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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

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INCONVENIENT TRUTHS OVER FORUM STUSHIE

A Standards Commission report (31 Dec. 2008) has criticised the Convenor of Edinburgh's troubled Children and Family's Dept for ejecting a parent from the consultative forum on school closures over alleged leaks to the *Evening News*.

Cllr Marilyn MacLaren acted in good faith last June, the report found, and she has now been formally cleared of contravening the Councillors' Code of Conduct (*Issues 160, 164*). But the Commission – which promotes and enforces high ethical standards in public life – pointed to her 'errors of judgement' based on officials' 'unreliable information' and insufficient consultation with colleagues and the person she suspected of leaking information. Her decision had been personal rather than corporate.

The Chief Investigator named a Mrs Ross, of the Lismore PS Parents Action Group, as the most likely person to have briefed the Press about which 4 primary

schools were to close. He concluded that she was in turn informed by someone leaking information from within the Council.

According to the report: 'After an initial denial the complainant [Chair of Drummond CHS's Parent Council Lynda Flex] acknowledged, at interview, that she may have been contacted by the [*Evening News*] reporter and if the reporter had mentioned the names of the four primary schools she may, without herself naming the schools, have responded in a manner which provided the reporter with confirmation of the names.' Cllr MacLaren has since apologised in private to Mrs Flex and invited her to rejoin the Forum on School Estate. A public apology is now anticipated at a full Council meeting.

A summary of the report (LA/E/753), from which nobody involved emerges smelling of roses, is at: [www.standardscommissionscotland.org.uk].

BOTANIC COTTAGE PRESERVED

Eileen Dickie writes: This once beautiful cottage in Haddington Place, built between 1763 and 1765 for the Principal Gardener of the new Leith Walk Botanic Garden, now lies in numbered piles of timber and pallets of stone in the Inverleith Botanic Garden. Its historic significance has been noted by several people over the past 25 years but, despite several attempts, listed status was never granted and it has been in steady decline for the past decade. In early 2007 it faced imminent demolition.

It was built during the Scottish Enlightenment by John Adam, probably from a design by Dr John Hope the first Regius Keeper and a noted botanist and doctor. The ground floor was the Principal Gardener's residence, the upper floor Dr Hope's Lecture Room which could hold 200 students.

In April 2007 a Project Group was set up to see what, if anything, could be done – if not to save the Cottage, at least to carry out archaeological research into the building. With the Cockburn Conservation Trust as project managers, Friends of Hopetoun Crescent Garden applied for a Heritage Lottery Fund

grant. £58,500 was awarded for archaeological research into the building and the site; research into documents held by the Royal Botanic Garden, the City Council and other bodies; a photographic record of the process; and a revamped website. A £5,000 grant was received from Leith Neighbourhood Partnership for an interpretation panel in Hopetoun Crescent Garden about the Cottage's history.

Over the past few months, and with great support from the developers and the demolition team, the Cottage has been carefully researched, dismantled, and all the stone and timbers numbered and transported to Inverleith.

Here it will lie whilst the next phase takes shape. A fundraising project will start and we hope that the Botanic Cottage will be rebuilt and put to good use in the Inverleith Botanic Garden.

Eileen Dickie is a committee member of Friends of Hopetoun Crescent Garden and a moving force in bringing this important project to fruition. See: [www.hopetouncrescentgarden.org.uk].



Nationwide interest in Broughton learning

An innovative scheme to extend P7's skills and ease their transition to secondary school is being developed by Leith Walk PS and Drummond CHS. Early results have been hailed as 'outstanding' by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, and the pilot is being held up as an example of good practice by Learning and Teaching Scotland. Educational psychologists and the University of Edinburgh are also taking a keen interest.

Planned around the ideas and principles of the Scottish Government's new 'Curriculum for Excellence', the programme aims to enhance literacy and numeracy skills by applying them to learning about health and well-being. Leith Walk P7s have attended their own centre within Drummond once a week, culminating in a dramatic presentation for parents, teachers, professionals and the city's Director of Education at the end of December.

The scheme's design was led by Mary Murray, a Leith Walk teacher and Broughton resident, and made possible by Head Jon Reid's strategic reorganisation of the timetable at Drummond which allowed teachers there to be made available for the visiting P7s. The combination of practical learning, and interschool cooperation between staff and students is crucial to the scheme's success.

Pupils will focus on becoming 'Smarter and Greener' in the Spring Term.

Ministers reject plastering plea

Broughton St Mary's Parish Church has lost its appeal to the Scottish government against a decision by the City's Planning Dept.

The appeal involved a new extension at the back of the church, proposed as part of the refurbishment project. This new Garden Room, with glazed walls and a glass and zinc alloy roof, was approved in 2007 as it would be clearly distinguishable from the old building, allowing the original's character and construction to be seen and understood. However, both Council and Government officials rejected a later proposal to plasterboard some of the vestry's rubble stonework in order to improve internal light/heat loss, to provide an audio-visual screen and cover electrical cables. The Reporter argued that this 'would not preserve the building or features of its special interest. It would harm the integrity of the listed building ...'.

