

Spurtle

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

TUNNEL VISION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Part of the abandoned Scotland St railway tunnel could be used as a youth and community centre if new plans become a reality.

The proposal envisages adapting a section of the tunnel near its mouth, with a possible "pavilion" extending out into the park where locals of all ages could meet.

The idea began in 2006 when Community Police Officers Simon Daley and Greig Stephen set out to find long-term solutions to petty youth disorder. They listened to the views of 100+ students at Broughton High School and soon recognised a widespread desire for a safe, fun place to spend time together without offending or disrupting other members of the public.

A working-group including City-centre Cllrs Hinds and Mowat was set up, and is now using local architects Simon Laird and Andy McRae to sound out local opinion. Laird and McRae will consult potential users, neighbours, supporters and doubters in a series of questionnaires and workshops starting in mid-Aug. Their aim is to establish whether the proposal would have a long-term future with the backing and involvement of local people.

Judy Conn, Secretary of the Friends of King George V and Scotland Yard Parks, says they welcome the consultation as a first step in "reviving a barren and neglected area of the park as well as providing social opportunities for the ... young people who currently congregate there with nothing to do but, as often as not, make a nuisance of themselves out of sheer boredom".

If you represent a constituted community group in the neighbourhood and want to learn more or make your views known, contact: [tunnelgroup@simonlaird.com].



Spurtle says: Many of us who would recoil in horror at racial, sexual or gender discrimination routinely demonise or ignore fellow Broughtonians who happen to be young. It is high time we all grew up.

Some may have doubts about providing a magnet for young people in the area. Some will worry about adapting 19th-century civil engineering. But the tunnel plans offer a substantial gain.

They address the long-standing lack of things to do for young people in Broughton. They are an overdue response to problems of under-age drinking and antisocial behaviour. They stem from talks with young people themselves and reflect their perfectly reasonable wish for a proper place to meet.

Providing, equipping and sharing social space across generations makes sense. So long as the plan can be well designed and properly managed, we're in favour.

NEW BUS AND TRAM HQ FOR ANNANDALE ST (WITH PLENTY MORE ROOM ON TOP)



Lothian Buses PLC has applied for planning permission to demolish two buildings at 47-9 Annandale St and build a 4-storey office block with basement parking and new access to the bus depot. (Ref.: 08/01829/FUL).

The Lost Property Office and former Bathroom World would make way for a new Bus and

Trams HQ with the top floor rented out. The modern design – acknowledging not copying the B-listed Central Garage next door – uses red brick, buff-coloured reconstituted stone blockwork, and much glass with powder-coated aluminium frames. The developers claim the new HQ will screen the functional but unattractive depot and car park behind, and "round-off" the fragmented streetscape which exists now.

Under the Council's Adopted Local Plan, areas like Annandale St which are suitable for "Housing and Compatible Uses" are not appropriate for major office developments. However, proposals for the expansion or modernisation of existing businesses are allowed if they fulfil other requirements and respect residential amenity. Lothian Buses argues that its proposal is "within a mixed use location, is of scale commensurate with the surrounding area, and is in a public transport accessible area."

On 28 Apr. the designs went on display for 2 hours in McDonald Rd Library with developers present to meet the public. Two people turned up, one of whom objected to the loss of her view. The proposal will now go before the Planning Committee, probably in Sept. (*See also* "Briefly")

Frustration for residents as flats scheme gets go-ahead



Residents in Forth Street and Union Street were astounded last month when the Council decided to approve a proposal locals have been fighting for the last five years to build 11 flats on the site of the small car park in Broughton Street Lane.

At an earlier meeting of the Council's Planning Committee the majority of councillors were against the development which was described as "match boxes on match boxes" and "not a true mews design". However, at the meeting on 11 June the Planning Committee passed the proposal by one vote, with around six councillors thought to be on holiday.

