

# Spurttle



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2017**

**No 267**

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**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free**

## BRIDGE BOUND FOR SCRAPHEAP

The bendy double-helix footbridge over Leith Street was cut, then removed by crane, in the small hours of 17 September. Its departure reflects the soon-to-be redesigned street's shift in emphasis away from the private motor car.

'The removal of the pedestrian bridge,' writes TH Real Estate's director of development Martin Perry, 'is an intrinsic element in our programme of improvements for the east end of the city, creating a high-quality and much-improved environment which will better serve Edinburgh's pedestrians, public transport and cyclists for years to come'.



Installed in 2003 as part of the Omni Centre development, the 50m 'complex composite beam' weighed 90 tons and, because its foundations were divided by a geological fault line, was designed to move +/-15mm. If all its circular hollow tubes were straightened out and placed end to end on the road, we estimate they would stretch from their original site nearly to the junction of Inverleith Row and Terrace.

Designed by architect Broadway Malayan, the Greenside Link's bespoke design means it could not easily be used elsewhere. It cost £1.8 million at the time of commission, but its scrap value today is estimated at only around £3,000. Would make an unusual garden feature.

Meanwhile, safety concerns and inconvenience have marked the partial closure of Leith Street (see our website, 11.9.17), and outrage has greeted belated unveiling of Picardy Place plans (see our website, 23.9.17): too much traffic, reduced public space, insufficient consultation.

## AKIMBO ON DUNDAS STREET



This unusual bronze by the French sculptor Eutrope Bouret (1833–1906) is currently featured in the window of Glenn Ross's Colours Gallery on Dundas Street. Entitled 'Au Cirque', the saucy boy with the riding-crop is a marvel of bravura details. Look at the intricate lacing on his boots, his belt, and the tassels on his fringed shorts. He is indeed a triple-star – and flaunts it!—JRM (For a longer review of the current exhibition, see our website later this month.)

## TRAMS TO NEWHAVEN PROCEED WITH CAUTION

Councillors voted on 21 September to progress extension of the trams by inviting potential contractors to cost the work. A final decision on whether or not to proceed from York Place to Newhaven will be taken in autumn 2018.

Before the Full Council and an earlier Transport & Environment Committee on 4 September, Leith Central Community Council sent a deputation to express their concerns about the project.

Vice-chair Harald Tobermann said Leith's 30k residents were already worn out by 10 years' disruption, and a further 3–5 years' construction could seriously affect their physical and mental health. Some 300 local businesses (and 1k jobs) would be at risk. Leith had much to lose and little to gain.

He called for 10 palliative measures for Leith residents/businesses including more parking controls, improved access to green spaces, better basic services such as waste collection and street lighting, compensation for businesses and refunds of Council Tax in the event of over-runs, and a 2-year delay to Phase 6 of the Leith Walk Programme.

In conclusion, LCCC urged councillors not to be hurried into a decision by the timetable requirements of the current Tram Act, and questioned the wisdom of proceeding with more work before Lord Hardie's Inquiry had published its findings.

Councillors took the points seriously, and reacted with some sympathy before eventually voting in favour of advancing the tram project. Compensation processes are already being drawn up by officials. For detailed reports and local ward councillors' interventions see our website (29.8.17; 4.9.17; 21.9.17).

## LUXURY HOTEL PLAN REJECTED AGAIN

On 31 August, councillors voted unanimously to refuse planning permission and listed building consent for a revised scheme by Duddingston House Properties and Urbanist Group to create a luxury hotel complex in and around the old Royal High School (see [goo.gl/3BPWE8](http://goo.gl/3BPWE8)).

The clarity of the Development Management Subcommittee's decision surprised both supporters and opponents of the plan. Planning officials' explicit recommendation to reject the plan was the major contributory factor – they identified a dozen policy breaches in the proposal. The weight of public opinion – some 3,205 letters of objection were sent in – must also have concentrated minds.

Support for the scheme from Scottish Enterprise, Visit Scotland and Edinburgh Airport was outweighed by many more objections from politicians, public bodies and residents associations. The New Town & Broughton Community Council outlined their opposition in person.