The Reporter acknowledged that his decision may present challenges to the developer, but considered none of these difficulties to be insurmountable. Phase 1 (including the Garden Room) will be completed in November 2009.

Nooks and crannies: Gerald Ogilvie Laing



On Picardy Place, close to the birthplace of author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, stands a statue of his fictional detective Sherlock Holmes. The work was unveiled in June 1991 and is by the Dingwall-based sculptor Gerald Ogilvie Laing (1936-). At the time of its design, there was criticism that depicting a tweedy old man with a calabash Meerschaum might encourage young people to smoke. Laing responded by (minutely) including Magritte's phrase on the bowl's rim: 'Ceci n'est pas un pipe'.

Nearby at 3 George Street, a bas-relief frieze by Laing adorns the old

Better late than never

Work to remove and replace the Rumbling Bridge at Powderhall is nearing completion, roughly 2 months behind schedule. Gusty winds twice led to postponement of the tricky manoeuvre to lower the bridge's 16-ton central span. Scottish Power have still to re-route a high-voltage cable, and 'safety work' to prevent unauthorised parking in St Mark's Park is also being considered.

Cllr Robert Aldridge, Environment Leader, said: 'We apologise for the regrettable delay in installing the new bridge and we appreciate that this must have been frustrating for local residents and users of the park. The delay occurred due to problems with shipping agents and transport of the bridge from the Continent.'

Standard Life HQ. Based on the parable of 'The Wise and Foolish Virgins,' this 1976 work shows 5 virtuous maidens who have prepared for death through faith in God (topless, mouths open, and staring vacantly into space); and 5 foolish maidens preoccupied with more familiar activities (scratching, sulking, having a bad-hair day, throwing a tantrum, and trying on a blindfold). The piece is a reworking of Steele's 1839 design in the adjacent architrave, a depiction of 'The Ten Virgins' which adorned much of the company's stationery throughout the 19th century.

Outside the former Standard Life Tanfield House in Canonmills stands Laing's 'Axis Mundi or the Apotheosis of the Wise Virgins' (1991). It depicts the tree of life from birth to death to rebirth with what may look like big sprites but are *not*. How Standard Life connects preparation of the soul with virgins and endowment mortgages is anybody's guess.

Laing is also a celebrated pop artist, attracting recent attention for 'The Kiss', his portrait of singer Amy Winehouse. Find out more at: [www.geraldlaing.com]. AM

L'Escargot Bleu is now open

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Profile: Sir John Graham Dalyell

Local resident and retired fisheries scientist Jim Adams writes: Although I have lived in Edinburgh for over 17 years, my professional life centred on the Marine Laboratory in Aberdeen. There I developed an interest in the history of marine science, and I was delighted when invited to write the marine science chapter for *Boats, Fishing and the Sea*, published recently, at £40, by John Donald as part of The European Ethnological Research Centre's Scottish Life and Society series.

While preparing my chapter I was struck by the number of nearby addresses associated, directly or indirectly, with my area of interest. Here I write of Sir John Graham Dalyell (1775–1851) whose legacy to marine science is five volumes published, two posthumously, between 1847 and 1858. Many of the invertebrates described were collected from the Firth of Forth where, like other local naturalists, he went collecting with Newhaven fishermen. Every summer he visited ports such as North Berwick and St Andrews 'for the purpose of picking up such rare animals as the fishermen might have fallen in with'.

His writing, in emphasising his admiration of the works of the Creator, recalled that of 18th-century naturalists. He recognised the value of meticulously studying the living animal, keeping his marine forms in cylindrical glass vessels of various sizes; an approach started, perhaps with freshwater forms, about 1790 when still at The Binns, where he was born in 1775. Later he moved to Edinburgh, and at the time of his death in 1851 he had been living with his sister, Elizabeth, at 14 Great King Street for some time.

Writing from 8 St Colme Street in 1860, Elizabeth recalled how her brother employed someone to fetch three or four gallons of sea water two or three times a week, and how, by frequently changing the sea water in his cylinders, and by keeping them very clean, he was able to keep many of his subjects alive for eight to ten years. Some he kept for even longer, and one sea anemone (subsequently named 'Granny') collected in 1828, outlived not only Sir John but also three of its subsequent four keepers. More importantly, Sir John's studies resulted in his being perhaps the first to observe the bottom-living stages of some of our common jellyfish. Sadly, a delay in publishing his findings resulted in the kudos for this discovery going initially to the Norwegian, Michael Sars.

Martin Lauder remembered

Spurtle was sad to hear of the recent passing aged 82 of Martin Lauder, a weel kent face around Broughton.

Martin was a local here for most of his life, spending 50 years in Bellevue Gardens with wife Alice, where they raised their children Mary and Angus. A systems analyst with the North British Rubber Company, he was a keen amateur painter, sketcher and photographer, contributing many excellent photographs to *Spurtle* and to Broughton History Society exhibitions.

