

Spurttle



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**June
2015**

No 241

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

BROCK HEADS FOR WESTMINSTER



Deidre Brock took Edinburgh North and Leith in the General Election on 7 May, mirroring other SNP successes across Edinburgh and the country (see our website 8.5.15).

She secured 40.9% of the vote (23,742 votes), a remarkable 31.3% increase on the party's showing in 2010.

Labour's Mark Lazarowicz was beaten into second place, with 18,145 votes (a fall of 6.2%). He had been a principled, hard-working and effective MP since his election in 2001 (Issue 83), and will be missed. Ian McGill (Conservative) came third with 9,378 votes (up 1.2%).

Brock is now part of the Westminster Group Leadership team, covering the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government liaison. She is also Spokesperson on Devolved Government Liaison.

As we understand it, she remains a councillor for Leith Walk, but not for long.

MORE BIN BANS BENEFIT BITS OF BROUGHTON

Restrictions on commercial bins will be extended to further parts of Broughton next month.

Traders will only be allowed to present rubbish within strictly timed windows, or face fines of up to £1,000.

The latest areas to benefit from the rule changes will include Greenside, Calton Hill, Leith Street, and East London Street south to Leith Walk.

Broughton north and east of Bellevue Crescent remains in the dark ages for now, and, unfortunately, no timing restrictions apply to private land, where small pockets of unpleasantness seem set to continue.



REISS REVISITS HOPETOUN



George Reiss, late of this parish, was among those who 20 years ago formulated the Hopetoun Village Action Plan.

It aimed to voice local aspirations for coherent development of the area between Broughton Street and McDonald Road before the bulldozers moved in en masse.

Reiss has since moved away, but as part of postgraduate research at Birmingham City University is revisiting Hopetoun to find out how locals now regard the area, the

LEITH RECALLS LOST SONS



HRH Princess Anne and First Minister Nicola Sturgeon attended a major ceremony on 23 May to mark the centenary of the Quintinshill (Gretna) Rail Disaster.

A parade of Royal Scots past and present marched from the Dalmeny Street Drill Hall to Rosebank Cemetery, where a short service of remembrance was held.

Troops and bandsmen then marched to East Claremont Street where Princess Anne took the salute and Ms Sturgeon afterwards went walkabout to meet locals. See our coverage online (23.5.15).

LOCALS DEMAND BETTER BEHAVIOUR

Residents at the top of Broughton Street say their lives are being made a misery by frequent anti-social behaviour.

The close proximity of a bookie, baker, chip shop and bar, they allege, attracts a small minority of troublemakers who block nearby steps while smoking and drinking, and who treat adjacent basements as bins.

Drunk men sitting on Broughton Street recently became verbally aggressive when asked to move from a domestic entrance, and began intimidating those inside. 'Battering the door was one step away from battering me,' a local told us. Police were informed.

Small groups also gather around the corner in Broughton Street Lane, where there have been problems with smashed windows and urination recently.

Ladbroke's regional manager Neil Gordon told *Spurttle* that troublemakers weren't his company's customers, and that he shared residents' concerns as staff were also being bothered. He said the firm had removed a basement air-con outlet to deter rough sleepers, and would continue to monitor the situation.

The matter will now be raised at the New Town & Broughton Community Council on 8 June.

way it changed, what worked and what didn't.

He's organising informal group discussions (with before-and-after slides and prompts), lasting about an hour, between 17 and 20 June. He's interested in the views of people who've lived locally for years, and those who've moved in more recently. If you'd like to take part, contact: George.Reiss@mail.bcu.ac.uk

Briefly

DOG OWNERS

PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW YOUR
DOG TO SIT ON OR EAT OUR
FURNITURE

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

A local pooch-loving pedant has brought to our attention this sign in the **Roamin' Nose** on Eyre Place. She reckons that so long as you allow your dog to sit on AND eat the furniture, everyone will be content. **We are not convinced.**

BottleDog has applied for an offsales licence (10am–10pm, seven days a week) in the premises of the former **French Press Coffee Company** café at 25a Dundas St. We think it may be from the same litter as BrewDog Edinburgh, the **trendy craft-beer specialist bar** in the Cowgate. NTBCC will oppose on the grounds of inadequate sound-proofing in a residential tenement.



Dicle Cafe, Celadon 2U and Tailor Design on Rodney Street suffered damage to windows and doors on 15 May when a man kicked them in at around 5am. He was spotted by locals, reported, and police promptly chased the culprit before **catching him on Scotland St.** A knife had gone missing from the café but was not recovered. Meanwhile, business continues as normal.

The **Central Edinburgh Book Group**, which used to meet monthly in McDonald Rd Library, has folded.

Broughton History Society's **AGM and Members' Night** takes place on 8 June from 7.15pm in Drummond CHS. **Tiaras optional.** Boom-de-ays compulsory.

Cliché-averse locals have been plucking plates and smashing bouzoukis in **excited anticipation** of a new arrival. Not another great-grandchild for **HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh**, but Spitaki's, a Greek restaurant in the former Elbow at 133–35 East Claremont St.