Whatever the merits of their case, the developers' tone over recent months has struck some as, by turns, shrill, pugnacious, and self-pitying. On this occasion, criticism of Council officers by UG's David Orr went down poorly. DHP's Bruce Hare and Rosewood Hotels' president Radhar Arora did not appear. Confusingly, Gordon Dewar spoke in favour of the scheme in a private capacity, not as Chief Executive of Edinburgh Airport.

Naturally, the applicants are disappointed. They will resume their first appeal to the Scottish Government regarding an earlier proposal, and appeal against this second decision simultaneously. This story still has a long way to go.

## Briefly

**Broughton History Society** will meet next on 9 Oct at 7pm in **Drummond Community High School**. Peter Burman will talk about **'Hopetoun House and its People'**.



Some **Clarendon Crescent residents** are objecting to the Council about the Clarendon Hotel's recent **refreshment of paintwork** there. They say the brilliant white used for the outside basement area, steps and railing tips is **incongruous**; that it visually divides the street; and is **inappropriate** for an A-listed, 1820s property of this kind. The Crescent's architect **William Burn** (1789–1870) was unavailable for comment. Burn's **varied projects** elsewhere in the area include: N. Leith Parish Church, **Edinburgh Academy**, Pilrig House, the British Linen Bank, the **Melville Monument**, and the former gasworks of Tanfield in Canonmills. We touched on the career of his father, **Robert Burn**, in Issues 203, 204 and 213; and online (1.2.12).

Are you an Edinburgh **flat or tenement dweller** with opinions about communal bins for recycling and landfill waste? Changeworks' **online survey** (goo.gl/rW62X4) takes 5–10 minutes to complete but there's **plenty of space** for those wishing to wax lyrical. Feedback goes to the Council. Participants may enter a prize draw.

A **large hole** appeared in a Broughton Market wall on 12 Sept. Nobody knows **who dunnit**, but the smart money is on a lorry, van, or rhinoceros blindly following satnav. **CEC have been informed**, as neighbours fear the structure may now be unstable.

**New Town & Broughton Community Council** are calling for more residents associations. The reason is simple: **constituted bodies carry more clout** than individuals when it comes to tackling public issues. At NTBCC's next meeting on 9 Oct, city-centre programme manager **Anna Herriman** will outline the Council's latest plans for **revamping George St** (see our website 3.6.16).

**The Ivy on the Square** opened on St Andrew Sq last month with 130 seats for diners, plus bar. **Shorts, singlets and microskirts** do not cut the mustard. Although gentlemen sporting **short-sleeved shirts** are expected to wear a jacket, gentlemen **enjoying the breeze** in kilts do not have to wear stockings. It all adds to the establishment's self-styled 'approachable sophistication and luxury with an underlying feeling of glamour and theatre'.

## RBS plans revised

Royal Bank of Scotland's application for planning permission in principle to redevelop the site between Fettes Row, Royal Crescent, Dundas Street and Eyre Place (16/05454/PPP) is being revised.

The currently submitted version was right royally monstered by Historic Environment Scotland (see goo.gl/WW8Prf) due to its potential 'significant adverse impacts on *the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site* and [nearby] Category A listed buildings'. By law, therefore, any consent given by City of Edinburgh Council would require the case to be called in by Scottish Ministers.

However, we now learn that GVA James Barr and architects Michael Laird Associates are working on a revised version aimed at addressing the earlier concerns of public bodies and private individuals. This will probably be submitted by mid-October, at which point a further period for public consideration and comment will begin. A GVA James Barr spokesperson told us on 20 September they would shortly be meeting community council members and other key stakeholders to let everyone know what the position is. More when we have it.



## Cycleways cause confusion

The Pilrig Street to Brunswick Street phase of the on-going Leith Walk upgrade features the bold experiment, (unique in Edinburgh) of inserting cycleways into the pavements to give cyclists a traffic-free option. However, although built and easily accessible, the new cycleways are not yet signed as such and will not be officially 'open' until they have been.