Forth Street resident Janice Donaldson said, "We are shocked at the poor way this has been handled by the Council. The previous Planning Committee rejected a very similar proposal in 2006 which was also thrown out by the Scottish Government after an appeal by the Developer, Prosper Holdings Ltd. As this plan is only 59cm less in height than the one which was rejected and also breaks the Council's own guidelines on minimum distances between buildings we thought this would go the same way. It is a clear over-development of the site. The Planning Department did not present residents' fears regarding loss of light and privacy and we expected the Convenor, Jim Lowrie, to challenge this, but he did not."

Local objectors have written to Alan Henderson, Head of Planning asking him to investigate the conduct of the officials. *Janice Donaldson*

Glass half-empty

How to come to terms with a sometimes anti-social and immature minority? "Jaundiced of Claremont" considers the problem.

Ruddy hooligans: know-nothings excused everything by woolly brained, do-gooding, liberal ostriches like *Spurtle*. Let's not beat about the bush: we're talking about heedless, selfish, bubble-gum-chewing, bubble-gum-spewing, stupid-haircut, pavement-hogging, alcopop-addicted, tattoo-daubed, knee-level-gussett-swaggering, cigarette-toting troublemakers with too much make-up on their faces and time on their hands. What were their parents thinking?

And the language! Try walking along St Mark's Path of a summer evening – Have they no shame? Don't they know or don't they care what ordinary people might think? I suppose they imagine it's trendy to expose respectable folk to a barrage of swearing, showing-off and overt sexual posturing, but why are we all so spineless about demanding decent behaviour?

Frankly, our teenagers' safety and innocence will not be preserved by entombing them in Scotland St tunnel. Rather, as a matter of urgency, Broughton's *senior citizens* must be given alternative places to hang out where they won't cause nuisance, set bad examples, and keep the rest of us awake at night.

Feet of endurance

At 1.15pm on 25 June, Drummond teacher Ewen Hardie set off on the first leg of his barefoot trek to London (*see Issue 160*).

Setting himself a target of 12–15 miles per day, Ewen reached Lindisfarne on 1 July and rested. He later stayed a night at the Buddhist monastery at Harnham before pushing on to York Minster where he was greeted by the Dean and members of the congregation on 19 July. He hopes to deliver a petition to 10 Downing St on 9 Aug., calling upon the PM to mark the suppression of the 1988 uprising in Burma, and to spell out what Britain is doing to encourage democracy there.

So far, sponsorship of Ewen's journey has raised about £1200 for the Burma Education Scholarship Trust. The last we heard (24 July), Ewen had passed through Kettleby on his way to Melton and the Grand Union Canal. To follow his progress, visit: [www.barefeetforburma.blogspot.com].



Drummond Community High School: proud and ambitious

"A marvellous school – a jewel in the city's educational crown." That was the verdict of Margo MacDonald – veteran nationalist, independent MSP for the Lothians, and a former teacher – speaking about Drummond CHS as guest of honour at its Celebration of Achievement and Prize Giving on 25 June.

Earlier, Head Jon Reid had spoken of a fantastic and immensely enjoyable year at the school. Academic results had improved, with the number of pupils gaining 3+ Highers up on 2006 levels by 7%, those gaining 5+ Highers up by 9%, and those gaining 1+ Advanced Highers up by 10%. He was confident 2008's results would be even better all round: "Extraordinary results like these are a sure sign of extraordinary teaching and we are lucky to have a staff of inspirational and dedicated teachers," he said.

Other highlights in the year

included students' increased sporting involvement and Level-3 accreditation as a Health Promoting School (the first in Edinburgh); trips to Spain, France and Poland; musical performances at the Lyceum Theatre and with the Secondary Schools Chamber Choir; fund-raising (over £2K) for a range of charities; and a top award in the Standard Life Achievement Awards in the Global Citizenship category for the Drummond–Muthambi Partnership with a school in Kenya.

An independent review of the school commissioned by Reid in Oct. 2007 concluded that it was "punching above its weight," and the energy and ambition of this local hub are clear. "The future is filled with potential and the promise of greater things," he said. "I am already looking forward to returning in August."



