

Spurtle

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

**January
2009**

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COUNCIL FINALLY MOVES ON SAFETY

Progress may at last have been made to tackle traffic dangers around Broughton Primary School (*Issues 163-5*).

Until recently, parents' demands for action were batted between separate Council departments, some of which *did not* appear to know the others existed, some of which *did* know but declined to talk to them or anyone else. The resulting confusion over areas of responsibility and budgetary resources resulted in much hot air but very little effect.

In December, however, Lorna Henderson (City Development's School Travel Coordinator) visited Broughton on 3 occasions and talked to staff and Parent

Council. She witnessed the problems for herself, brought along an engineer to assess the situation, and arranged for police to make their presence felt, dispense advice, and enforce the law as necessary.

Parent Council Chair Gordon Chrumka is optimistic that with this single and coordinating point of contact, clear lines of communication have been opened. A revised School Travel Plan has been finalised, and Chrumka and Headteacher Alan Devine have now written to City Development and Services for Communities requesting urgent funding for long overdue improvements. We'll keep you posted.

BROUGHTON BOOKSHOP: CHAPTER 3

Spurtle rejoices that Broughton has another second-hand bookshop. Broughton St Bookshop, which replaced the sadly short-lived Cocktail Emporium at No. 44, opened on 28 November. It is the 2nd successor to the much-loved Broughton Bookshop established in 1971 at No. 49a and its continuation as Broughton Books at 2a Broughton Place.

The shop is run, with family assistance, by 19-year-old Brian Rafferty, who has Asperger Syndrome, a complex form of autism. This is Brian's first full-time employment and an immense undertaking in his life. All the books are donated and profits pay for shop costs and for Brian's first wage. At the end of the year a percentage of profits will be given to the National Autistic Society. Donations of books are most welcome. Just hand them in to the shop, or Brian can arrange to have them collected.

In its previous incarnations, the Broughton Bookshop has been described as 'warm and modest, with a generous disposition'. *Spurtle* feels sure that Brian's predecessors will salute him as their worthy successor, and we wish him every success.



Welcome to *Spurtle's* first ever January issue. Helping us celebrate is Widow Twankey no less (alias Mr. Allan Stewart currently starring in *Aladdin* at the King's Theatre). Happy New Year to all our readers!

CITY TARGETS RUN-DOWN PARKS

On 2 December the Council issued a list dividing city parks into 3 categories. The list will help it prioritise spending of a £1m improvements budget for 144 sites (1500 acres) across Edinburgh.

In the Broughton area, potential Green Flag Award sites (for those areas with the best environmental standards, facilities, and community involvement) are: Inverleith Park and Hopetoun Crescent Gardens. Parks or green spaces considered to be of reasonable standard are: Redbraes, Rocheid Path, St Mark's, and Victoria. Ones needing improvement are: Bellevue Crescent and Gayfield Square Gardens, King George V, Montgomery St, and Pilrig Parks. Investment will continue across the range of parks, but the new list will help focus resources to raise standards where most needed.

The 'Green Flag' benchmark aims to encourage safe, clean and accessible public parks which are managed in an environmentally sustainable way. Assessments are based on a range of categories including cleanliness, maintenance, conservation, marketing, and sustainability. Why, though, asked *Spurtle*, were affluent Bellevue Crescent Gdns picked out as requiring improvement? A Council spokesman pointed to no signage; only one entrance; hedges around the southern garden restricting visibility; and paving stones in need of repair.

Spurtle also asked what plans the Council has for St Mark's Park, where as many as 30 commuters have been parking all day since at least May (*Issue 159*). A spokesman said, 'We are working on restricting vehicular access to the park ... A new gated entrance is proposed but cannot commence until the replacement Bailey Bridge is constructed.' Users of the football club will have access to the smaller car park by the pavilion.

Elsewhere, the dilapidated Barony St play area is not categorised as a park, but funding for a new play area and community garden has been secured with the Broughton Project Group. Work will begin in 2009.

