



LINLITHGOW CIVIC TRUST

NEWSLETTER

No. 2010/3

December 2010



High East Port

A view of the High East Port, around 1910, from an old post card. Note the Whitten Fountain on the left hand side, behind which is Nobel's Explosive works (now Tesco's store). The line of buildings between the Star & Garter Hotel and the railway bridge has since been demolished.

Reproduced by courtesy of Bruce Jamieson.

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Photographs & Illustrations: We are obliged to Moray Hamilton, Bruce Jamieson, Kathy Lindsay, Chris Long, Tony Oxbrow and Ron Smith for permission to use the photographs and other illustrations in this issue.

Chairman's Comments

John Aitken

Congratulations to Burgh Beautiful and all who helped to achieve a Silver Gilt Award in Beautiful Scotland. Well done!

There's an article in this Newsletter by Scottish Civic Trust Director, John Pelan. Linlithgow Civic Trust is affiliated to the SCT. We aim to encourage greater contact between civic trusts in Scotland and feel that the SCT should represent our collective views. The SCT is interested in addressing a wider audience and I encourage interested individuals to join their mailing list when the opportunity arises.

A developer wants to build 600 more houses, an hotel, a supermarket, a filling station and an old people's home to the north east of Linlithgow, complete with an upgraded 4-way M9 junction. We await submission of their plans but will oppose this development and recommend implementing the Trust's "Vision" as a much better option.

The Town Management Group, who meet monthly with WLC officials under the chairmanship of Provost Tom Kerr, originated as a loose gathering of organisations with an interest in Linlithgow. Since its inception it has enabled many organisations, including Linlithgow Civic Trust and Burgh Beautiful, to exchange views, to work more closely together and to ensure greater co-operation with the Council. It has funded a number of beneficial projects. The latest developments open the door for much wider community involvement in Linlithgow's affairs and there are more details later in this Newsletter.

The aftermath of the serious fire in the Star & Garter Hotel demonstrated our over-dependance on Linlithgow High Street for traffic flow through the town and highlighted the need for a bypass. The Trust, along with many other organisations in Linlithgow, hopes that the Star & Garter Hotel can be reconstructed - it is an iconic building, dating from 1759 when it was built as a town house for the Boyd family. It has been an hotel since 1847.

We were surprised by the appearance of bilingual signs on Linlithgow Station with "Gleann Lucca" appearing beneath "Linlithgow". This is contrary to the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005: Gaelic is not now and was never widely spoken here and we doubt if "Gleann Lucca" is even the definitive Gaelic translation of the town's name. There was no public consultation. I have written to Transport Scotland on behalf of the Trust, asking them to replace the signs with ones stating simply: "Linlithgow".

Editorial

John Aitken

Thanks to everyone who commented on the new LCT logo. Your input was widely supportive and we have adopted both forms for use on publications, letterhead etc.

This issue includes an article on St Giles Cathedral by former LCT Chairman Chris Long and an article by John Pelan, recently appointed Director for the Scottish Civic Trust.

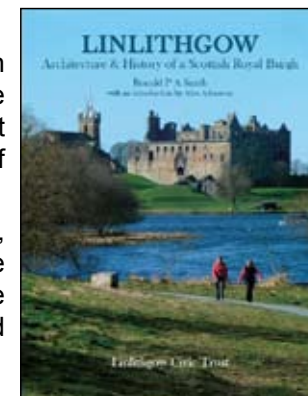
Suitable articles are welcome for future additions. E-mail newsletter@lct.org.uk or phone John Aitken on 01506 848258 if you would like to comment, contribute or suggest improvements.

Recent Events

Sat 9 October: Book Launch, Linlithgow Library

There was a full house at Linlithgow Library on Saturday 9 October for the launch, during "Celebrate Linlithgow", of Linlithgow Civic Trust's latest publication – "Linlithgow - Architecture and History of a Scottish Royal Burgh".

