

Spurtle

BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER

No 118

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Free

**September
2004**

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SCOTTISH POWER WREAKS HAVOC ON WALKWAY

'The appalling thing is that utility companies have a right to dig up anywhere they want without permission'



*Irene Love of
Bellevue Road
writes:*

On 7th August I was walking along the cycle path between the allotments behind St Mark's Park. When I reached the cross-roads I turned left and could not believe the scene. There were two men with machines. I asked what had happened to all the brambles and the trees, and was told there had been water pipes installed. I then retraced my steps and walked towards the railway terminus behind Powderhall Cleansing depot. This area had been cleared but in a more serious manner. They had cut down most of the bramble bushes and a huge area of trees up to the railway terminus, then directed their attention through the woods.

I had a meeting with Councillor Davies on 18th August, who promised to look into the situation and get back to me. He also explained they had no jurisdiction over the utilities.

I revisited the site to take photographs and measure the pipe and the areas affected. The pipe measured just over 4 inches and in some places the clearance measured 34 feet – which I thought was a bit excessive! There was a deep trench, and a Scottish Power sign lying at the bottom.

I understand the 'utilities' must

maintain and upgrade, but surely some control should be exercised over this kind of work.

Spurtle raised this last point with local Councillor Davies. He replied:

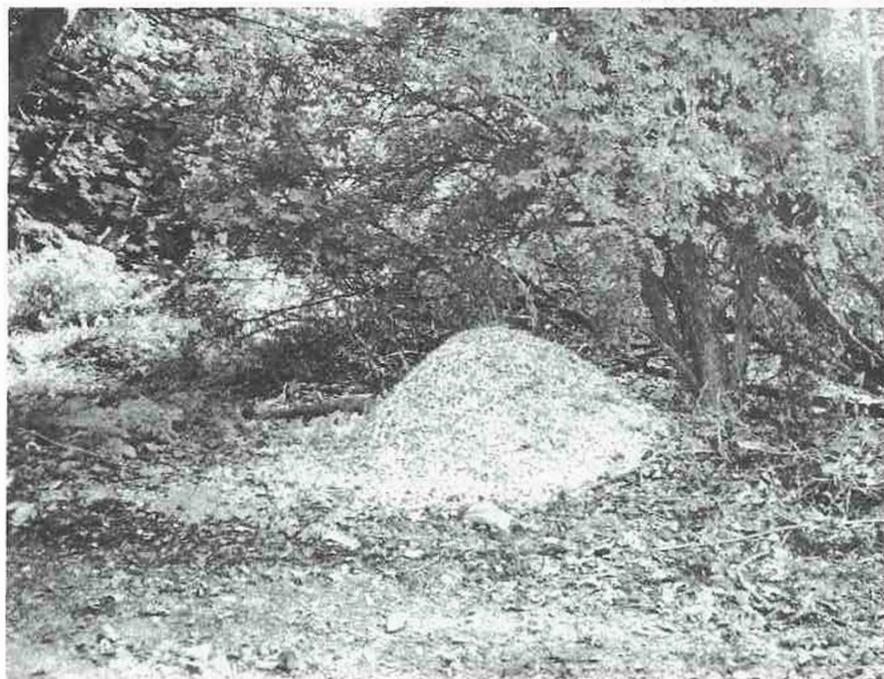
The appalling thing is that under present law utility companies have a right to dig up anywhere they want without permission from the local authority. I don't know of any moves towards the position about utilities and councils changing. It would require the Scottish Parliament to enact a change in the law. There are constant attempts to bring them to heel, but I don't think anything has really yet

worked. We've tried to get a voluntary 'concordat', but not with great success.

But later:

I've just this moment read a report which says that the Scottish Executive does indeed intend to introduce legislation to improve co-ordination, quality and enforcement with regard to utilities and their 'openings' of roads, etc. There is no sense of when – but I think it is being drafted.

Meanwhile the City Council has asked Scottish Power for full reinstatement of all trees and vegetation, new drainage as necessary, and repair work to the damaged pathway.



