

Spurtle

BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER

No 153

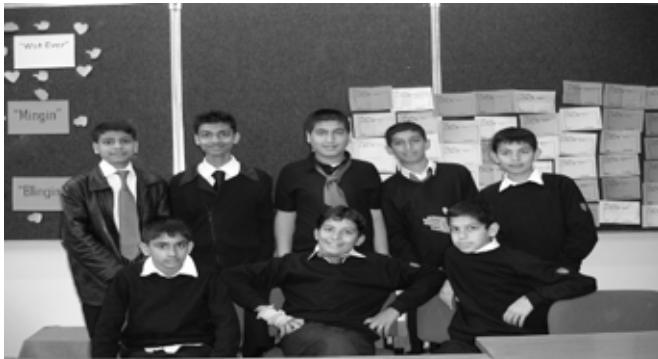
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Free

**November
2007**

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PUPILS CELEBRATE RAMADAN AT DRUMMOND CHS



Fiona Watt writes: The Muslim festival of Ramadan involves fasting from sunrise to sundown (roughly 6am to 7pm at this time of year), and contrary to what you might think, the participating pupils at Drummond Community High School all look forward to it.

The school hosts a Ramadan Club to give their pupils practicing Ramadan a place to go at lunchtimes. When I met some of the boys at the club recently (pictured) they admitted the fasting can be difficult, but it gets easier as the days get shorter. Ramadan fasting means absolutely no eating or drinking, not even a sip of water, so the pupils can sometimes feel a wee bit tired. Staff volunteers at the club, Annie Scanlon and Ian Bruce (pictured) explained that the school provides a special room for resting, and the children are excused PE if they wish.

Thirty boys and girls attend the club, giving them the chance to escape from the tantalising smell of the school dinners and other pupils' crisps and sweets! Computers, books, and arts and crafts materials are provided in the club – making a tent, prayer mat, and models of mosques have all been previous projects.

The pupils explained that Ramadan is intended to foster compassion for those in the world in need of the necessities of life, who do not have enough to eat and drink, and to give a renewed focus on spirituality. Prayers are said five times a day in a special room in the school, using a compass to determine the direction of Mecca, and the five Muslim teachers take prayers with the pupils.

The pupils also enjoy celebrating Eid, the end of Ramadan. Eid was on 15 October this year, and was celebrated with a school party, with games like musical chairs and the old favourite – giant pass the parcel! Muslim pupils also get two days' holiday from school to go to the Mosque for special prayers, get presents, money, and new clothes from their families, and have a special celebration Eid meal at home.

So what do the other Drummond pupils think of Ramadan? The boys admitted there was a bit of teasing with bags of chips, but that most of their non-Muslim friends have respect for what they were doing – “Friends who are not Muslim say they couldn’t do it – they think we are brave to do it,” said pupil Aqif Khan.

Thanks to staff Annie Scanlon and Ian Bruce, and Aqif Khan, Izaz Khan, Muhammed Shahid Ghani, Zuhair Hassan, Abbas Ahmed, Bilal Shahid, Zohair Khan, Shabazz Shafi, Nouman Mohammed, and Humza Taiq.



HMO QUOTAS – SOCIAL ENGINEERING?

Alan Ramsay writes: City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) say only 30% of houses in a given area will now be given an HMO licence. Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) Licences exist to protect tenants in shared flats from unscrupulous landlords, and people usually share flats because they are on a low income. This measure will push up the cost of flats with licences even further. Students make up only a third of those occupying shared flats – and young working people starting out in their jobs can't afford to rent or buy flats in the city. Do we really want to socially engineer poorer/younger people out of the city centre? Will this rule just drive unscrupulous landlords underground? Is this the best way to deal with noisy neighbours? The CEC seem to think so!

Briefly

An **information day** for local community organisations to get details of **grants and other available funds** will take place on 16 November (11am–1pm) at the Prentice Centre (1 Grant Mains Avenue, opposite the new Telford College). Featuring speakers and information from the “**Big Lottery**” **Fund Scotland, Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland** and others, it’s been organised by Mark Lazarowicz MP in response to requests for information made at a Community Consultation held in September by himself and Malcolm Chisholm MSP.

Congratulations to two of Barony Street’s stellar icons! On **Doors Open Day** on 29 September, the **Glasite Meeting House** attracted no less than 469 visitors from a’ the airts in the course of 6 hours! Nearby, the **Broughton Deli**/Restaurant, which was established without hullabaloo one year ago and was immediately welcomed by a devoted local clientele, has had its first review in a national newspaper. The *Glasgow Herald* gave ‘three cheers’ for its general excellence, endorsing the Deli’s motto of “food we believe in” – and so say all of us!