After an introduction by chairman John Aitken, authors Ron Smith and Alex Adamson gave those attending a flavour of the book's content, thanked the many people who helped with the publication, and signed copies for subscribers and purchasers.



Ron said: "It was very rewarding to explore the origins and history of Linlithgow's many places of interest, particularly when I managed to unearth facts previously unknown to me, and it was a great pleasure to make use of the anecdotes and research kindly made available. I hope that readers will enjoy the book as much as I enjoyed compiling it, and I was very relieved when Alex agreed to write his excellent historical introduction."

Alex said: "Linlithgow is one of Scotland's most important royal burghs and I have tried to tell the story behind the growth of the town, from its known mediaeval origins to the form it enjoys in the early 21st century".

After the historical introduction, the book takes a detailed look at each building (past or present), and it is profusely illustrated with over 180 old and new photographs, mostly never previously published, and many the work of Martine Stead and Linlithgow Academy pupil Calum Smith.

The book is available, priced £12 per copy, from The Linlithgow Bookshop and Blast-Off Books. Advance sales have been very encouraging.

Sat 9 & Sun 10 Oct: Guided Linlithgow Tours

Linlithgow Civic Trust and Cirtaslow Linlithgow jointly conducted two guided tours of architectural and historic locations in the town to mark the publication of Linlithgow – Architecture and History of a Scottish Royal Burgh and the launch of a leaflet "About Cirtaslow".

Sun. 26 Sept: Visit to Ochiltree Castle

No less than 32 Trust members took part in this interesting visit. Hazel Hunter and her husband John fell in love with sixteenth-century tower house outside Linlithgow, when they first saw it. They have dedicated their lives to restoring the building, from the basics of replacing cement pointing with lime, to replacing modern features with traditional ones. LCT is most grateful to the Hunters for letting us visit their home.

Programme

Mike Vickers

Thu 17 Feb: Annet Lecture, 7.30pm Linlithgow Primary School

The speaker at the 2011 Annet Lecture, organised by Linlithgow Heritage Trust, will be Dr Miles Oglethorpe of Historic Scotland and his subject will be "Energy".

Mon 7 March: Lecture, 7:30pm Burgh Halls

Architect Malcolm Fraser will give the 2011 LCT Lecture on the subject of the refurbishment of the Burgh Halls and their conversion to a community arts centre.



Sat 9 April: LCT Annual General Meeting

Please note this date in your 2011 diary. Full details, including time and location, will be issued later.

Summer Programme

The summer programme is currently being finalised and promises to be both interesting and varied. Full details will be included in the next LCT Newsletter and published on the LCT website: www.lct.org.uk.

If you have any ideas for the Programme, please let Mike Vickers know tel: 01506 671307, e-mail programme@lct.org.uk.

Planning

Alex Adamson

August saw LCT comment on a number of small applications in the town centre. Two involved the creation of new houses, one at 10 Hillside and one in an existing outbuilding to the rear of 265 High Street.

The 10 Hillside application was very similar in nature to an application for the site which was granted planning permission, on appeal, in 2009. The presence of a house at this location and its scale were therefore not at issue, however we made comments on some of the aspects of the design.

In October we commented on the proposals for three major buildings within the town.

Internal alterations have been proposed for the Sheriff Court House and the County Buildings. The Court House is to become an hotel and the County Buildings is to take in additional staff as West Lothian Council rationalises its use of office buildings. While offering constructive comments LCT did not object to either application.

The third major building was Clarendon House, where West Lothian Council has produced a draft planning brief for the house and its grounds. This brief offered a number of possible uses but with residential to the fore, including six new houses in the grounds. LCT objected to the residential element of the brief as being contrary to Council policies and to our Vision. We stated our continued support for the plan in the Vision that the house should be marketed for conversion into a hotel with conference facilities, preferably not part of a chain, with most of its grounds being retained as part of a larger public park and/or allotments.