Musicians from around the world will descend on St Andrew Square next month for the **2015 Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival**. The Spiegel tent will host around **35 shows from 17–26 July** with Heriot's Rugby Club on Inverleith Row hosting another two. The act with the best name must surely be **New Orleans Swamp Donkey Traditional Jass** [sic] **Band**. Hopefully it does not portend the state of the square come the end of the festival. Info. at: <http://goo.gl/DTaip>

George Street consultation

The final quarterly George Street Stakeholder Group consultation on uses, layout and priorities will start at 10am on 15 June in the Assembly Rooms. Anyone can go along and contribute.

Feedback from on-street customer research will be discussed. So too will be the identity and work schedule of a newly appointed independent designer for the street, and opportunities for the public to become involved in the work. (See <http://goo.gl/dAhFyb> for job description.)

On completion of its 12-month trial period in September, George Street will revert to its former layout. However, an interim advisory cycle lane is expected to be installed (like that between King's Buildings and Causewayside) until a more permanent arrangement requiring a TRO is found.

Has Planning lost the plot?

The New Town & Broughton Community Council last month discussed perceived shortcomings in the performance of CEC's Planning Department.

- It appears understaffed, overloaded and mistake-ridden.
- There seems to be no mechanism to correct what officials concede have been errors in their procedure and judgement.
- There is inadequate scrutiny of domestic projects, particularly of Edinburgh World Heritage Site interiors.
- Planning has failed to enforce its own decisions in a timely or consistent manner.
- Officials react to enquiries and constructive criticism with inappropriate defensiveness.

Systemic and budget-related problems have also been raised on the *Planning Democracy* website here: <http://goo.gl/VF5kwU>

NTBCC has resolved to pursue the issues with the Edinburgh World Heritage Trust, Planning itself, and at the influential Edinburgh Civic Forum.

New page for Broughton bookseller



Elizabeth Strong will retire at the end of next month after 43 years at McNaughtan's Bookshop on Haddington Place.

The basement haven began in 1957 under Major McNaughtan and his wife. Elizabeth joined in 1972 and took over the business seven years later.

In the mid-1980s she extended into the former Ladbrokes premises next door, and has always been keen to maintain the shop's mixed stock with a strong element of academic texts and the Classics.

New owners Derek and Anna Walker – who currently work in the Antiquarian section of Blackwell's in Oxford – will start settling in over July before taking full control of McNaughtan's in August.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth is looking forward to focusing on her painting from now on, and will start by exhibiting as part of the Edinburgh Landscape Artists' Group at White Space on Gayfield Square from 8 August.

Best seats in the house

This pair of his-and-her chairs have been turning heads in Canonmills lately. They appear in the window of Napier Bathrooms, and are, say staff, ideal for indoor and outdoor use. The pair are discreetly plain at the front, in contrast to their beautifully sculpted backs.



Rodney Street picture palace

Within the flats at 23 Rodney Street is the ghost of one of Edinburgh's great picture palaces.

The ABC Ritz, built in 1929, was the inspiration of Jimmy S. Nairn, manager and impresario extraordinaire who filmed every stage of its construction, to the consternation of builders. It was one of the first to accommodate the new 'Talkies', and premiered Al Jolson in *The Singing Fool* on 8 September 1929.



Photo courtesy of: dusashenka [<https://goo.gl/ZUB7b2>]

Nairn created fantastic foyer displays for publicity. In 1933, he commissioned an exotic landscape with 'six love birds, canaries, tortoises, and three lizards' for *Mr Robinson Crusoe*, starring Douglas Fairbanks and Maria Alba.

After 1934, Nairn continued his 50-year cinema career in Stirling (the Regal), and Inverness (Playhouse, La Scala, Empire) where his memory is held dear.

This writer remembers the Ritz as a vast magical cavern and a marvellous escape on a dreich afternoon. One matinée showing of John Huston's steamy *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1967), starring Brando and Taylor, was attended by a riveted audience of three.

Seating was reduced to a mere 1,200 after modernisation and removal of the Circle in 1969. Alas, ABC closed the Ritz in November 1981, with Mel Gibson in *Mad Max*. Demolition followed in 1983. But memories are fecund ... Readers' reminiscences are invited for publication. — JRM

Watch out for: Gulls

These much maligned visitors deserve a second look, coming in a variety of sizes and shapes as the species change through the year. They share some characteristics: a generally white appearance, superb flying skills, lifelong pair bonding. And the traits that get them into trouble: loud calls, intelligence and a sharp eye for anything edible.

How to see them: Over the summer look out for the Lesser Black Backed Gull (pictured behind). They have slate-grey wings and yellow legs, and are only here for the summer. In other respects they resemble the resident Herring Gulls (pictured in front), which have pink legs and lighter coloured wings.