The much-admired **balls** separating Broughtonians from their neighbours to the East have disappeared! Concerned locals learned that the **artistic metal spheres** on Leith Walk’s central reservation had been withdrawn by contractors during utility diversion work for the new tram lines. The balls are now safely stored in deepest Leith, but where or when they will re-emerge remains unclear - **Spurtle** will keep a watching brief.

Are **falling school rolls** in Edinburgh – and so the problem of excess school estate – the result of **unaffordable house prices**? Do many families simply find the city too expensive, or are there other points about **Fife, the Borders and Lothians** which make them more attractive to families than the capital? Green Party leader **Cllr Alison Johnstone** is pressing the Children and Families department to thoroughly research these “push-pull” planning factors – **Spurtle** commends this bit of common-sense, long-term thinking.

The next meeting of the **Broughton History Society** is on Monday 12 November, featuring **David Ingrams**’s illustrated talk entitled “A walk doon the Royal Mile”. Drummond CHS, 7–9pm, free to members, £1 guests – and free coffee and biscuits!

Broughton St Mary’s Church in Bellevue Crescent is having its **Christmas Fair** on Saturday 24 November 10am–12. Tickets are priced at £1.50 (50p for children) which includes admission and refreshments. Stalls include home baking, jewellery, books and CDs, bottle and Christmas stalls.

Bare feet for Burma

Ewen Hardie writes: It is impossible not to admire the bravery of the Burmese monks and civilians who raised their voices against oppression and injustice despite the terrible risks of doing so in a country under brutal military rule. As a teacher at Drummond Community High School I was moved to add my voice – to use my freedom to promote theirs.

As the violent crackdown against the uprising began my heart filled with grief for a world in which such brutality exists. Almost harder to carry was a sense of helplessness. Was there really nothing more I could do than sign a petition appealing to the Chinese to exercise their influence on the country’s leaders? The speed with which the news moved from this atrocity to the traffic report to the weather shocked me. Tragic news has become so common that we do not even pause to contemplate it. The thing I felt most acutely was the injustice that while this was going on, life here wouldn’t miss a beat. I needed to do something so that, for me at least, this would not be the case. So I shaved off my dreadlocks of eleven years in solidarity with the Burmese people.

News of my haircut and the reasons for it spread like wildfire around the school. I am indebted to my students for their input to the amazing conversations that followed. I was reminded that no issue is too complex or difficult to address with young people provided they bring the necessary quality of attention to it.

Concerned that the issue should remain topical nationally (as the headlines move on), and locally (as my new appearance becomes accepted), I have also been going everywhere barefoot since this is unlikely ever to seem “normal”. I intend to remain shaven-headed and bare-foot until Burma is enjoying democracy. For the sake of world peace and the safety of my feet, I hope that this comes sooner rather than later.

Broughton St Mary’s sponsored walk

Pictured are some parishioners and friends of Broughton St Mary’s Church in Bellevue Crescent before they embarked on a sponsored walk around St Mark’s Park on 21 October. Now that Broughton St Mary’s has raised the first £1.3m to extend and refurbish its premises as a community resource, fund raisers are focusing on achieving the remaining £1.9m necessary. **Spurtle** has generously been allowed to organise election hustings at the church free of charge over the years, and wishes well to all concerned.



Support your local petitioner

Janice Johnson of East Claremont Street has raised an on-line petition on the Scottish Parliament website on behalf of Psoriasis Scotland-PSALV, calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to urgently develop clinical guidelines on the diagnosis and treatment of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis: to develop national standards of care for people with psoriasis/psoriatic arthritis; and to define psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis as chronic conditions to be included in the list of conditions exempt from prescription charges. Your support for this petition would be welcome at www.scottish.parliament.uk, closing date 7 December 2007.

Bridging the Haddington Place gap



Ross Maclean writes: Leith Walk Developments have lodged plans with Edinburgh City Council to build a substantial hotel on the gap site in Haddington Place next to McDonald Road Library. The Rezidor hotel group, already engaged in transforming the site of the Lothian Regional Council Offices on George IV Bridge, is in consultation with the developers behind the £15m plan, which comprises a 175-bed hotel, two retail outlets, a bar-restaurant at street level, and an underground car park. The complex will fill the gap between McDonald Road Library and the tenement on Haddington Place, a site recently occupied by a petrol station.

