favourite thing! - There has been a lot of learning about Battle 500 in P6B this term.

We created trading cards about the Earl of Lennox and the earl of Arran and made collages using a range of different materials to represent features of the battle.

Reported by Maisie, Nairn and Isabelle, P6B



P7A used the Battle 500 website to complete research into different aspects of the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge.

We created a shared planning sheet and wrote our own information texts about the event. We also created puppet people to represent the key figures involved, including links to England and France.



P7B had fun creating 'exclusive' magazine interview pages on the important historical figures involved in the

Battle of Linlithgow Bridge. We chose between Archibald Douglas the 6th Earl of Angus, Matthew Stewart, the 4th Earl of Lennox, James Hamilton the 1st Earl of Arran, Queen Margaret Tudor and James V. *Reported by Ben Paine, P7B*

Created by our reporters from our Novel Navigator Pupil Leadership Team.



The New Well Linlithgow

Community grows through connection

Summer has been a wonderful opportunity to meet people across Linlithgow. It was a privilege to be part of both the Linlithgow Riding of the Marches and Canal Fun Day, where we enjoyed many conversations with local residents, families and visitors. Thank you to everyone who stopped by our stand to say hello, ask about our services or simply share a chat. Days like these remind us how much people value belonging and community.

Upcoming Event Evening with Ben Couper

This autumn we're delighted to welcome professional violinist **Ben Couper** to The New Well. Ben is Head of Music at Driffield School in Yorkshire and has spent the past year touring the UK with a concert programme that combines outstanding live music with themes of hope, resilience and wellbeing. It promises to be a memorable evening, and we're looking forward to welcoming both familiar faces and those visiting The New Well for the first time. More information, including booking details, will be available on our Facebook page and website.

Every conversation, every service and every volunteer is part of one purpose:



helping build a community where people can live in hope and connection. Whether through professional counselling, helping someone back into work, or creating spaces where people can meet over a coffee, we're creating opportunities for people to find support, friendship and a renewed sense of hope.

If you'd like to find out more, use one of our services or discover how you can partner with The New Well, simply scan the QR code below.

Matthew Cunningham



Are you doing your bit?

This question was enough to drive us on at YOUTHSPEACE this summer to make a small but significant (in our eyes, anyway) difference to Linlithgow. For years we have been blessed to share such a wonderful part of Linlithgow with our neighbours at The Vennel, and while we have done occasional things throughout the years to support the upkeep of the area, we decided this year to make a concerted effort with our young people to tidy up the area to give it a simple but effective lift for us, our neighbours, and for anyone passing through.

We started the summer by linking in with Burgh Beautiful who were kind enough to share their litter picking equipment. With this, we covered The Vennel area; down alongside the Loch to the Water Yett car park, around the whole car park and play park area and back; and also the grass areas surrounding The Vennel flats. This was supported by our wonderful youth volunteers who were delighted to be able to get stuck in and do their bit to improve the look and feel of their space. Like we say, simple but effective.

We then progressed through the weeks



by doing some clean-up gardening around The Vennel space that we share now with the Banking Hub and Cut 17 Barbers. Linlithgow Community Development Trust Tool Library were willing partners in this venture, offering up garden equipment for us to use. The youth volunteers were out with the spades, hoes, and brushes to clear away months of buildup of leaves, weeds, and general dirt. The effort put in on these super hot days was admirable and it was lovely having neighbours pass by and hearing them offering thanks and appreciation for these efforts, the young people felt great afterwards for the difference they were able to make.

By the end of this program of work, we had worked for approximately 5 hours across all the sessions, which is not very much time at all, but this is just what the

aim was – to do our bit, nothing grand, simply putting in a few hours of work to improve things for ourselves and our neighbours. As a group, our young people asked the question

– what would happen if everybody just did their little bit? And this was a great question, because it led to interesting discussions, with ideas coming from the young people to encourage others just to do a little bit occasionally and feel the pride in having made a difference for others. It also led to honest discussions around whether we truly have done our bit over the years, and if there is more we could do, but what was lovely was that the group felt it isn't worth getting bogged down in 'they should do more/they don't do enough' discussions, instead they were just keen for people to feel pleased with what is done, and hope that it could possibly inspire others to get out and do their bit.

So we will go back to that question from the beginning, and ask – are you doing your bit?

ROOTED IN COMMUNITY: HOW BURGH BEAUTIFUL FITS ANY LIFESTYLE (AND HOW YOU CAN JOIN US!)