'They have revisited the site and got rid of the trees which they cut down. These have been shredded up and put in piles all over the place.' (Irene Love)

BRIEFLY

Drummond's Parent Staff Association has its AGM at the school on **Monday, 6th September, 6.30pm**: election of office-bearers, review of the past year, planning for the year ahead. All parents, carers and staff are welcome.

Nahid Aslam of Bellevue Place is involved in a project called 'The Welcoming' – a chance for people to meet, have some food and learn about each other's culture. It starts on Wednesday 8th September and will continue every Wednesday after that, 1pm-4pm. It's based in the Methodist Central Hall, Tollcross, it's free, and you are welcome wherever you live in Edinburgh.

Broughton History Society kicks off its new session with a talk on 'The History of the Dean Village' on **Monday, 13th September, 7.15 for 7.30pm** in Drummond Community High School. Visitors (£1) are very welcome; or sign up as a new member.

'One of the most unacceptable proposals I've seen', said our local MP. Now the planning application for housing and commercial units on the Martin and Frost site in McDonald Road has been withdrawn. 'Good news', says Bob Stewart of the Community Council, who also objected to the application.

Our local Community Council still has vacancies for members. They'd particularly welcome **someone from the Pilrig area**: see their advert on the back page for details.

By the time you read this, results in the City Council's Gardening Competition will have been announced. In next month's edition we'll honour any winners from Broughton, and award local prizes to the best of Broughton entrants who didn't win in the citywide contest.

Letters delivered to the wrong address, or left at the bottom of tenement stairs – **has the postal service got seriously worse recently?** What do you think?

TRAFFIC CALMING IN EAST LONDON STREET

A satisfactory outcome?

In July we reported Bob Crombie's worries over the traffic calming measures in East London Street, where he lives. He said there was still a serious speeding problem, particularly in the evenings and at weekends, and argued for more speed humps and more 20mph signage. Local Councillor Davies wrote to Spurlie in response to our article:

The survey completed recently by Council officials showed that the average speed along the length of East London Street was 21.7mph. I am sure that some irresponsible drivers try to speed along that street – but I think if the average speed can be maintained we should all see it as a satisfactory outcome.

If no one was driving faster than 21.7mph in the 20mph zone, that would certainly be 'satisfactory': but as an average it's surely not grounds for complacency. In any case,

Bob Crombie questions the validity of the speed check:

I don't know at what location in the street the survey was carried out (maybe at a speed bump) but I do not see many vehicles doing this speed. I informed him that evenings and weekends were particularly bad times for speeding, when the street is quiet... I'm sure motorists do not know they are in a 20mph zone, more signs need to be posted along the street... Two more humps, at Cochran Terrace where the tarmac meets the cobbles and at the east end of the street where the tar and cobbles meet, would be ideal spots to slow the traffic down.

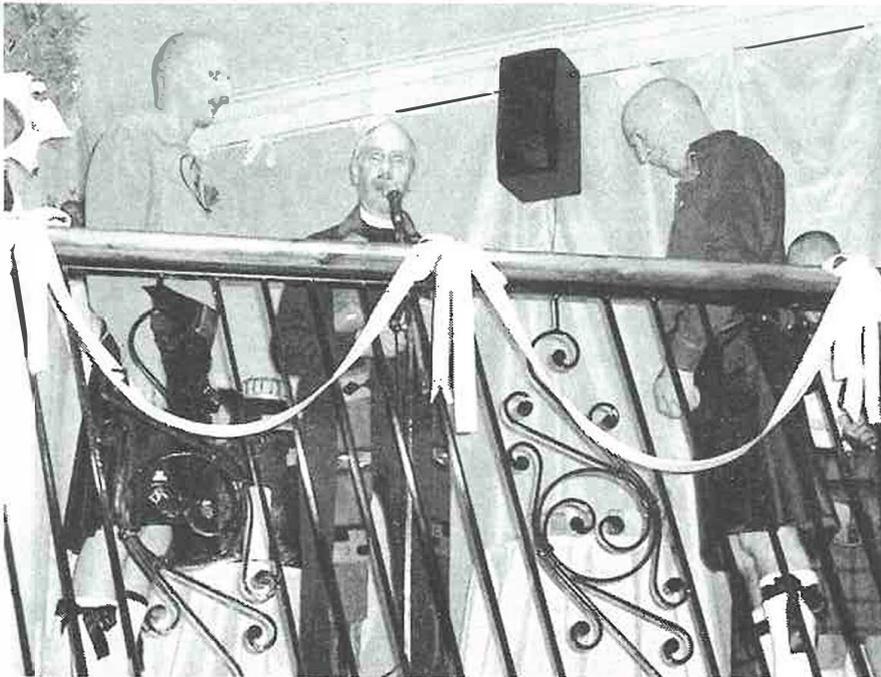
I would welcome 5 minutes of Mr Davies's time if he would come down and stand with me outside the door of No. 83 to observe the speeding. It will only take 5 minutes or less to prove my point.