Since the fire at the Star and Garter, LCT has kept in regular contact with planning staff, promoting the restoration of this iconic building.

The Scottish Civic Trust

by John Pelan, Director SCT



The Scottish Civic Trust is an important national body with a number of key roles to play for the wider benefit of Scottish society. It aims include:

- promoting initiatives which inform and educate people on environmental issues
- contributing positively on planning matters
- encouraging the highest quality in new architecture and public space
- supporting the conservation and re-use of historic buildings
- working to improve Scotland's townscapes and landscapes.

The Trust was originally established over 40 years ago as a response to the widespread and relentless post-war destruction of much of Scotland's important historic environment. The creation of the Trust in 1967 led directly to the formation around the country of scores of local civic trusts, groups and societies whose members were determined to protect and conserve the unique character of their cities, towns, villages and countryside against a background of neglect, destruction, dereliction and inappropriate development.

The existence of these groups, now numbering over 100, demonstrates that civic society is alive and well in Scotland and that there are people across the country willing to give their time and energy, mostly voluntarily, to improve their local historic and contemporary built environment. The Scottish Civic Trust believes that the role of civic movement cannot be underestimated and there is a need to provide that movement with fresh impetus and direction. The Trust is here to meet the challenge and has plans for improving and developing the ways we engage and interact with all the local groups. We want to know more about them: how many individual members there are; what sort of activities are they engaged in; what is the average age; what are the most important priorities; what difficulties do they face? These are some of the questions we will be putting in a new national survey of the civic movement in Scotland that we will be sending out later in the year.

We will be investing in a new website which will promote not only the work of the Trust but news and events from the local groups around the country. We want to explore ways of engaging with younger people, through the development of our social networking sites but also through better targeting of our current projects such as **Buildings at Risk**, **Doors Open Days** and **PhotoArch**.

We are holding our inaugural annual conference on 1 December in the wonderfully restored St Andrew's in the Square in Glasgow. **Scotland's Civic Movement: Making a Difference** will bring together professionals, local groups and individuals to think about the difference for active community engagement in the planning and placemaking agenda in 21st century Scotland.

The Scottish Civic Trust My Place Awards, now in its second year, will have a new category, alongside best project, of **Civic Champions**. This will recognise the contribution of individuals to improving and protecting their built environment. We plan to run a series of up to six charrettes with architects, designers, conservation specialists, planners and members of local groups, addressing heritage and historic built environment issues. We will be publishing a new suite of support and advice documents for local groups and societies affiliated to the Trust on topics such as; how to promote and protect your historic environment; toolkits for local heritage management; communications; and advocacy.

These are some of our plans for the coming months and years. I am looking forward to meeting many members of the local groups around the country and hearing their ideas for taking the Trust forward.

Visit to St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh

Chris Long

There are several interesting similarities between St Giles Cathedral and St Michael's Parish Church in Linlithgow. Both were built with a crown steeple. The one at St Giles was built in the late 15th century. The crown at St Michael's, illustrated in the last newsletter, was taken down when it became unsafe and was replaced in recent times with the familiar modern interpretation of the crown. Both churches have been subdivided in the past. Both churches boast a variety of stained glass from Victorian to modern times including exuberant glass in the transepts.

Of particular interest to me was the stained glass in what is called the Holy Blood Aisle in the south of St Giles. This is a small chapel which contains the grave of James Stewart, Earl of Moray, who was of course assassinated in Linlithgow in the area of the former sheriff court on 23rd January 1570. Located there are two large stained glass windows, (by Ballantyne and Son, stained glass artists). The upper illustrates the imagined scene in Linlithgow in 1570, at the time of the assassination. Below is a representation of the funeral service of the Regent Moray, held at St Giles Cathedral, which was taken by his friend, John Knox.