Ever wondered how Linlithgow stays so blooming vibrant? The secret isn't an army of full-time horticulturists!! it's a friendly, diverse group of local volunteers giving whatever time they can!

From working parents to retirees, Burgh Beautiful relies on people from all walks of life. Whether you want to dig for an hour a week, share professional skills, or lend a hand at events, there's a place for everyone. We sat down with three volunteers to chat community spirit and what volunteering really looks like.

Crawford Flint: Deep Roots and Great Craic
Crawford's family history in Linlithgow goes back generations (his Great-Great-Grandfather lived at 36 High St!). After 32 years in the electrical wholesale industry, he retired in 2019 and swapped office desks for digging tools.

How do you fit volunteering into your life? "We do about an hour on a Tuesday at the Serpentine bed (whoever can make it, there's no pressure!), and we often go for a coffee afterwards! We also take turns on a rota for watering. If it's dry, it's a quick task every couple of days. Even when health and mobility issues slowed me down a bit, I brought my mobility scooter along to offer moral support, lend a hand, and head to the café. Now that I'm feeling better, I'm fully back at the Serpentine bed. It's never onerous, and it's very flexible."

What do you get out of being involved? "The team of volunteers are great fun and really committed to making the beds look good. We also love the positive comments from locals and visitors while we work. It makes it all worthwhile!"

Margaret Harrison: From Science Labs to Wildflower Slopes
With a background in bacteriology, Margaret spent her career working in hospital and medical diagnostic labs. A lifelong lover of nature, she joined Burgh Beautiful after chatting with fellow locals on the High Street.

What's your role with Burgh Beautiful? "I sit on the committee and help manage projects like tree planting, monitoring our bird boxes, and maintaining our wildflower slope near Xcite. I also look after two beds – one seasonal and one permanent."

How much time does it actually take? "Aside from bi-monthly committee meetings, I spend an afternoon planting when the summer and winter displays arrive, and then maybe an hour a week watering and weeding. The permanent beds largely look after themselves! Every little bit of time counts."

What's the best part of being on the team?

"In my ten years with BB, I've helped plant new trees on the High Street, develop Rosemount Park arboretum, and plant community woods. Under great leadership, we really feel like we make a tangible difference to our town."

Kristen Hunter: Tech Skills, Girl Power, and Flexibility
Kristen is a mum of two young girls and manages software development for NHS Scotland health and social care systems. Originally from South Africa, she brings both a love of green spaces and digital skills to the team.

What's your main job with the group? "Like Margaret, I sit on the committee where I help with strategic planning and tech advice. Day-to-day, I manage our Facebook page and write articles for local publications... showing that you don't even need to hold a trowel to make a big impact!"

How do you balance volunteering with a job and young family? "I manage to fit social media, committee duties, and writing around work and family life... just! The group is wonderfully supportive, when I can do more, I do, and when I need to scale things back, I'm vocal about it. I also jump in on fun ad-hoc events like the Inviting Gardens and the annual Plant Sale."

Why do you love being part of BB? "I love the PEOPLE and the CAUSE. Linlithgow would be unrecognisable if it wasn't down to all the individuals who give up their time to support this fabulous group."

Ready to lend a hand? You don't need a green thumb or endless free hours to make a difference. We'd love to welcome you!

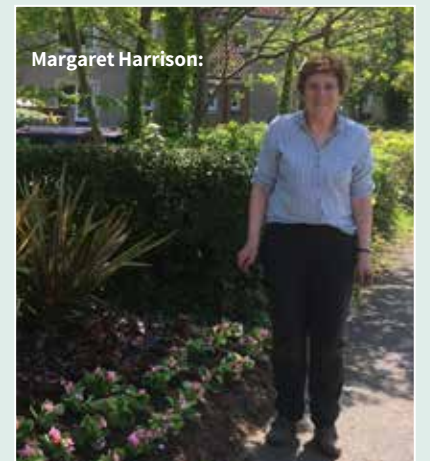
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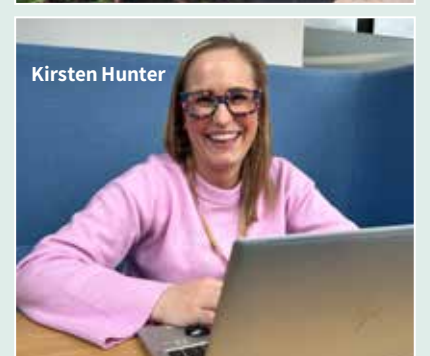
Kristen Burdett