The gap site features a dilapidated building – the ‘Gardener’s Cottage’, the very last remnant of the old Physic Garden in the Hopetoun area which later transferred to Inverleith and became what is now our world-renowned Royal Botanic Garden. The historic significance of this cottage has been noted by the Cockburn Association, and our local Broughton History Society. *Spurtle* can report that an archaeological survey of the building as well as imaginative plans for its future are currently evolving, and we will carry a fuller report on this in the December issue. For more information see the CEC website at www.edinburgh.gov.uk. (Plan reference number 07/03999/FUL)

Things that go bump! in the morning

Alan McIntosh writes: What sound do you normally wake up to? The Dawn Chorus? A loved-one’s yawns? A late-returning reveller vomiting in the shrubbery? For many East Claremont Street residents it has long been the sound of multiple “explosions”.

The problem – generally between 6.30 and 7.00am – has been caused by westbound lorries bearing empty skips at high velocity over the speed humps. A weary local recently complained to the Council’s Services for the Communities, suggesting the skips came from the Powderhall Destructor site and asking what could be done. Apparently, the refuseniks at Powderhall denied their lorries had ever been driven inconsiderately, and in any case there is no law against the “legal” use of roads by their vehicles at any time of day or night. What’s more, such regular bomb-like concussions are allegedly “incapable of causing structural damage to substantial tenement buildings in the area”. Weary local offered to compile video and audio evidence but this was declined. It must therefore be some other fleet of empty skip-bearing lorries which has coincidentally begun driving very much more slowly along East Claremont Street on recent mornings.

Nooks and crannies

Ross Maclean writes: This month we restore a striking detail of Broughton’s historical iconography to its rightful site – at least on paper. The substantial sculpture of the boy with a raised mallet originally adorned the niche at the top of the old Heriot’s School building which now features Kushi’s and Santorini restaurants at street level. When the school closed in 1886, the figure was transferred to the lofty pediment of the Heriot Trust’s Watt Institution and School of Arts building which later became Heriot Watt University.

There the gallus lad still stands defiant. Gifford et al. in their magisterial work, *Buildings of Scotland – Edinburgh*, unfairly describe him as a ‘hammering cherub in the scrollly broken pediment’. Perhaps they have a point, however. He is a little lost in his draughty spot above Chambers Street. Could he not be restored to his rightful home in Broughton, either to his own plinth, or placed dramatically in a raised position in the centrepiece of the London Street roundabout looking up to Broughton Street on which he gazed from 1853–86? What do Spurtle readers think?



Belle's View



Hi fans

Dinnae fash about nights drawing in – there's oodles of new places to spend the twiglet hours in swinging Broughton!

Pearce's Bar on Elm Row has had a funky bohemian-chic Swedish makeover by **Anna and Mike Christopherson**, who also own Leith bars **Sofi's, Boda** and **Victoria**. Opening in November, **Pearce's** will have a wide range of drinks, including Russian Baltika, Japanese Asahi, Traquair Ale, Australian Coopers Pale Ale, and Swedish Aquavit, for enjoyment in a warm and inviting ambience. The other bars feature DJs, live music, film and knitting nights, and a Charity Art Auction is planned - so watch this space: www.bodabar.com.

Like ultra-chic décor? Get along to new club **GHQ at Picardy Place**, which has white leather circular sofa beds, a black and white lit dance floor, a mirror-tiled ceiling, toilets decorated with posh wallpaper and a chill-out room with white padded walls. Glasgow nightclub entrepreneur **Stefan King** spent £3 million on the club, offering a high-quality upmarket night out, soon to also feature a fine-dining restaurant, cocktail bar and hotel rooms. Pan loafy!

Oooooh – **Voodoo!** Exciting new venue **The Voodoo Rooms in West Register Street** above the **Café Royal** also opens in November. Comprising a Bar and Dining Room, The Speakeasy and The Ballroom and Ballroom Bar, it promises lunches, brunches, dinner, drinkies, elixirs, coffees, cakes, cocktails, fizz, live music, cabaret, clubs, events, gatherings, happenings, exhibitions and screenings, with local musos **Aberfeldy** booked for a forthcoming gig! For **Voodoo** news, gossip, menus and listings, see: www.thevoodoorooms.com.

Till next time

PERSEPHONE BELLE

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New Town/Broughton Community Council

Vacancies for Community Councillors

The Community Council represents the views of local residents to Edinburgh City Council.

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