



Burgh Beautiful

SUPPORTED BY LINLITHGOW CIVIC TRUST

ANNUAL REVIEW 2010

2010 was a successful year for Burgh Beautiful, with a Silver Gilt award from Beautiful Scotland, but of greater importance were the positive effect on the appearance of Linlithgow and very visible achievements of Burgh Beautiful volunteers and of those working in associated groups.

The end of 2009 had been a crucial time for the campaign, the decision having been made 29 October 2009 that Burgh Beautiful campaign would remain as an integral part of Linlithgow Civic Trust. Attention was immediately focussed on fund raising, with a particularly successful Advent Fair raffle on 28 November amassing £925.91, mainly thanks to the hard work and commitment of Liz Burrows.

Summer and Winter Planting

General themes for plant types and colours for summer planting were agreed with West Lothian Council at the outset (the general adoption of these themes by both the Council and Burgh Beautiful seemed to be generally considered a success, with the Beautiful Scotland judges later making favourable comment that the strategy had 'paid off'). A register of all significant planted areas in the town, identifying maintenance responsibility, was compiled (and will be updated shortly).



Burgh Beautiful's 2010 plant requirements were ordered from Pentland Plants via the Council in order to achieve economies of scale. For the summer, the campaign funded the planting, installation and watering of 50 of Linlithgow's floral hanging baskets – in St Ninian's Road, the west end of the High Street and at Low Port/Blackness Road, at a finally-agreed cost of £1,250. This sponsorship was marked and publicised by logo discs between the baskets, kindly funded by Provost Tom Kerr's disbursement. Hazel Duguid made the necessary arrangements for the provision of the baskets with South Logie Nursery, and very kindly made available her garden as a

distribution point for the 4,000 bedding plants delivered by Pentland Plants in early June (photo on right). John Carswell played an important role in organising the watering of the baskets through the summer.



Planting of flowerbeds, barrels and planters was completed in mid-June, and all the displays (and maintenance of permanent planting) were a credit to the volunteers involved. Unfortunately, the town entrance barrels at the top of Preston Road suffered

from the theft of most of their newly-planted contents, but it was hoped that the subsequent publicity in the *Linlithgow Gazette* would deter a re-occurrence. On the other hand, the opportunity was taken to insert a number of surplus plants into the underused raised beds at the entrance to the Regent Centre car park, in a form of reasonably successful 'guerrilla gardening'. Tony Oxbrow was heavily involved in the landscaping and planting activities related to the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge.

Planting and maintenance of Burgh Beautiful features over the summer was undertaken as follows:

- **Liz Burrows** – Barrels and border at railway station

- **Hazel Duguid** – Beds/borders at the Regent Centre and Provost Road (both sides); heather bed at Blackness Road; herb border and other raised beds at the Health Centre (photo on right); town entrance barrels at Preston Road and Manse Road. Hazel has to be congratulated on such an outstanding contribution (and, although she has now relinquished the town entrance barrels, now being/to be planted by Shirley Smith and Sheila Ashby, she has taken on the six planters at Brae Court, and custodianship for the time being of the large planter in front of Mackays!)



- **Peter and Diane Fairweather** – Barrels at the Star & Garter (Peter and Diane are now tending the barrels near the Low Port Centre)

- **Elizabeth Gowenlock** – Barrels at Linlithgow Bridge

- **Chantal Hamill** – Shrub border at Low Port Primary School

- **Kirsty Leonard** – 'Guide' bed at The Vennel (photo on right - unfortunately the setting of this bed was ruined by ongoing pavement works all summer; accordingly it has been agreed that Girlguiding Linlithgow have half-price sponsorship of



hanging baskets for the coming year). Kirsty was also involved with planting of the containers in front of the flats near the corner with Preston Road and maintenance of planting along the frontage opposite St John's Avenue

- **Kathy Lindsay** – Barrels at The Maltings and bed at Braehead Road/Moray Drive
- **Jean Long** – Planters at The Cross
- **Diane Marchant** – Town entrance barrels at St Ninian's Road
- **Tony Oxbrow** - Town entrance barrels at Blackness Road and Lanark Road; Fairtrade bed at Kinloch View; Raised bed and planters at St Michael's Hospital
- **Myra Smith** – Bed at the Low Port Centre
- **Shirley Smith** – 'Katie Wearie' bed at West Port (photo on right)
- **Jane Sweet** – Planters at Brae Court (now being done by Hazel Duguid).