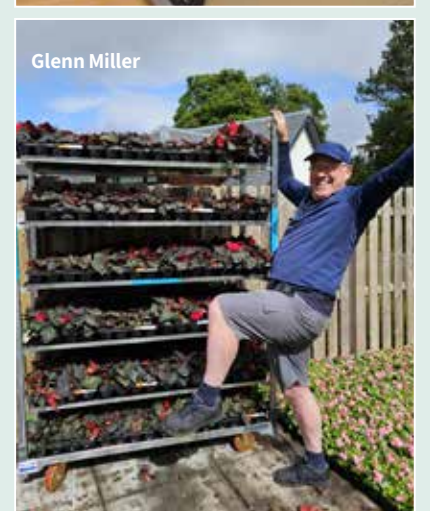
Margaret Harrison:



Kirsten Hunter



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LINLITHGOW LADIES' CHOIR



We have been asked “Whatever happened to The Linlithgow Ladies’ Choir May concert?” The short answer is it will be in September this year (at 4pm on Saturday 12th September at St Michael’s Parish Church, Linlithgow, since you ask, tickets on the door £10 for adults, children free)

The longer answer for the delay is the story of some hard work, great guidance from our Musical Director, Kirsty Ball and loads of fun singing.

The Choir has been extremely busy during the first part of the year leading up to three major singing events in March.

First up was the Choir taking part in the Edinburgh Music Competition, an annual competition for amateur choirs and ensembles held in St Cuthbert’s Church, Edinburgh. Here the full choir sang in one class while the newly formed Linlithgow Ladies’ Lower Voices’ Choir sang in another. We were excited to participate for the first time in this competition and delighted with the judges positive feedback. Despite tough competition, the Linlithgow Ladies Choir was placed first in their class.

Our second March event was in Glasgow. Last year members of the choir were invited to sing in a performance of Holst’s the Planets with the Scottish Sinfonia. This year we were

asked to reprise this performance which we performed with the Glasgow Orchestra Society.

Our third performance was local.

Bill Jones asked if the choir would join the Linlithgow String Orchestra and various other local musical groups in a performance of excerpts of Handel’s Messiah. This was an amazing experience, with St Michael’s Parish Church full to capacity, the standard of the musicians and soloists was exceptional, and the audience enjoyed the performance enormously. It was an excellent start to Easter Week.

After our Easter break, it was straight into rehearsals to prepare for our next musical outing as we once more sang with the Scottish Sinfonia. This time we sang in the little known but beautiful Faure’s Caligula at St Cuthberts in Edinburgh. It was great to sing with the orchestra and was well received.

Little wonder we had no time for our usual May concert. However, we have good news....

The Linlithgow Ladies’ Choir are holding their next concert on Saturday 12th September at St Michael’s Parish Church Linlithgow. Tickets will be available at the door (adults £10, children free). At the concert we will be singing a mixture of popular and Scottish songs. We do hope you will come along and experience our singing.

The Linlithgow Ladies Choir is a community-based choir; open to all who would like to come and sing with us. We hold our rehearsals on Monday evenings from 7pm - 9pm, led by our inspirational conductor, **Kirsty Ball**. Rehearsal starts with a vocal warm up and then we work on music for future concerts. We sing in four parts - alto1 and 2 and soprano 1 and 2. sections. We perform a mixture of music styles from pop to classical, musicals to Scottish folk tunes. Accompaniment is provided by our pianist, **Hilary Crichton**, and at times members also add in flute and percussion.

There is no audition. Some of our singers can read music, but not all, some pick songs up as if in the shower with the radio on! The choir is sociable, fun and very rewarding, friendships grow and we support each other through life events. If you think you would like to join or find out more about the Linlithgow Ladies Choir please contact: **membership_sec@linlithgowladieschoir.co.uk**

Don’t forget how much we look forward to seeing you at our next musical offering – at our concert on the 12th September at 4pm at St Michael’s Parish Church, Linlithgow.



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MEG WALLACE LOCAL ARTIST

EXHIBITION AT
BURGH HALLS
19 / 20 SEPTEMBER



The story of Meg Wallace's life as an artist only began six years ago but her iconic pastel images of Linlithgow have already become an intrinsic part of the very fabric of our town.