The gardyloo factor

New Town & Broughton Community Council (NTBCC) recently welcomed City Councillor David Beckett's initiative in addressing the perennial problem of refuse and waste collection (or lack of it) in sections of the New Town. A trial project using robust, seagull-proof bags is likely to be implemented in targeted streets, including Dundas and Cumberland Sts. Residents will be issued with these sacks which will accommodate two black bags, can be emptied into the collection vehicle and then returned to the householder for re-use. The bags are already used successfully in Totnes, Devon, and withstand attacks by foxes and rodents as well as those of breeding seagulls.

Residents have received a circular and questionnaire for their views on this, and how householders and the Council can work together responsibly to clean up the city in general. In addition to Mr Beckett's initiative, NTBCC's environmental wing actively engages with local government in effecting practical solutions to the rubbish issue which so besmirches our city. *Spurtle's* view: Do we prefer to live in one of Europe's 5-star capitals, or succumb to a blasé, throw-away culture which relegats it to any of dear Blighty's Dirty Old Towns?

Partnerships made plain: Part 3

In his final article disentangling Neighbourhood Partnerships (NPs), John Dickie uncovers some of the obstacles to making local democracy truly democratic.

1. Cllr Chapman says: 'I can't see how Neighbourhood Partnerships will work if members of the public are not actively encouraged to participate in meetings, regardless of their representation by formal members. There are things officials could do to make this happen better, mostly to do with communication before meetings and effective follow-up on issues to named individuals afterwards.'

2. The areas covered by NPs are vast, almost certainly too vast to be considered as coherent communities. 'NPs have to ensure that they gather information from all the smaller communities that constitute them,' says Cllr Chapman. 'It will only be through true collective working or real partnership arrangements that they will function as "neighbourhoods".'

Lorimer Hope – a tribute

It was with great sadness that I learned of the death of Mr Hope on 13 November, *writes Jean Bell of Bellevue Street*. My husband Archie's family rented their home from the Hope family, and Lorimer was a good friend of Archie's eldest brother Tommy. They were keen cyclists and often explored the surrounding countryside together.

When I was assisting with the St Ann's Reminiscence Group in the Cowgate I asked Mr Hope if he would come and talk to us. He declined, but agreed to come to our house and have tea and a chat. I put the tape recorder on the table, and he told me all about his childhood, schooling and work in Broughton in his father's business of J.D. Hope Funeral Directors on London St.

Mr Hope was a very kindly, courteous man who always raised his hat on meeting you. He had a pawky sense of humour, and many anecdotes of local people – including Mr Mackie, the 'bobby' with the moustache in Garioch's poem 'Fi'baw in the Street'.

A gentle, pleasant man who lived his life to the full.

Notice of Martin Lauder's death

Spurtle was saddened to hear of the death on Wednesday 3 December of local resident and erstwhile *Spurtle* photographer Martin Lauder (82), a weel kent face of Hopetoun Village and Bellevue. Our condolences go to Martin's wife Alice and their family. A fuller obituary for Martin will follow in the next edition of *Spurtle*.



3. Administrative arrangements are as arbitrary as the areas to which they apply. For example, I live in Leith Walk Ward, but my New Town/Broughton Community Council isn't a member of Leith NP. Martina McChrystal, Partnership and Information Manager in the North Neighbourhood Team, explained: 'New Town/Broughton CC opted to sit on the City Centre NP and hold a watching brief in Leith. This means they are not entitled to vote but are kept informed of any issues that may impact on their area.'

'So, I don't have a voting community representative on the NP covering my area?'

'Broughton representation is primarily through New Town/Broughton CC on the City Centre NP. Its representatives have agreed to attend Leith NP meetings on an issue basis ... if they wish they can raise particular issues.'

Powerless representation for half of Broughton is hardly 'local', 'flexible', 'joined up' or 'accountable'.

The £145,000 Christmas card

One of the stellar pieces in Lyon & Turnbull's sale of pictures on 3 December was 'Sheep Beneath Snow Encumbered Branches' by the 19th-century Scottish artist Joseph Farquarson. The wintry image, familiar to millions as a popular 'Hallmark' Christmas card, has long been recognised as one of Farquarson's finest works. The pre-auction estimate was £50–70K. On the day, bidding was not as tranquil as the scene, but positively fierce. It was finally



sold for £145,000 to a private Scottish buyer in whose collection it will now take pride of place.