Planting of winter bedding and bulbs was undertaken from September to November, to a greater extent last year, with the Council also planting some bulbs. The Burgh Beautiful members most involved with this were Hazel Duguid, Peter and Diane Fairweather, Myra Smith, Jean Long, Shirley Smith, Liz Gowenlock, Liz Burrows and Tony Oxbrow.



Sheila Ashby and John Carswell contributed home-grown pansies and Sweet Williams respectively. Kathy Lindsay made a community event out of the planting of her tubs at The Maltings by involving the Beaver Scouts (see below). Meantime, Chantal Hamill started on the reconditioning of the shrub borders at the entrance to Low Port Primary School and we 'adopted' the big planter outside Mackays, planting it up with surplus plants from the winter hanging baskets and other plants provided by Leslie Aitken.

Good news received on 17 December was confirmation that, after all, the Council would be funding summer planting as usual for 2011. In return for us taking on all the hanging baskets, we have accepted their kind offer to pay for Burgh Beautiful's 2011 supply of summer bedding plants, worth £664.86 + VAT.

Of very great importance, and instrumental to Linlithgow's success in the Beautiful Scotland awards in 2010, are the three truly outstanding examples of residents transforming extensive areas of basic communal landscaping into gems of horticultural excellence – around the town centre flats at Water Yett and West Port. Over the past year, the planting at Water Yett, led by Eileen Murray with assistance from Tommy Peake and Joan Glover, has gone from strength to strength, the latest sculptural feature being the fairy in the photograph on the right.



Eileen and her team have, over the past few years, completely transformed the surroundings of their flats and of the areas of car parking serving the health centre and Linlithgow Loch, creating a colourful and welcoming atmosphere which gives an excellent impression of the town to visitors (photo on left below).



At the West Port flats, residents Audrey Simpson (photo above right) and Peter Common (photo below right) have created beautiful settings for their homes, more secluded than at Water Yett, but none the less impressive. Over the past year, Audrey has greatly augmented her displays with new planting, fencing, containers, pebbles and other features.

Audrey, Peter and Peter all met the Beautiful Scotland judges on their August tour of the town, and their work was highly praised to the extent that it was said that their efforts were the best of their type that could be found anywhere in Scotland.



Sponsorship of Hanging Baskets and Floral Displays

Later in the year, in conjunction with the Linlithgow & Linlithgow Town Management Group, we took on the co-ordination of community sponsorship of the ALL the hanging baskets on lampposts and poles over future winter and summer seasons, and there was a really excellent response to our invitation to sponsor hanging basket/holly ball locations for 2010-11 at a cost of £120. At the time of writing, 30 locations (mainly pairs of baskets and/or holly balls) have been sponsored by public-spirited individuals, businesses and groups, which is a truly excellent response and our sincere thanks are extended to all sponsors:



Arco Limited, Campbells Prime Meat, Cittaslow Linlithgow, Martyn Day, Donaldson's Nursery, George & Hazel Duguid, The Four Marys, Friends of Girlguiding Linlithgow, Garden Cottage Self Catering, Golden Chip, Gillian & Niven Grant, Go Green Bags, Hunters of Linlithgow, Kingsfield Golf Centre, The Linlithgow Bookshop, Linlithgow Business Association, Linlithgow Civic Trust, Livingston's Restaurant, Jim & Nuala Lonie, Margaret Morrison, Oakwell Childrens Nursery, Purely Patchwork, Springfords LLP, Hetty Smyth, Alan Steel Asset Management Ltd, and Vickers Projects.

Also to be thanked is the Rotary Club of Linlithgow & Bo'ness which will be providing sponsorship 'in kind' by watering the hanging baskets over the summer months, using a water bowser financed by the Linlithgow & Linlithgow Town Management Group. Donations towards the baskets were also made by Corinne Anderson, Springfield Playscheme, Professor Averil Stewart, bringing the total raised up to an amazing £3,460 plus £90 expected from the Linlithgow Heritage Trust for summer baskets only. Additionally, West Lothian councillors' disbursements totalling £450 were received from Tom Conn, Martyn Day and Tom Kerr.



All the sponsored locations are marked by plaques, put up by Jim and Calum Hay, Tom Kerr, David Tait and Ron Smith on 12 December. Our appreciation is extended to these individuals (plus Hazel Hay) for the time and commitment they have devoted to the provision of the hanging baskets and holly balls as an excellent demonstration of the community working together. The activities involved are mentioned below.