Look at the windows the next time you are in the Royal Mile and at the life size bronze of John Knox, who was minister at St Giles from 1559 to 1572. In contrast to the grave of the Regent Moray, John Knox's grave is marked with a diminutive brass plate under car parking space no 23 to the south of the cathedral inscribed "J K 1572".



Assassination of the Earl of Moray



John Knox, preaching at the Earl of Moray's funeral.

Town Management Group

John Aitken

The **Linlithgow & Linlithgow Bridge Town Management Group** (LLBTMG) has been meeting monthly for several years now. It originated as a monthly "talking shop" which enabled organisations in the town to discuss issues of mutual concern and to hear the views of council officials.

West Lothian Council allocated capital funds to Linlithgow and LLBTMG discussed where they might best be applied. This has resulted in a number of beneficial projects, including new street furniture, hanging baskets, banners on lamp posts, establishment of the new Heritage Trail, setting up a Battle of Linlithgow Bridge Trail, webcams at Linlithgow Cross and The Canal Centre etc. Recently the LLBTMG has been involved in commissioning the "Katie Wearie" sculpture at the West Port, the improvement of paving in the High Street and better vehicle access to the Peel.

In the current economic climate it was decided to constitute the Town Management Group more formally so that it could accept and administer funding from WLC and other sources. A constitution for LLBTMG as an unincorporated voluntary association was drawn up and agreed and this includes the powers for the establishment of incorporated or charitable subsidiary bodies, should the need arise.

There is a possibility that one or more Community Interest Companies may be formed under the LLBTMG to operate Council owned assets like the Burgh Halls and the Lowport Centre or to acquire assets like Clarendon House and its grounds from WLC and manage their development and future use for the benefit of the community. Such businesses would need to be run on the same lines as any other business, managed by competent qualified people pursuing a profitable business plan, but any profits would be used to benefit of the community.

Burgh Beautiful

Ron Smith



Beautiful Scotland Judging and Awards - The Burgh Beautiful campaign continues apace and, since the last Newsletter, the Beautiful Scotland judges (Colin Ainsworth, Gregor McGillivray and Terry Stott) visited the town on Monday, 9 August. Fears of a repeat of last year's torrential rain were soon dispelled and the party was 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.

Whilst not giving too much away, it was clear that 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 awards ceremony - Liz Burrows (BB), Alan Agnew (WLC), Ron Smith (BB) and Frances Melville (Provost of Fife)

At the prize-giving ceremony in Glenrothes on 22 September, after an interesting tour of the town's floral displays and a useful visit to Falkland (Britain's 'Champion of Champions'), 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/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. (It is good to report that both issues have since been addressed.)

Events - Since then, we have been planning for the year ahead, with requests for summer plant price quotations already sent to potential suppliers, and a programme of events has unfolded:



Beaver Scouts working hard at clearing and planting barrels at Moray Drive in October.

- **Saturday, 2 October** - 'Focus on the Crocus' – A crocus planting event organised by the Rotary Club of Linlithgow Grange in association with Burgh Beautiful.
- **Sunday, 3 October** - Trial watering of hanging baskets by the Rotary Club of Linlithgow and Bo'ness.
- **Sunday, 24 October** - Taking down of hanging baskets, assisted by the Linlithgow Business Association.
- **Saturday, 30 October** - Involvement of Beaver Scouts in clearing barrels and tulip bulb planting, organised by BB member Kathy Lindsay.



Planting of crocuses by Grange Rotary/Burgh Beautiful at Preston Road in October.



The results of Eileen Murray's work at the Water Yett, September.



The Burgh Beautiful Low Port bed in August, with a happier backdrop than today.