Robert Stanley Pillans (c.1843–78): 'Scotch comedian'

Robert Stanley Pillans (RSP) was born near the top of Broughton St, a tailor's son. He was raised by his mother in South Hill St Lane, and then worked as a printer's 'devil' (despite being only semi-literate most of his life).

He first performed at Bryce's – an underground 'free-and-easy' on Princes St where his humour, mimicry, and song found a ready audience. In his early 20s he appeared on the Dundee stage as a comedian, and in 1866 married an English actress, Annie Adams, a clergyman's daughter. By 1867 they were living at 10 Greenside St while RSP played comic roles in Wyndham's revivals of Scott classics at the nearby Theatre Royal. He was soon famous and beloved in Edinburgh for his parts in the lavish pantomimes of the day, particularly his topical songs and intoxicated dames. In the 1871–72 season, for example, he played Aladdin's mother, Widow Twankey ('née Betsy McHiccup'): 'I ance was young and fresh and fair,/But noo I'm auld and yellow,/Auld Scotland is my native land,/I was born in Portobello.' His 'rollicking manner' and 'perfect command of the Scotch vernacular' ensured success, as did risqué songs delivered when ladies and children had withdrawn during the interval.

In 1872 he moved from 23 Union Place to 6 E. London St, where the last of 4 daughters was born. After the Theatre Royal fire of 1875, he transferred to the Edinburgh and Empire Theatres before touring Australia in 1878. Here his career faltered owing to alcoholism, of which he died aged 34. The funeral proceeded from his last home, 23 E. London St, to a common grave in Warriston Cemetery where a flat stone (N:371) commemorates him. Relevant handbills, programmes and even lyrics form part of the Hornell Collection in the Central Library. *AM*

Nooks and crannies: sign of the times on Rodney St

When fishmonger Bob Quin removed the plastic fascia from his Rodney St premises, he discovered an older sign and ventilation ducts underneath (*see below*).

He is convinced No. 34 has seen many years' service as a fishmonger's shop, perhaps since its construction. *Spurtle* researches suggest its first use by David Bennet, a bootmaker, in 1902–03; followed much later by James Barclay, hardware merchant, in the 1920s and 1930s. The first fishmonger we have found was W. Grandison in 1947. Can readers prove us wrong?

Mr Quin now seeks a signwriter to add up-to-date details in a style sympathetic to the earlier lettering. Coincidentally his former sign for 'BOBS FISH' (snapped by non-*Spurtlers* on a Monday when there was no stock in the



window) is the subject of an aesthetic/philosophical, online discussion. In Google Images, type: < R o d n e y Street Edinburgh flickr >. *AM*

Cherchez la femme

Broughton's crime wave has continued with the theft on 29 November of a sign outside Pani Solińska on Broughton St.

The sign, depicting a Polish woman in national dress, had been an attractive and (perhaps too) popular local feature since its arrival in March last year.

After the disappearance, a reward notice on railings outside the restaurant read: 'She is part of our family and designed and hand painted by our family. Please if you find her return her to where she belongs. We miss her!!!'

In a later development, CCTV footage from local businesses revealed the thieves at work at 8.56pm. Pani Solińska has now issued an 'amnesty' for the sign's safe return, otherwise the 'very clear images' will be taken to the police.



Briefly

Schools resume on Monday 5 Jan. 2009.

Well done Mr M. Crehan who came closest in guessing the total number of languages spoken in local schools (*Issue 164*). Here is another *Spurtle* brainteaser. What is the local connection between **Mycroft's little brother, 10 maidens, the tree of life, and a rehab refusenik**? Answer next month, and a £5 prize for the first correct solution drawn from the shooglie hat.

The next meeting of **Broughton History Society** will be in Drummond CHS at 7pm on 12 Jan. **Kate Love** will talk on **John Buchan's Edinburgh**. Members free, visitors £2, with fussed biscuits and yeasty tea.