Meg has lived in Linlithgow for 35 years and a much anticipated exhibition of her work will take place over the weekend of 19th / 20th September when 80 framed signed Giclée (digital inkjet) prints will be on display in the Burgh Halls (Baillie Hardie Hall).

I recently sat down with Meg when she shared her thoughts on what has become a new and fascinating chapter in her life.

A CHANGE OF DIRECTION

'Six years ago I left my office job (Insurance and Banking) and was given a set of pastel pencils. Drawing has always been a hobby and I started sketching Linlithgow right through COVID times. It was a kind of mindfulness. I started a project to draw all corners of our amazing town - local scenery, buildings, community events, sports and hobbies and loch birdlife. Pastels is a very forgiving medium - brush off, redraw, blend, mix - literally anyone can do it.'

It all began one Christmas eve at St. Michael's Parish Church, then a heron, Scotch hop, Avon viaduct, Canal, Pipers at the Marches, sledging at the Palace, fishing on the loch. Soon I had 12 pictures and thought about a calendar. I put the images on the internet and they seemed to be popular. In blind faith I got calendars made by a local printer (JMK) and if they didn't sell they would be family presents!

I set up an Etsy shop and website. Customers could purchase online and I was able to hand deliver. I was approached by Mannerstons, Post Office, A Wee Mindin, Lilypond Crafts and the Museum. Then mugs, coasters, cards, colouring books, prints, key rings and jigsaws.

The town scene jigsaw was a real learning curve. I researched a UK manufacturer and the first one sold out. The second was a collage of 9 Linlithgow scenes. When that sold out the third one was birdlife on the loch.

It grew and grew and now my Linlithgow artwork is sent all over the world - Europe, USA, South America and Australia - often to people who have moved abroad from the town but find the illustrations a nostalgic reminder of 'home'. Feedback from abroad is people want to visit the town when in Scotland. I love the idea of Linlithgow being on walls in far flung countries.'

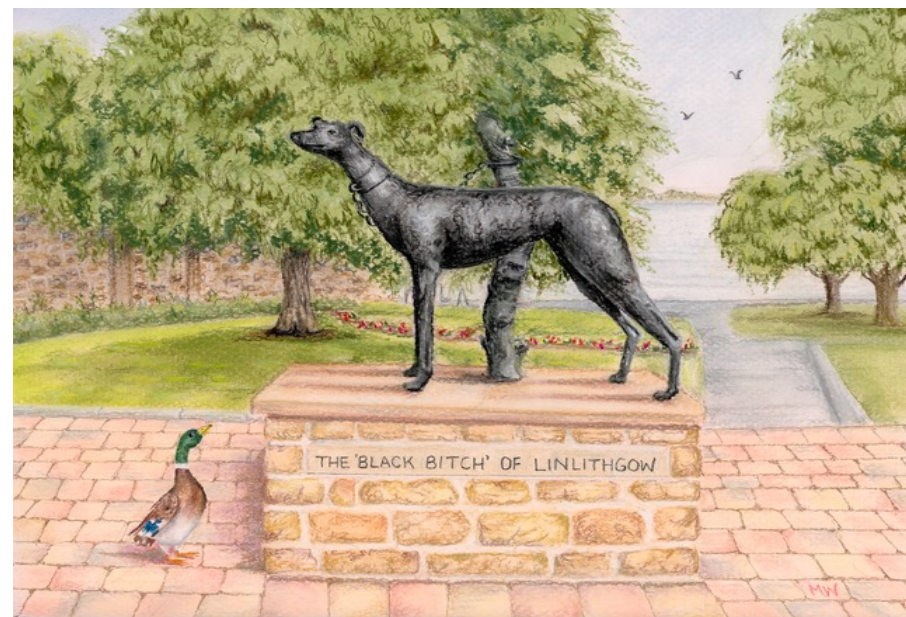
RUNNING A BUSINESS (From home on the east side of Linlithgow)

'The new venture brought an increase in confidence, working my own hours, meeting new people (with interesting stories and suggestions), managing my own week and getting involved in the community. I learned price margins, pitfalls, sourcing materials and advertising.'

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



Meg's artwork is fantastic but she remains very humble in respect of all that she has achieved in quite a short space of time. During our conversation, Meg's passion for our town and our community was obvious and her commitment has

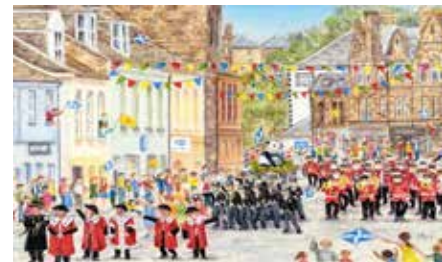


been wide ranging with work with local schools (Meg's three sons went to local schools), fundraising for local charities, senior art classes, church commissions and talks to groups, guilds and institutes.