West Port: Burgh Beautiful planting & baskets, plus floral embellishment of the hotel in August

- **Saturday, 13 November** - Making of holly balls and planting of hanging winter baskets at former Sheriff Courthouse, 10am to 4pm.
- **Saturday, 20 November** - Winter tree planting event at Springfield Park (far end of Bonnytoun Avenue), from 10am (event postponed for 24 hours if weather is severe).
- **Saturday, 27 November** - Fund raising at the Advent Fair, from 10.00 - 3.30pm with stalls selling raffle tickets and taking orders for holly balls and

wreaths (£20 each) in aid of next year's floral displays. Orders for holly balls and wreaths will be available for collection at the old Sheriff Courthouse on Sunday, 5 December between 2pm and 4pm (alternatively there will be a £5 delivery charge). We would still like a few more volunteers to serve at the stalls - if you're interested, please contact Chris Long.

- **Saturday 4 December** - Burgh Beautiful holly ball and wreath making event, 10am onwards at the old Sheriff Courthouse. Everyone is invited to help with making up the domestic holly balls and wreaths which will have been ordered at the Advent Fair.
- **Thursday, 9 December** - Annual election of Burgh Beautiful chair/secretary, review and social event.

Sponsorship of Hanging Baskets and Floral Displays – At the time of writing, 26 locations (mainly pairs of baskets and/or holly balls) have been sponsored by individuals, businesses and groups, which is a truly excellent response and our sincere thanks are extended to all sponsors. Other ideas for sponsorship or fund raising are under active consideration. A full list of sponsors will be published when the process is complete.

Special thanks are extended to Jim & Hazel Hay, David Tait, Chantal Hamill, Tony Oxbrow, Liz Burrows, Chris Long, John Carswell, Sheila Ashby and everyone else involved in the above initiatives and events.

As always, Burgh Beautiful seeks new volunteers. We plan shortly to publicise a list of specific and clearly-defined planting/maintenance, project management and governance activities which may be of particular interest to individual Civic Trust members and I would ask that you think about how you might become more involved in line with your own interests and skills, if not already a Burgh Beautiful volunteer.

Publications & Other Items for Sale

Chris Long

The Trust offers an excellent range of booklets and souvenirs, including:

Linlithgow - Architecture & History of a Scottish Royal Burgh *	£12.00
Linlithgow Old & New	£15.00
(£10 when supplied directly by LCT to Members)	
Walks Around Linlithgow	£6.00
Street Names of Linlithgow & Linlithgow Bridge *	£4.50
Architectural and Historical Guide to Linlithgow.	£3.00
A particularly attractive tea towel	£4.00
Linlithgow Town Plan	£2.35
Poster (drawings of the town's antiquities & historical features)	£1.95

These are available for purchase through commercial outlets in the town or through the publications secretary (Tel: 01506 843461)

* A copy of Street Names of Linlithgow & Linlithgow Bridge is supplied free with each copy of Linlithgow - Architecture & History of a Scottish Royal Burgh supplied directly by Linlithgow Civic Trust.

Membership

John Aitken

Thanks to everyone who paid their subscription since the last LCT Newsletter. Reminders are enclosed with this newsletter for anyone whose subscription for 2010-2011 is still due.

Please encourage people with an interest in Linlithgow to join Linlithgow Civic Trust if they support our aims. There is a form on the website www.lct.org.uk or contact me.

If your contact details have changed or you wish to resign your membership, please e-mail membership@lct.org.uk or phone 01506 848258.

Executive Committee

Chairman John Aitken chair@lct.org.uk . 01506 848258
also Membership, Newsletter and Website

Vice Chair Currently Vacant

Secretary Dian Gorrie secretary@lct.org.uk . 01506 842860

Treasurer Sheila Ashby treasurer@lct.org.uk . 01506 840565

Burgh Beautiful Ron Smith burgh-beautiful@lct.org.uk . 01506 670758

Planning Alex Adamson planning@lct.org.uk . 01506 845918

Programme Mike Vickers programme@lct.org.uk .01506 671307

Publications Chris Long membership@lct.org.uk . 01506 843461
also Secretary to Burgh Beautiful

Committee: Peter Fairweather, John McGregor and Ken Ralston

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