Following the consideration of competitive quotations, we have submitted an order to Craigmarloch Nurseries of Kilsyth for the filling and delivery of 78 hanging baskets for 2011 at a cost of £1,010.10 + VAT. Expenses already incurred include those for winter plants, compost, holly ball materials and the supply of sponsorship plaques.

Events over the Year

2010 saw a good variety of planting, fundraising, environmental and community events:

- **Linlithgow Spring Clean and Litter Pick** – Co-ordinated by Chris Long, this event on Saturday 24 April was undertaken in conjunction with Cittaslow Linlithgow. Litter-picking materials and prompt uplift of refuse were provided by West Lothian Council. 40 volunteers (including at least five children and a baby!) worked from seven advertised locations, followed by a photo-shoot at Regent Centre where Greggs the Bakers provided juice and millionaires' shortbread as a reward for all the volunteers' hard work. 87 bags of rubbish were collected, and detritus included a shopping trolley, a rusty old wheelbarrow, 14 footballs, a rubber car tyre, many discarded bottles and some drug-related litter. Helpers included volunteers from Linlithgow Community Council, the Rotary Club of Linlithgow Grange, Linlithgow Climate Challenge, as well as Councillor Tom Conn and Fiona Hyslop MSP, and the event was well publicised in the *Linlithgow Gazette*.



- **Dog Show** – In May 2010, Burgh Beautiful held its fifth Family Fun Dog Show in the magnificent setting of the Peel. Partly due to the ideal weather conditions, the event again proved to be a huge success, with a crowd of about 400 people in attendance. There were a record 185 entries from 106 dogs, spread across 12 different judging classes. The Clear Round Jumping was very popular and the Terrier Racing had some hilarious competition. Burgh Beautiful was extremely grateful to the 20 local



businesses who helped with very generous sponsorship of the classes and also to Historic Scotland and the Peel Ranger Service which hosted and part-sponsored the event. Historic Scotland used the opportunity to promote the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and sponsored a school poster competition on the theme 'Dogs in the Countryside'. Also giving valued assistance were a good number of local Air Cadets (439 Linlithgow ATC) who helped in many ways including the erection of tents and marquees. Other features included a children's story-telling tent, a tot's play tent, dog behaviour sessions and face painting. Most of the funds for Burgh Beautiful were raised from an impressive tombola (with 274 prizes donated by individual Burgh Beautiful supporters) and a raffle (with prizes given by local businesses and other well-wishers). As well as dog class entry fees, the campaign benefited from 'splat the rat', 'guess the dog's birthday' and a treasure hunt and quiz. After expenses, a total of £903.92 was collected, a considerable advance on previous years. Thanks go to Kirsty Leonard, Eileen Murray and Sheila

Ashby for general organisation of the event and particularly to Liz Burrows for all her hard work on the tombola and raffle.

- **Plant Sale** – Efficiently organised by Chantal Hamill, Burgh Beautiful’s annual plant sale was held this year on 29 May and, located at its usual prime position at The Cross, was again successful in raising funds and raising the profile of Burgh Beautiful. A worthwhile net sum of £445.57 was realised.
- **Community Planting Event** – Burgh Beautiful has this year promoted the first in a programme of community planting events with the aim of local residents adopting an area to plant and maintain. The bed to be planted, at Preston Road, was kindly de-turfed by the Council in early April, and some basic permanent planting was undertaken by Burgh Beautiful. The community planting event, which took place on 5 June 2010, was publicised in advance by a leaflet drop to all 135 houses in the target area of Deanburn Road and Deanburn Park. The event on the day was most successful, with 11 people attending to plant their contribution of annual plants and most signing up to maintain and extend the bed in future years. Donaldson’s School was also involved and Tony Oxbow is thanked for all the time and effort he has devoted to this project. We hope to promote similar events elsewhere in the town over the coming years.



The last quarter of the year saw particular burst of activity. The timetable of events included the following (credit being given to the individuals involved with the hanging baskets/holly balls above):

- **Saturday, 2 October 2010** – ‘Focus on the Crocus’ – A crocus planting event organised by the Rotary Club of Linlithgow Grange in association with Burgh Beautiful. At the other end of the town, the Club had earlier in the year revamped its raised bed at the corner of Blackness Road and Springfield Road, and had been involved in environmental work in The Peel.
- **Sunday, 3 October 2010** – Trial watering of hanging baskets by the Rotary Club of Linlithgow and Bo’ness.
- **Sunday, 24 October 2010** – Taking down of hanging baskets, assisted by the Linlithgow Business Association.
- **Saturday, 30 October 2010** – Involvement of Beaver Scouts in clearing barrels and tulip bulb planting at The Maltings, organised by BB member Kathy Lindsay (photo on right).