Also look out for: We're regularly visited by two of our smaller gulls. The Black Headed Gull has a dark red beak, slim pointed wings and, at this time of year, a distinct dark brown head. And finally, the inaccurately named and shy Common Gull. It nests on moors and remote islands, but visits our playing fields in winter to roost and find food.— Miles Forde



Photo: Wikipedia Creative Commons

Music school plan hits right note

Outline plans to rehouse St Mary's Music School in the former Royal High School on Regent Road were aired at the New Town & Broughton Community Council last month (see our website 13.5.15).

There was overwhelming support for the Royal High School Preservation Trust's proposal to create unobtrusive and secure boarding accommodation at the east of the site (leaving the west clear), and for opening up a range of performance and rehearsal spaces in the Hamilton Building at the centre. No changes are envisaged for the 'iconic' façade. Advocates insist the plan is fully funded that the Trust will raise additional money through summer lets.

Meanwhile, the luxury hotel scheme of Duddingston House Properties and the Urbanist Group remains in prime position and is still advancing. Significantly revised drawings were, we understand, greeted with qualified approval by CEC's Edinburgh Urban Design Panel in May. 'Anywhere else, they would have been good' was one unofficial verdict we heard later. The Panel's report (which is advisory only) will be made public when the hotel planning application is submitted later this summer.

Meanwhile, although reserving judgment until finalised plans are available, Edinburgh Central's Marco Biagi MSP indicated in his newsletter last month a personal leaning towards the music school alternative.

Briefly



BBCScotland broadcast the final **Leaders Debate** of the 2015 General Election campaign from the **Mansfield Traquair Centre** on 3 May. Two very eminent readers (better acquainted with a mutual friend than they were with each other) later discussed the event's **memorable lighting scheme**. One claimed it resembled 'the effect of those psycho-active substances in the mid-70s', the other 'an Antwerp brothel, 1976'. There followed an **awkward pause** as neither eminent reader chose to explain how they knew so much about it.

Broughton's **Phantom Positive Thinker** is back (see our website 11.2.15). Recent scrawlings on Rodney St assured pug-ugly passers-by '**YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL**' and advised them to '**BE KIND TO STRANGERS**'. The correct way to greet strangers is, of course, from behind a chained door, just after demanding to see their ID and just before tasing them.

The nerdishly fascinating snapshot **Edinburgh by Numbers** is now available online: [<http://goo.gl/sHSou3>]. On the whole, the capital emerges well from the statistics. The document is a masterpiece of accessible design and **very selective collation** by CEC officials. Treat sceptically.



Water of Leith Conservation Trust volunteer **Steve Morrison** took this photo as reports of **otter sightings** flooded in last month. WLCT reported: 'On 6 separate occasions a pair have been stopped between Dean Village and Bonnington'. Stopped doing what?

Reactions to the projected '**ribbon hotel**' or '**golden turd**' in the St James Quarter have been mixed (Issue 240). At last month's NTBCC, some thought it was fun and an **eye-catching addition** to the skyline; others dismissed it as frivolous and '**a monument to conspicuous consumption**'. There was consensus that it appeared too big for the available space, and that whatever is finally built here should be made of **top-quality materials**.

Moreover ...



Almost indistinguishable **Adam Knight** (left, manager of Starbucks on Waverley Steps) and **Adam Knight** (general manager of Edinburgh Playhouse) are backing **Waverley Care (WC)** this summer. Starbucks will promote 'tartan awareness ribbons' via selected stores. **Edinburgh Playhouse** has made WC one of its beneficiary charities and will host its annual **Comedy Gala on 16 Aug.** Mansfield Place-based Waverley Care cares for and supports people living with HIV or Hepatitis C.



End-on parking has its supporters, but **not done like this**. No-one was hurt when a driver misjudged the turn into Nelson St from Abercromby Place last month.

St Stephen's Church appears to be flourishing as a **performance space**. Concerts are scheduled for violin and viola at 3pm on 14 Jun and the **Argyll String Quartet & singer Helen Lothian** on 21 Jun (£7/£5).

Marco Biagi, SNP MSP for Edinburgh Central since 2011 has announced his intention **not to stand for next year's Holyrood election**. He plans instead on a return to academia. See his Facebook statement on 23.5.15 at <https://goo.gl/wtkTxF>

The **booksale** at St Andrew's and St George's West Church on 15 May raised **£111,671**. All proceeds to Christian Aid.

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Monday of the month
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Alison Johnstone MSP for Lothian Region



On the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month during term time I hold a surgery for Lothian residents at the Scottish Parliament between 11am and 1pm.

Please call to book a surgery appointment or to arrange another time and venue that is convenient for you.

Contact me on 0131 348 6421
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New Town/Broughton Community Council

THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL
REPRESENTS THE VIEWS
OF LOCAL RESIDENTS TO
EDINBURGH CITY COUNCIL

NEXT MEETING

Monday 8 June

at 7.30pm

Broughton St Mary's Parish
Church, Bellevue Crescent

www.ntbcc.org.uk/contact/

AM DECORATING

Your local painter & decorator **Alastair McAlpine**
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