Meg concluded with a heartfelt and profound reflection -

'Some people say my style is nostalgic, but it's how I see Linlithgow. I aim to bring the warmth and beauty of Linlithgow and community to paper. This has allowed me to develop into the artist I always wanted to be.'

SEPTEMBER EXHIBITION



Things are coming together nicely for the exhibition. Meg has chosen the Burgh Halls due to the accessible and central nature of the beautiful location overlooking the scenes which she draws. In addition to the main feature of artwork, there will be a table for locals to contribute their own memories of the town if they wish, and a children's colouring and drawing table, with their own gallery corner. Hopefully something for everyone.

The hours of the exhibition are:
Saturday 10am-5pm / Sunday 10am-4pm

www.megwallaceart.co.uk /
Email - meg@megwallaceart.co.uk /
Instagram - @megwallaceart

Ronald Hunter

THE NAMES FLORENCE KNAPP

"The Names" is an interestingly written novel which explores how a name can

change the shape of a person's life in the way that they see themselves, and also in the way that others relate to them.

The novel tells the story of a family over the course of one generation. We join the family as they welcome the arrival of a new baby, a son, into their lives. Cora - the mother - and Gordon -

the father - live in Australia with their daughter Maia.

The outset of the novel appears simple. Cora travels to the registry office with her nine-year old daughter Maia to name her new baby son. As she journeys to the registry office, she explores three possibilities in her mind for his name:

Gordon - following with her husband's family and their tradition

Julian - her own personal first choice of name

Bear - the name that Maia has thrown into the melting pot of discussion.

It is at this point the novel divides, as Knapp explores the parallel yet very different lives the baby would lead should he be named one of these choices. We move through the novel with the family, jumping into the life of the child at pivotal stages of his life, moving with him as he journeys from childhood into adulthood, showing what would happen if he were to be named Gordon, Julian or Bear.

"Yes, people's lives bump and collide and we send one another spinning off in different directions. But that's life. It's not unique to you. We each make our own choices."

Strong themes of domestic abuse, family relationships and societal expectations run through the novel. We discover early in the novel that Gordon is a domestic abuser. Cora lives in fear under his shadow and is troubled by the repercussions of her actions when choosing a name for the baby, which play out differently in each of the narratives.

"And yet, in her own life, she has pretended what she knew wasn't real, because it felt too big and hard to deal with. At eighteen. And in all the years since."

The intricacy of the novel is clever. This is a well-written narrative which pulls the reader into different lives. While we connect with Gordon/Julian/Bear in all of his lives and

are invested in the development of his character, it is for Cora that the novel is written. She is a victim, caught in a horrifying web of abuse which marks her life in different ways depending on the trajectory. She has been glamourised into this relationship, under false impressions of a partner that has morphed into someone grotesque and is trapped there by the love for her children.

"Would she have used that time differently had she known? Sewn more quilts, read more books, gone to Venice? Found love again, she thinks, in more honest moments."

Knapp writes each life with sensitivity. The novel is well-paced and balanced between all elements of a family's life together - joy, humour, sadness - and everything in between as it is overshadowed by domestic abuse. The importance of community is explored - through wider family and friendships - creating an evocative narrative that lingers long after the final chapter.

"That maybe freedom is just about choosing the life you want. Even if that life's in one place."

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



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FROM SUMMER CAMP TO CENTRE STAGE



LAMP Camp a Summer Success

LAMP's annual summer musical theatre workshops were another resounding success this year, with all places selling out for the three-day programme. Young performers from Primary 5 to S5 enjoyed three exciting days of acting, singing and dancing in a fun, friendly and supportive environment.

The workshops were led with the help of volunteers from LAMP's adult company, who gave up their time to inspire the next generation of performers. One volunteer said,

"It's the highlight of my summer holidays! I love supporting our

young theatre stars to build confidence, develop new skills and, most importantly, have fun along the way."

LAMP Camp continues to be a fantastic opportunity for young people to build confidence, make new friends and discover a love of musical theatre.

Adult Company Returns to Rehearsals for 9 to 5: The Musical

LAMP's adult company is preparing to return to rehearsals for its upcoming production of 9 to 5: The Musical.