- **Saturday, 13 November** – Making of holly balls and planting of hanging winter baskets at former Sheriff Courthouse in association with the Linlithgow Business Association, courtesy of owners Jim and Hazel Hay. Around 40 Linlithgow residents planted 38 winter hanging baskets and make 33 holly balls for display in the town in the High Street, West Port, St Ninian's Road, Guyancourt Vennel, Low Port and Blackness Road.



- **Saturday, 20 November** - Winter tree planting event at Springfield Park, using 210 saplings donated by the Woodlands Trust as part of their 'More Trees, More Good' campaign. Species planted included rowan, field maple, wild dogwood, birch, dog rose, blackthorn, hazel, hawthorn, elder, crab apple and cherry. The event was efficiently and effectively organised by Chantal Hamill with the assistance of Tony Oxbrow. It is encouraging to note that eight non-members of Burgh Beautiful took part.



- **Saturday, 27 November** – Fund raising at the Advent Fair, with stalls selling raffle tickets and taking orders for holly balls and wreaths (£20 each) in aid of next year's floral displays. Because of the weather, there was a slow start, but things picked up later to the usual level and stayed busy until 3pm. The proceeds (less materials costs) were £677 from the raffle, £660 from the wreaths and holly balls, £27 donations, making a record-breaking total of £1,364. Liz Burrows once again did more than anyone else to organise the fund-raising effort, soliciting, collecting and preparing (for presentation) all the raffle prizes, liaising and engaging with all donors, organising the raffle ticket books, selling considerable numbers of raffle tickets, seeking orders for (and covering the cost of) wreaths and holly balls, helping to set up the stall, keeping us right at the draw, delivering many of the prizes, etc, etc - our appreciation is extended to Liz for all the time, effort and commitment that she has, as always, contributed to the event. Thanks are also due to Jean Long, Ken Ralston, Christine Adair, Dian Gorrie, John Aitken, Chris Long, Chantal Hamill, Valerie Dillon, Leslie Aitken, Peter Fairweather, Liz Gowenlock, Tony Oxbrow, John Carswell, Kirsty Leonard and Myra Smith for all their help on the day. Liz subsequently had published in the 17 December Linlithgow Gazette a letter of appreciation, listing all the business and other donors.
- **Saturday 11 December** - The orders for holly balls and wreaths received at the Advent Fair (and more, bringing the total to 26 holly balls and seven wreaths!) were made up in the old Sheriff Courthouse on Saturday, 11 December (postponed for a week because of the snow). Despite other demands on participants' time, around 17 people took part, in many cases for an extended period. Thanks are extended to all, including once again members of the Hay family.

Beautiful Scotland Judging and Awards

Further to the initial application for consideration in the Beautiful Scotland awards, the campaign was required to prepare and submit a detailed 'Judges' Portfolio'. This functions not only as a review of the activities of Burgh Beautiful, but also as a record of what is being done by everyone concerned with the environment and heritage of our town. The Beautiful Scotland judges (Colin Ainsworth, Gregor McGillivray and Terry Stott) visited the town on Monday, 9 August (photo on right) and were shown round the town by minibus, on foot and by canal boat to see the floral displays, the parks and open spaces, and other features of heritage and wildlife interest. The judges were *particularly* impressed by the superb efforts of the community gardeners in the town centre (led by Eileen Murray at Water Yett and Peter Common and Audrey Simpson at the West Port) and in the emerging scheme at Preston Road/Deanburn. Particular thanks are due to Alan Agnew (West Lothian Council) and Tony Oxbrow for accompanying the judges along with myself, also to Andrew Smart (Peel Ranger), Liz Burrows, Kirsty Leonard, Chris and Jean Long, and Shirley Smith (Burgh Beautiful), Kirsty Marchant (First ScotRail), John Aitken (LUCS and Linlithgow Civic Trust), Brian and Jack Friel (St Joseph's Primary School Eco Committee), Susan Erskine (Brownies) and Dorothy Dowie (Girl Guides) for helping with the tour.



At the prize-giving ceremony in Glenrothes on 22 September, we were delighted to receive a Silver Gilt Award for Linlithgow in the Medium Town category, one level above last year's Silver Award and just one level below the coveted Gold Award! Significant points from the judges' report were:

- 90% given for the categories related to residential/community gardening, appreciation of local heritage and local environmental quality and cleanliness.
- 80% given for all other aspects of horticultural achievement and for 'Pride of Place'/public realm.
- The two main recommended 'areas for improvement' related to the consideration of alternative methods of watering hanging baskets (because of the cost) and to improving local business support (both issues since addressed as above).