Over 70 people turned out for the barbecue and garden party organised by Hopetoun Village Residents' Association on 7th August. The Association is for residents of the Bryant development known as 'Hopetoun Village' covering parts of Hopetoun and Annandale Streets, and soon the middle part of Hopetoun Crescent. Seated, left to right, are Marie Keen, Bill Craig, Fiona Blenkinsop, Andrew Heslop and Stella Quarry, with Kenny Scott standing.

CLAREMONT GAY BLESSING

Partners for life



Lorna Mitchell of Bellevue Street reports: On 20th August Robin Scott and Jean-Philippe Hertzog became partners for life by a blessing performed by a Church of Scotland minister in the Claremont Bar, East Claremont Street. The Groom and Groom will be following up the ceremony with a Civil Partnership

next year, when this becomes legal for same-sex couples. They will then carry out a PACS, which is the French equivalent of the ceremony, at the Claremont Bar, meaning that Robin will be entitled to equal partnership rights in France. They plan their honeymoon in Salzburg later this month.

HARD-SURFACING GARDENS

The case against

You read it first in **Spurtle!** In previous editions we've covered local worries over the trend towards hard-surfacing gardens, the environmental dangers this threatens and Robin Harper MSP's intention to seek planning legislation to discourage the practice. Now the issue has surfaced in the mainstream UK Press, in an article 'Death of the British front garden leaves cities in peril of flooding' (*Observer*, 15th August) – echoing some of Robin Harper's concerns.

Increased danger of flooding is not the only argument against paving over our gardens, of course. Amongst others are the threat to biodiversity, loss of health benefits from plant life, and loss of patches of greenery and colour that make our surroundings more attractive. A letter in response to the

Observer article mentioned above suggests a social effect too:

'The more time people spend in their front gardens, the more they are likely to engage in conversation with neighbours or passers-by. Just as the isolation of sitting in a car rather than walking leads to less social contact, so the destruction of the front garden as a space to spend time in leads to less social contact with others in the neighbourhood.'

According to local Councillor Davies, Edinburgh City Council already forbids hard-surfacing 'in conservation areas and in front of tenement/flatted blocks. We also have a "sustainable urban drainage" policy for all new developments, which severely restricts run-off and encourages porosity and seepage into the earth'.

BRIEFLY

Last month we reported complaints about litter from take-aways in Antigua Street. Councillor Davies confirmed to **Spurtle** that a new clause had been added to take-away licences at his suggestion, obliging them to clean up in front of their premises on pain of losing their licences if they do not; and he promised to look into the records of two particular businesses. The Director of Environmental Services has now confirmed that: 'Environmental Wardens will increase their patrols in and around Antigua Street, paying particular attention to the two premises that your constituent has complained about'.

The new Leith Community Treatment Centre opened in July, entry from Junction Place or Bonnington Road (near Victoria Swim Centre). Yvonne Pryor of East Claremont Street sings its praises: 'It's much more a part of the local community than going to the old Eastern hospital campus for maternity services. The waiting area for maternity services – a light and airy space with colourful and interesting art work – is shared with other services, for example the diabetes clinic, so there is always a diverse mix of people sitting waiting. The staff are always very helpful and friendly'.