The BUPA Great Winter Run (5km of unadulterated bliss) will take place in **Holyrood Park** on 10 Jan. Anyone aged 14+ can enter online at [www.entry.greatrun.org] until 3 Jan. Also on 10 Jan. in Holyrood Park, watch **elite athletes** from all over the world gasp, spit, snort, and turn blue in the **Edinburgh International Cross Country**.

The proactive **New Town & Broughton Community Council** has objected to a non-existent plan for the new '**St James Quarter**'. A hotel screening St Mary's Cathedral does not feature in the application (probably because the developer doesn't own the land), but *is* pictured in all the artist's impressions. **NTBCC smelt a rat** and so got its retaliation in first.

Residents waiting for news of **Unite's appeal** to Scottish Ministers over 130 McDonald Rd (*Issue 164*) may have to wait a bit longer. We now learn that the result may not be announced until **21 Jan. 2009**. Those of an anxious disposition can search for DPEA updates by entering P/PPA/230/1032 at: [www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/planning/appeals].

Groups and individuals with innovative waste project ideas can receive a **Waste Action Grant** (£50–2,500) [wasteaction@edinburgh.gov.uk]. There will be a rolling programme of deadlines for £50–200 applications, and quarterly deadlines for £500+ ones. Deadlines for larger applications are noon on: 16 Feb., 15 Jun., 12 Oct.

A retrospective application for change of use from a private dwelling to a small **backpackers' hostel** at 30a Dublin St has been refused and enforced (24 November). The basement hostel had been running since June 2007 and there were proposals to upgrade it to '4-star' standard. However, Council Planners received 13 letters from locals objecting to **disruption, mess, and loss of amenity**. There were also concerns about the intended number of beds and change to the character of a mainly residential street.

Belle's View



Hi fans

A very Happy New Year! Had one too many twiglets, and feeling a bit partied out? What's for soothing rest and recuperation this January frosty Broughton?

If you jiggered something doing the Orkney Strip The Willow over Hogmanay, don't despair, as your local sports and holistic therapist **Caroline Williams** can sort you out with some restorative deep tissue sports massage and reflexology at **The Massage Place**, 46 Rodney Street, getting you back to your former vim and vigour! Tel: 0131 557 0855 or see www.themassageplace.co.uk.

Now that we've done with singing "Away in Manger", check out new **Yoga Stable**, where their motto is "peace in the body brings peace to the mind". Get rid of those creaky bits and discover your inner bendiness with some invigorating Iyengar **Yoga** classes – suitable for all ages, so no excuses! **Yoga Stable** 3A, Montgomery Street Lane, 0131 556 9526 www.yogastable.com

Hey you wi the big sonsie face! Don't forget it's the 250th anniversary of **Robert Burns'** birthday on 28th January. We can almost claim Rabbie as an old Broughtonite as lived in **St James Square** (quite near Broughton Street!) for several months in 1787. As Burns flatteringly referred to Edinburgh as *Edina! Scotia's darling seat*, we can repay the compliment by celebrating The Bard in style with a world-famous **Sandy Crombie's** haggis, or if that's too offal for you (hey – it came out of a cracker!) you can get a MacSween's veggie haggis further up Broughton Street in **Realfoods!**

Till next time!

Persephone Bone

Hard times...



sweet dreams

Blandfield goes online

The Blandfield Residents Association has set up an Internet forum to aid communications between itself, residents, owners, and the estate factor.

In the past, the factor tended to write directly to owners rather than residents, leaving tenants feeling excluded. 'The committee hopes that the forum will put an end to these problems, and help to foster a community spirit,' says Mark Sheffield, forum administrator. 'All residents and owners are encouraged to register.' The forum can be found at: [www.blandfieldresidents.ForumUp.co.uk].

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:
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Friday advice sessions:
4.00pm Stockbridge Library,
42 Hamilton Place
5.00pm 92 Pilton Drive
6.00pm Constituency Office

Spurtle Team: Maria Hart, George Hosey, Alan McIntosh, John Ross Maclean, Fiona Watt.

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