Nooks and Crannies: The Marvel of Warriston Bridge

Edinburgh City Council's recent decision to undertake a full-scale survey of the city's many thousands of trees is to be welcomed. Cllr Robert Aldridge states: "Like the city's buildings, trees need to be surveyed to keep them safe" (*Evening News*, 3 July). The same should apply to the capital's multiplicity of bridges which are an equally vital facet of the city's structure and are literal links between past and present.



Warriston Bridge, which spans the Water of Leith beside Warriston Rd, is a striking example. It formed an integral part of the Edinburgh, Leith and Granton railway line which chiefly operated from 1847-68, and included the remarkable Scotland St tunnel that still slumbers phoenix-like under the New Town.

The monumental scale and technical splendour of the viaduct are best appraised from the road underneath. Circa 150ft long, 30ft high above low-water level, and 30ft wide, the structure has 3 sedge-mental arches, reminiscent of cathedral vaulted interiors. Technically, the complex stone-work is described thus: 'the masonry is ashlar, droved on the parapets, bands, voussoirs, intrados and inner buttresses, but elsewhere rusticated' (A. Maclean, *The Edinburgh Suburban and Southside Junction Railway*). To the layperson, the arched masonry is a marvel of interlocking stonework which echoes patterns in nature – the bark of a tree, the shell of a mollusc, the ridging and ripple of sand on a shore.

While Warriston Bridge may seem in a minor key compared to the Dean Bridge, its lofty neighbour upstream, both should be celebrated in a Mozartian way as testimony to those visionary Victorian designers and nameless craftsmen whose verve and brio our current city architects would do well to emulate.
JRM

Briefly

Buses rarely take the direct route, and now – it seems – neither do their finances. In the event of its Annandale St application being successful (see p.1), the partly Council-owned **Lothian Buses PLC** will have to meet Planning regulations and pay at least £468,058 towards the cost of trams, and at least £17,000 for new bus shelters with real-time information displays. Perhaps some real-time information displays at City Chambers would bypass this **bureaucratic guddle**.

Bellevue & Claremont Residents Assoc. – influential in the late 1990s but long dormant – is to be revived with fresh management and an extended brief including **McDonald Rd and Annandale St**. A short meeting will be held at the Claremont Bar, 6.30pm on Sun. 31 Aug. to bring the group's paperwork and constitution up-to-date and to select office bearers. All welcome.

Minor mystery: a puzzling message in white and red paint has appeared on the wall of the Stafford Centre, Broughton St. As best we can reproduce it: "TbI YMHBiN rNMNNAH" [in which all the Ns are back to front]. It seems to mix **Cyrillic, Spanish and mirror-writing**, suggesting a visitor from **Warsaw, Madrid or Cheltenham** who had **1 deep-fried Mars Bar too many**. Can any reader explain?

Schools reopen for the Autumn Term on **Wednesday 20 Aug.**

The Council is running an on-line survey about the **use, management and future of city parks and greenspaces**. Fill in the form and enter a draw to win **£50** in high-street vouchers or **£25** to spend on plants. Visit: [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/parksurvey].

A small group is investigating how and whether to commemorate music-hall legend **Arthur Lloyd** (Issue 160) locally. The Council's Snr Conservation Officer is offering advice as various options are considered, residents contacted, prices established, and funding sources considered. Contact **Spartle** and we'll forward interest or views.

For many **non-football fans**, a **skip-smoulder** at 50 E. Claremont St enlivened the final of **Euro 2008** on 29 Jun. The mini-blaze was reported at 9.05pm, a pump arrived at 9.07pm, and the flame was extinguished by 9.15pm. The match dragged on for a further 45 mins. **Spain beat Germany 1:0**.

Work to replace the metal Bailey Bridge in St Mark's Park with a new hardwood link on masonry piers began on 7 July. There will be **no access by St Mark's Path** for around 20 weeks (till roughly 24 Nov.), during which time cross via the bridge at **Powderhall Rigg**.

Dogs galore!

A "Doggie Fun Day" will be held on Sunday 7 September 2-4pm (gate closes 3.30pm) at Queen Street Gardens East, (entrance next to Aitken and Nairn, Abercromby Place). Competitions include prettiest pooch, best trick, catch the biscuit, waggiest tail and more (cost £1 per dog). There will also be a Canine Partners puppy demonstration, tombola and refreshments. This event is being held to raise money for Canine Partners, (www.caninepartners.co.uk), which provides trained dogs for disabled people in Scotland.