An honorary life member of local Drummond Tennis Club, he played the game into his eighties, and will be fondly remembered for his cheery and uncomplaining good nature by many friends in the area. Here's a picture of Martin as Senior Scout during the wartime years. *FW*



Blacklock seeks Westminster job

Councillor Angela Blacklock, Labour representative for the Leith Walk ward, is seeking selection as an MP in the Edinburgh East constituency.

Her party's National Executive Committee has stipulated an all-women shortlist as it replaces Gavin Strang MP who retires at the next General Election. The successful candidate's name will be announced within the next 2–3 months. Blacklock first became a councillor in 2007 with 1,937 votes.

Briefly

Broughton History Society will meet next at 7pm on 9 Feb. in Drummond CHS. Jim Scanlon will talk about '**Postcards of Leith**'. Members free, visitors £2.

Last month we invited readers to find a connection between Mycroft's younger brother, 10 maidens, the tree of life and a rehab refusenik. Despite the **£5 prize** on offer, there were no entrants. See '**Nooks & Crannies**' for the solution.

The southbound lane at the top of **Broughton St** was closed for 11 days last month (5–16 Jan.). The tram-related disruption was caused by enabling work 'to carry out six investigation sites': otherwise known as holes.

Schools finish for the mid-term break on Friday 13 Feb., and resume on Tuesday 24 Feb.

PM Gordon Brown was to have been rewarded by a visit from Broughton's beat **PC Simon Daley** on 16 Jan. However, at the last moment the PM was called away, and Mrs Brown, Chancellor Alastair Darling, and Hazel Blears MP hosted the event instead. The Downing St reception was arranged to acknowledge those who have made outstanding contributions to the community. Daley's name was put forward by local MP Mark Lazarowicz, who paid particular tribute to Daley's work with young people. On top of his normal duties, Daley – a policeman for 19 years, the last 5 of them spent here – has been the driving force behind a community garden in Redbraes, the recent Polish–Scottish war memorial, and plans to use part of Scotland St Tunnel as a youth centre.

Owing to the **credit crunch** and fuel tax changes, Lothian Buses's fares went up on 18 Jan. **Single fares:** adult £1.20; child 70p. **Dayticket:** adult £3; child £2.40. Citysingle: £24 for 20 tickets. Night Buses: £3. **Night ticket:** £1.50 (unchanged). For full details of Ridacard and other fares see: [www.lothianbuses.com/news].

Bellevue Area Residents' Association will meet at 7pm in Drummond CHS on 3 March. Come and meet the Committee and fellow residents to discuss local issues and find out what's going on. Guest speaker to be confirmed. Refreshments will be served. Tell your neighbours.

Spurtle bids a fond adieu to eminent historian and influential political guru **Sir Bernard Crick**, who passed away last month. He lived in Bellevue Terrace and was a loyal and enthusiastic supporter of this paper from its heady beginnings.

Belle's View



Hi fans

Brrrrrr! Plenty of cold and frosty bright moonlight nights the noo in February, but fear not, for plenty rose-mantic treats are available for those concerned with affairs of the heart, as we near St Valentine's Day in Broughton!

Young, free and mingin'? Looking for a *Crazy Little Thing Called Love*? Get along to the **Edinburgh Playhouse** at **Greenside Lane** to see former computer operator **Gary Mullen**, winner of 2000 *Stars In Their Eyes*, with his tribute to Freddie Mercury and Queen, *One Night With Queen*. Backed by band **The Works**, this is the ultimate Queen tribute band, complete with **Brian May**, **John Deacon** and **Roger Taylor** looky-likeys! 3-4 February, 7.30pm, tickets £17.50/16.00, from: [www.edinburghplayhouse.org.uk].

If you want the object of your affections to look at you through rose-tinted beer goggles, why not invite them along to the Basement Bar in Broughton Street for a wee swally? Treat them to a sumptuous cocktail in the bar's dark and cosy recesses, the perfect place for a snog on a wintry evening! Choose from their extensive cocktail list, and inflame their ardour with a **sassi degrassi** (chilli and wheatgrass in a wyborrowa infusion with vermouth) – spicy! [www.thebasement.org.uk]

Stuck for the perfect gift for the one you love? Never mind faffing about with boxes of chocolates and wussy teddy bears, say it with a semmit by buying them a romantic **Phoenix Bar** T-shirt [www.phoenixedinburgh.com]. Available in S/M/L/XL, £10, regular for the hombres and slim-fit for the laydeez!

Till next time!

Persephone Rose

Tramworks resume in city centre ...



'If you knows of a better hole – go to it!'

New Town/Broughton Community Council Vacancies for 3 Community Councillors

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

Next meeting
2 February at 7.30pm
at Drummond CHS

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
Fax: 0131 557 5759
mark@marklazarowicz.org.uk
www.marklazarowicz.org.uk
Friday advice sessions:
4.00pm Stockbridge Library,
42 Hamilton Place
5.00pm 92 Pilton Drive
6.00pm Constituency Office

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