Based on the much-loved film and featuring an original score by the legendary Dolly Parton, this



hilarious and uplifting musical follows three determined women as they take on their egotistical boss, proving that friendship, teamwork and a little imagination can change everything. Filled with memorable songs, laugh-out-loud comedy and plenty of heart, 9 to 5 promises to be an entertaining night out for audiences of all ages.

Tickets will be on sale soon. To be among the first to hear when they are released, sign up to LAMP's mailing list at: <https://www.linlithgow-musicals.co.uk/event/9-to-5/>

SHOW DETAILS:

Dates: 20th - 24th October

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

Venue: Linlithgow Academy Theatre

Team LAMP

Photo Credit: Rebecca Holmes Photography



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We are reviewing accessibility to worship services to make sure our services are easy to attend and participate in.

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Is there anything that helps you participate that you are grateful for and might benefit others too?

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Year 2026

Tina Arnot
Laser, Light and
Skincare Specialist

SCOTTISH SKIN CARE SALON OF THE YEAR 2026 SKIN HAPPY WINS AGAIN!

I am absolutely delighted and incredibly proud to share that Skin Happy has been named **Scotland's Skin Care Salon of the Year 2026** at the Scottish Salon Awards for the second consecutive year.

To have been shortlisted alongside so many talented professionals from across Scotland was already a tremendous honour. To then hear Skin Happy announced as the winner was a truly unforgettable moment and one that I will always cherish.

For a small independent clinic in Linlithgow, being recognised as not only an award-winning salon locally and within West Lothian, but as Scotland's Skin Care Salon of the Year, is a truly special achievement.

The Oceanic, Scottish Salon Awards were created to celebrate excellence within the hair and beauty industry, recognising the dedication, professionalism and passion that independent salon owners and practitioners bring to their work every day. To receive this national recognition for a second year is something I am immensely proud of and grateful for.

While my name may be on the award, this achievement belongs just as much to the wonderful clients who have supported Skin Happy throughout the years. Many of you have trusted me with your skin health journey, recommended me to family and friends, shared your experiences through reviews, and continued to champion my small business within our community. Your loyalty, kindness and encouragement have played a huge part in making this possible.

Since opening Skin Happy in 2020, my goal has always been simple: to provide honest advice, evidence-based treatments in a welcoming environment where people feel comfortable, informed and confident in their skin. Every consultation, treatment and conversation is centred around helping clients achieve the best possible outcomes while feeling supported every step of the way.

I am so proud that Skin Happy continues to play an active role within our local community through skin health education and awareness, charitable support and partnerships with local organisations. These opportunities allow me to give something back to the community that has supported my business from the very beginning.

Winning this award for a second year motivates me even further to continue learning, developing my skills and investing in the latest technologies and education to ensure I can offer the highest standards of care to every client who walks through my door.

Thank you to everyone who has supported Skin Happy, whether you have been with me since the beginning or have only recently discovered the clinic. Your trust means more than you know, and I look forward to continuing to help our community feel healthy, confident and of course skin happy.



With sincere gratitude,

TINA ARNOT

Laser, Light and Skincare Specialist
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LINLITHGOW 10K RETURNS WITH RECORD CLUB TURNOUT AND RECORD PRIZE FUND



The countdown is on to one of West Lothian's biggest running events, with the Linlithgow 10K returning on Sunday 27 September 2026.

Organised by Linlithgow Athletic Club and supported by headline sponsor Talk to Thomsons, the popular road race is filling quickly. With fewer than 400 places remaining, runners considering taking part are being encouraged to secure their entry soon.

This year's event will also see a record turnout from the host club, with nearly 100 Linlithgow Athletic Club members preparing to take their place on the start line.

The 2026 race will feature an enhanced prize structure. The first male and female finishers will each receive £500, with cash prizes extending through the first five senior finishers and across master's categories from V40 to V80. Male and female team prizes will also be awarded.

There is an added incentive for the fastest runners, with £1,000 included within the prize fund for new course records, £500 for male and £500 for female. Whether chasing a record, a podium place, a personal best or simply the satisfaction of completing one of Scotland's most atmospheric town-centre races, there will be plenty to run for.

The race will be compered by Dougie from Buena Vista Events, while LAC's head junior coach, Geoff Pendrill will lead runners through their pre-race warm-up. A team of pacers, covering finish times from 30 to 65 minutes, will help participants pursue their individual goals.