Plans for the Future

We have been thinking about the establishment of a base for future activities of Burgh Beautiful – polytunnel, shed for storage and ground for keeping ‘winter’ plants over the summer. One possible location is in the grounds of Clarendon House which may possibly come into the ownership of a community trust. Other sites have been considered and rejected for various reasons. Tony Oxbrow is to be thanked for preparing an application for funding from the Council’s ‘Community Chest’.

John Carswell has kindly been examining alternative fund-raising ideas, possibly a ‘Gardens Open’ event, the idea of a golf event having been put on the ‘back burner’ for the time being. Liz Burrows and Kirsty Leonard are reviving interest in the idea of a mosaic as a form of public art. Following councillors and officials raising doubts about West Lothian Council continuing to finance floral displays in general, several local garden centres and nurseries were approached regarding the possibility of sponsoring or creating floral displays in the town. New Hopetoun Gardens expressed a positive interest which has been followed up.

Although, as referred to above, the Council is, after all, funding its important contribution to Linlithgow’s planting displays in 2011, there is still much uncertainty about the position in future years. Taken together with the widening of our activities and the hoped-for establishment of a base, a major campaign for new volunteers will be needed over the coming year.

Events already planned for next year include spring and autumn clean-ups, plant sale, community planting in Springfield, entry to the Beautiful Scotland competition, and the annual Dog Show. Sheila Ashby had very kindly agreed to organise the latter event which will be held next year on 6 August.

Thanks to our Volunteers, the Council and the ‘Gazette’

Burgh Beautiful Steering Group – Ron Smith (Chairman), Chris Long (Secretary), Sheila Ashby (Treasurer), Liz Burrows (Fund Raising/Publicity), John Carswell (Coordination of Individual Initiatives), Hazel Duguid (Planting & Horticulture), Chantal Hamill (General Interest), Tom Kerr (Community & Business Liaison), Eileen Murray (Planting & Horticulture), Tony Oxbrow (New Planting, Ecology and Schools Liaison). Additional members of the Steering Group would be welcomed.

Planting Group – Ron Smith (Chairman), Liz Burrows, Hazel Duguid, Chantal Hamill, Chris Long, Jean Long, Tony Oxbrow, Shirley Smith. This list requires review as the practice has been that all planters are strongly encouraged to attend the two annual meetings of the Planting Group, before summer and autumn plantings.

Other Registered Burgh Beautiful Planters, Volunteers and Members – Leslie Aitken (from November), Gordon Beetham, Liz Beetham, John Davidson, Diane Fairweather, Peter Fairweather, Elizabeth Gowenlock, Moray Hamilton, Kirsty Leonard, Kathleen Lindsay, Christine McGregor (until early 2010), Diana Marchant, Bob Ross, Audrey Simpson, Myra Smith, Jane Sweet (until October).

It should be recorded that Burgh Beautiful is represented on the Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Town Management Group and, as a result, we have been influential in such matters as the introduction of 'heritage' lighting, banners and hanging baskets, the selection and location of street furniture including planters, the establishment of a new heritage trail, and the upgrading of the public realm with Caithness stone.

West Lothian Council has greatly assisted our efforts over the past year, in practical terms as well as financially. The councillors' disbursements already mentioned have been greatly appreciated. David Lees, Michael Lee, George Downey, Alan Agnew and others have been very supportive of our efforts in terms of plant ordering, giving of advice, supply of compost, making available planters, helping with litter picks, stripping turf for community planting, etc. Hazel Hay, in her role as Tourism & Town Centres Officer, has helped in many ways relating to such things as the hanging baskets and the provision of stalls, while Rory Cameron and his staff have contributed improvements to the town such as white lighting in the High Street (photo above) and the new/repainted street nameplates. Many others have helped with improvements to Linlithgow over the past year, not least with regard to the new paving in the town centre.



Finally, we have to record our appreciation to Jackie Mitchell and Irene MacKinnon for the excellent coverage in, and publicity from, the *Linlithgow Gazette* over the past year.

Ron Smith
Chairman, Burgh Beautiful
19 December 2010

Photo credits: Chris Long, Hazel Duguid, Ron Smith, Eileen Murray, Moray Hamilton, John Aitken, Kathy Lindsay, Jim Hay, Calum Smith.