The difference these dogs make both physically and emotionally is enormous, allowing disabled people to live a fuller and more independent life. Total training of a dog costs £10,000, and they are trained to pick up dropped items, open doors, and help with dressing. They can also help with shopping and using bank ATMs, with each dog specifically trained to meet the individual needs of their owner. For more details, contact Stephanie Scott: 557 2762.



Heritage Lottery behind research

A £48.5K grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to the Friends of Hopetoun Crescent Garden (FHCG) has triggered archaeological study of the Gardener's Cottage on Leith Walk, a vestige of the former Botanic Garden there.

FHCG are using the money to discover and preserve evidence of the building's past before it is taken down later this year. They will create an oral history archive and interpretation about the site for local schools and the community. FHCG, the Cockburn Conservation Trust and developer Drumkeen are also seeking funds to dismantle and re-erect the Cottage in today's Botanic Garden at Inverleith. Under Lottery rules, the grant was for 4 months so shrouded in secrecy that some locals wrongly suspected the involvement of Knights Templar or the Priory of Sion. We are happy to dispel these rumours.

Belle's

View

Hi fans



Hurray! The Fringe is now upon us – so what's for Fringing fun in swinging **Broughton**?

Fancy chuckles galore with a bit of music thrown in? Local venue **The Edinburgh City Football Club, 7 Baxter's Place**, has a fantastic global programme of stand-up comedy and musical talent. There's a different line-up of comedy and music every night with cheeky resident compere **Ivor Dembina**, free entry and a late bar, 1–25 August (21.15, 1 hour 10m). Get there early – the shows pack out every night, with previous performers including deadpan Brummie telly star **Shazia Mirza**. See the line-ups at www.laughinghorsefringe.co.uk, and catch *next* year's Perrier Award winner before they make the big time!

Need to lose a bit of holiday weight? Get on down to the **Phoenix Bar on Broughton Street** for **Hoopla – A Free Impro Workshop**, led by the directors of The Hoopla Show 2–23 Aug. (13.00, 1 hour) details at www.hooplainpro.com. No impro or acting experience necessary – just don't try doing it while you're holding a pint and a packet of crisps!

Can't be bothered hoofing it around during the Fringe? Forget the boring old No. 22, get on board on the luxurious sleek and silvery double-decker **Comedy Bus**! Join it outside the **Omni Centre** for a guffaw-inducing sight-seeing tour of the city, visiting four top-notch bars and clubs (coo, I didn't know we had that many!), while enjoying outrageous comedy from **On a Roll Entertainment** along the way! 1/2/8/9/15/16/22/23/29/30 Aug. (19.00 4 hours 30m, £15).

Enjoy the Fringe– no sleep till September!

Till next time!

PERSEPHONE BELLE

New Town/Broughton Community Council

Vacancies for Community Councillors

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

Next meeting
4 Aug at 7.30pm
at 67 Northumberland St

For details please contact:

Chris Richardson 07952 755 854
chris_richardson1001@hotmail.com

Malcolm Chisholm MSP Edinburgh North and Leith



Constituency Office:

5 Croall Place, Leith Walk, EH7 4LT
Tel: 0131 558 8358
Fax: 0131 557 6781
Saturday surgeries:
9am Leith Library
10.30am Royston/Wardieburn
Community Centre
12pm Stockbridge Library

Mark Lazarowicz

MP for Edinburgh North and Leith



Constituency Office:

5 Croall Place, Leith Walk, EH7 4LT
Tel: 0131 557 0577
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mark@marklazarowicz.org.uk
www.marklazarowicz.org.uk
Friday advice sessions:
4.00pm Theatre Workshop,
42 Hamilton Place
5.00pm Ainslie Park Leisure Centre
6.00pm Constituency Office

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Drummond CHS 556 2651

Lothian Buses 555 6363

McDonald Road Library
529 5626

St Mary's Primary School
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