Runners can also expect plenty of encouragement around the route, including the unmistakable sound of a piper on the course, before returning to a lively finish in the heart of Linlithgow,

Every finisher will receive a 2026 race T-shirt, water, a banana and a Tunnock's Caramel Wafer. New for this year, runners will also receive a LAC 10k buff, specially designed by KCF Creative. Reflecting the colours of the 2026 race T-shirt, the buff will feature the logos of Talk to Thomsons and Linlithgow Athletic Club, together with a selection of familiar Linlithgow icons. It will provide runners with a practical and distinctive memento of race day. Ideal for keeping warm during the cooler months.

With a famously supportive atmosphere, historic surroundings and a field ranging from elite competitors to first-time 10K runners, the Linlithgow 10K promises another memorable afternoon of sport and community spirit.

Only 400 spaces remain, so runners are encouraged to enter soon to avoid missing out.

Scan the QR Code to Entry Central.
Mel Pendrill



Important road and parking restrictions

To allow the event to take place safely, temporary parking restrictions and road closures will operate in Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge on Sunday 27 September.

Parking will be restricted from 9.30am until 5.30pm on: **the north side of the A803 Main Street and Falkirk Road, between Mill Road and St Ninian's Road; and both sides of Mill Road,**

between Main Street and Avalon Gardens.

The following temporary road closures will also apply:

Mill Road, between the A706 and Main Street: 2pm-3pm

St Ninian's Road, between the High Street and Mill Road: 2pm-3.45pm

Bonnytown Road, between its eastern and western junctions with the A803: 2pm-4.30pm

High Street, between Blackness Road and St Ninian's Road: 2pm-2.45pm

The Cross, from the Kirkgate junction eastwards for approximately 25 metres.

A signed diversion will operate for St Ninian's Road via the High Street, Blackness Road, the A904, Grahamsdyke Road and Linlithgow Road. No formal diversion route is listed for Mill Road, Bonnytown Road or the High Street.

Residents, visitors and businesses are thanked in advance for their patience and support while the event takes place.

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PAUL ROLFE

HOUSING MARKET COMMENTARY | AUGUST 2026

Paul Rolfe
SALES AND LETTING

“A QUIETER SUMMER THAN MANY ANTICIPATED”

The UK housing market has experienced a quieter summer than many anticipated, with newly listed properties seeing an average asking price reduction of 1.0% (£3,832) in July, bringing the national average to £372,359. This is a notably steeper decline than the average July reduction of 0.2% seen over the past decade.

While summer traditionally brings a seasonal slowdown, this year has been influenced by a combination of factors including holiday travel, the World Cup, unusually hot weather and ongoing political and economic uncertainty.

Supply Remains Strong Despite Softer Demand

The number of homes available for sale remains close to a 12-year high for the time of year, although total stock levels are now around 1% below those recorded at the same point last year.

Buyer demand has softened compared with 2025, with activity levels remaining below last year's figures. Mortgage rate increases during the first half of the year, following geopolitical tensions and the conflict in Iran, have undoubtedly affected affordability and confidence for some would-be purchasers.

Sales Activity Shows Market Resilience

Despite the challenges, the market continues to demonstrate resilience.

The number of agreed sales during the first six months of 2026 was 6% lower than the same period in 2025, but broadly in line with activity levels seen in 2024. This suggests that well-presented, correctly priced properties continue to attract buyers when they meet both lifestyle needs and budget expectations.

Pricing Correctly Remains Critical

One of the clearest messages from current market data is the importance of getting the asking price right from the outset.

Analysis of properties sold so far in 2026 shows that almost three-quarters achieved a sale without requiring a price reduction. In contrast, homes that needed a reduction spent an average of 127 days on the market, compared with just 36 days for properties that sold at their original asking price.

In a market where buyers have greater choice, testing the market with an optimistic asking price can prove costly. Sellers who launch at a realistic and competitive level are typically rewarded with stronger interest and quicker sales.

Mortgage Rates and Affordability

Mortgage rates remain a significant factor influencing market confidence.

The average two-year fixed-rate mortgage currently stands at 4.92%. While this is higher than the 4.25% recorded before the conflict in Iran began, it does represent a slight

improvement from last month's average of 5.08%.

Encouragingly, competition among lenders remains strong and the wider fundamentals supporting the housing market are still in place.

Reasons for Optimism in the Second Half of 2026

Although 2026 has presented its fair share of challenges for home movers, there are positive signs for the months ahead.