There is a video on the teachings of **Krishnamurthi the philosopher** being shown at the YWCA Roundabout Centre at 4B Gayfield Place, on the third Sunday of each month at 6pm. Free, and all welcome.

Be a **Spurtle** Supporter. For £1 per month (£11 per year) you get the paper delivered to your door along with one or two other bits of information – and know you are doing your bit to keep **Spurtle** independent and stirring. If you are interested, drop your contribution in at Broughton Books, Broughton Place (any cheques should be made out to John Dickie).

REDBRAES PARK

Residents' wildlife project gets funding



Davie Thomson of Redbraes Residents reports:

Redbraes Community Workshops have been successful in obtaining funding to carry out Phase 1 of the upgrading of Redbraes Park. Thanks to Barclay's Bank and the efforts of BTCV, the wildlife walk project has been started. This will open up what has been a derelict area of the park into a woodland walk. The effects so far are startling, and with the offer of plants from the Parks and Recreation Department what was an inaccessible area will be turned into a place where the plants, trees and

squirrels blend together to provide the view of nature that is in danger of disappearing.

In October the project will be completed and there will be an Open Day when you can come along and see what can be done to retain such open spaces. In the climate of house-building putting pressure on open space, your support can retain some of the beauty and character associated with the Water of Leith and Broughton area.

We welcome NEW REPORTERS

Write up a local story yourself, or let us know about something you think we should be covering.

Copy date for the October edition is Saturday 25th September.

You can drop your copy or idea in at Broughton Books, Broughton Place, or phone John Dickie on 556 0903.

THINKING OF LETTING YOUR PROPERTY?

We always require properties to meet constant demand

Broughton Property Management
61 Broughton Street
Tel 0131 478 7222

E-mail: broughton_prop@ednet.co.uk



New Town Broughton and Pilrig Community Council

Vacancies for Community Councillors

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

We are looking for three people to fill vacancies on the Community Council. If you think you might be interested phone the Secretary for a chat, or come along to our next meeting on Mon. 6th September at 7.30pm in the library, Drummond High.

Secretary: Annette O'Carroll 556 7586

E-mail: aoc1@onetel.net.uk

Malcolm Chisholm MSP Edinburgh North and Leith



Constituency Office:

86-88 Brunswick Street, EH7 5HU
Tel: 0131-558 8358 Fax: 0131-557 6781

Saturday surgeries:

9am Leith Library
10.30am Royston/Wardieburn
Community Centre
12pm Stockbridge Library

Contacts

**Bellevue and Claremont
Residents Association**
Yvonne Pryor 466 1144

Broughton Road Group
Pat Eccles 556 7550

Broughton Village Association
Stephanie Harvey 557 2762
(daytime)

**Friends of Hoptoun Crescent
Garden**
Mitchell Manson 557 1933

Gayfield Association
William McNair 556 4493

**Hoptoun Village Residents
Association**
John Blackwood 557 1245

McDonald Area Amenity Society
Bob Stewart 557 1267

Redbraes Residents Association
George Hosey 467 6151

**New Town Broughton and Pilrig
Community Council**
Annette O'Carroll 556 7586

Broughton History Society
John Dickie 556 0903

Cllr Trevor Davies
Broughton Ward 529 3221
Surgery at Broughton Primary
School, Weds. 6.30pm-7pm during
school terms

Cllr David Guest
New Town Ward
558 8823 or 529 4268
Surgery at 67 Northumberland
Street on Mondays from 6.30 to
7.15pm

Mark Lazarowicz MP for Edinburgh North & Leith



Constituency Office: 86-88 Brunswick St
Tel: 0131 557 0577 Edinburgh,
Fax: 0131 557 5759 EH7 5HU
Email: mark@marklazarowicz.org.uk
Website: www.marklazarowicz.org.uk
Friday advice sessions:
4.00pm Stockbridge Library
5.30pm Constituency Office