Employment levels remain healthy, wage growth continues to outpace house price growth, and affordability is gradually improving. If mortgage rates continue to ease, there is every reason to expect buyer confidence to strengthen as we move towards the end of the year.

For sellers, the message remains straightforward: presentation matters, pricing matters, and properties that come to market at the right value continue to attract committed buyers even in more challenging conditions.

Local Insight:

While national trends provide useful context, every local market behaves differently. Buyers and sellers in West Lothian and surrounding areas should seek advice based on local demand, competition and recent sales activity rather than relying solely on national averages.



PETS' CORNER



This month Westport Vet's Pet of The Month is Gracie Anthony...

Hello
I'm Gracie
Anthony.



Gracie's owners are doing the right thing by changing walk routines and providing cooling items during weather changes.

Routine changes are essential to keep pets safe. If dogs require walks, early mornings and later evenings are more suitable cooler times of day, ensuring walks are kept in shaded areas and like Gracie's, shorter than usual.

Surfaces can heat up quickly during summer which are at risk of burning paw pads. Artificial grass, decking and sand are a few examples that heat to high temps extremely fast. Laying damp towels over garden surfaces can help protect paws at home.

The '5 second rule' is a simple way to test if ground surfaces are safe for your pet to walk on. Simply place the back of your hand on the ground, hold it there, count to 5 seconds - if it's too hot for your hand it will burn paws.

Having a cooling fan is great, though care should be taken that fans are bladeless, positioned out of pets reach and only used under supervision.

Cooling mats are good for some however can burst easily so caution is required. The cooling gel inside is toxic if ingested so they are not recommended for all - definitely not suitable for puppies, chewers, cats or small animals.

There are lots of ways you can help pets at home - make dog ice treats using ice lolly trays or by freezing Kongs/food items. Having a paddling pool can be a great way to keep dogs cool whilst offering mental stimulation. For example, raw carrot will sink in water if your dog enjoys a food scatter/search game. Pool water should be regularly changed and pools need to be cleaned between uses to avoid bacteria forming on the surface material. No pool - no problem! Make one with a bowl, bucket, or sink basin.

Some animals love to bask in the sunshine however owners should encourage pets to lie in shaded cooler areas.

Fresh water should be available 24/7 adding extra water sources in warm weather. Bowls should never be in direct sunlight - this causes bacteria to form and multiply which can make pets unwell.

For cats, where suitable, making routine changes more gradually can help to avoid stress.

If someone is looking after your pet when you are on holiday make sure you notify your vet in writing - who this is and if you give consent for them to bring your pet in for treatment or emergency treatment whilst under their care.

In an emergency or if you have any concerns about your pets always phone 01506 844165. The Westport Team is available 24 hours, 365 days. For enquiries please email surgery@westportvets.com



Gracie is an 11 year old Greyhound. Gracie found her forever home in Linlithgow in January 2023. She was adopted by her wonderful family when she was 8 years old from Dogs Trust West Calder.

Gracie's family describe her as lovable, affectionate and adorable! She can also be very stubborn, especially if she wants to go a certain way on her walks. She makes them smile everyday by jumping like a kangaroo when walks are mentioned!

She loves walks down by the loch and spotting 'tree snacks' (squirrels!), roaching in her bed with her Cleo Caterpillar or when she is enjoying some treats - particularly her sausages.

Her cheeky habit links to her greyhound 'cement' feet when she wants to go a certain way on her walks. She will also appear at the kitchen door - as if by magic, when the treat cupboard door opens!

She doesn't acknowledge toys very often but adores her Cleo Caterpillar, she cuddles up with it on her bed.

Her favourite place to be - her happy place, is at the peel/by the loch/rose gardens, spotting

squirrels and rabbits. (She is a bit old for walks all the way round the loch). Either that or on her bed/sofa/her owner's bed! She does also enjoy an occasional trip to a pub, particularly to Platform 3 where she is a regular!

Q. How has Gracie been coping with the recent heatwave and the thunder we've been having?

Her owner Jennifer says:

"She coped well with the warm weather but didn't quite understand why her walks were shorter/out of routine. She has a cool mat for the garden and a fan for inside. She isn't bothered by thunder at all (or fireworks)."

Q. What are you most looking forward to doing together this summer?

Owner Jennifer says:

"Gracie is going to have a little baby human sister in October so we will be getting the house ready for our new arrival. Looking forward to lots of easy going, slow paced walks and treats once her mouth is better after her dental work."





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