Confusion has ensued, with some cyclists disregarding the 'Cycleway Not In Use' notices to the bewilderment of pedestrians unfamiliar with this particular form of dual-use, and being none-the-wiser thanks to the absence of signage.

When they finally appear, the cycleway markings will include arrows encouraging cyclists to follow the same direction as the road traffic on each side of the Walk. But early evidence suggests this is too optimistic, as well as unenforceable.

Given time, there's no reason why pedestrians and cyclists cannot adjust to this new arrangement without conflict. All it needs is awareness and consideration to be shown by both, particularly near bus-stops where pedestrians have no option but to cross the cycleways. It remains to be seen how motorists (like this one spotted outside Sainsbury's last month) will adjust. We'll report again once the experiment is fully bedded in from early November onwards.—*Tim Smith*



## Beautiful Edinburgh: a visitor complains

Edinburgh is struggling to strike the right balance between mass tourism and residential amenity. Last month, *Spurtle* and all four city-centre councillors were copied in to an email of complaint from Sandra Semple, a visitor. We reproduce it below.

*Dear Environmental Health,*

*We are staying in a Princes Street-facing room at the Travelodge, directly opposite Malone's 'temporary' bar.*

*Today we are changing rooms as – with the main windows AND secondary glazing closed firmly – the noise from the bar was SO loud we could barely converse with each other in the room. Add to that the raucous singing, shouting and reeling around by drunkards and it made a disgusting sight as well as a noisy one.*

*I am sure that last night the decibel level of the live music MUST have gone beyond the danger level for human hearing.*

*It has completely spoiled our visit and left a poor impression of the city, especially as the 'tacky' structure spoils a lovely view. I will recommend it only to stag and hen night parties in future.*

*Spurtle* reported Keasim Ltd's belated application for planning permission on our website (25.7.17). New Town & Broughton Community Council have objected to consent.

## Minister leaves Broughton for Brazil

The Rev. Graham McGeoch is to leave Broughton St Mary's Parish Church after nearly 4½ years as minister. At the end of October, he, wife Telma and their young son will move to Vitoria on the coast of Brazil.

Describing his time in Broughton as 'a privilege', McGeoch writes of his hopes that 'the church will continue to hold an open dialogue with the wider parish, in all its diversity, and [...] continue to be known as a place of warm welcome for all'.

The highlights here for him have included facilitating the church building as 'a community facility', the recent worship service with imam Shaykh Hassan Rabbani, and pioneering LGBT work recently recognised by the wider church, politicians and the BBC.

In Brazil, McGeoch will care for his son, and develop a collaboration with the Instituto Maria e Joao Aleixo in Rio de Janeiro, which works in a favela of 130k people to promote positive examples of citizenship in urban peripheries. He will also collaborate with a theological faculty in Vitoria. We wish him well.



## Briefly



Just started school? Here's **John 'Jackie' Hogg** in 1937 (with Sandy Hill in the background behind **40 Broughton Rd**), on his first day at Canonmills School. Loving the **double-breasted jacket, shorts and sockless sandals** (see Issue 264).

**Blagden Property (One) Ltd** seek planning permission to partially demolish, alter and rebuild an office and workshop at **14-16 Union St and 24 Forth St**. They propose 11 residential apartments (3x1-bdrm, 5x2, 3x1) with basement parking for 7 cars (**Ref. 17/03993/FUL**). We have been here before three times (see [goo.gl/kxfu2x](http://goo.gl/kxfu2x)). The latest modern design **will not offend critics** of past ones in the same way.

A new history plaque in **Bellevue Cres Gdn** alludes to a Zeppelin raid on Leith and Edinburgh on the night of 2/3 April 1916. A **high-explosive bomb** fell on vacant land in Bellevue Ter (now Nos 12-13, 15-18), breaking the windows of 5 main-door flats and 5 tenements, and 7 windows in **St Mary's Church**. No-one was hurt here, but **deaths and injuries** did occur elsewhere in Leith, Bonnington and the city centre. See [[goo.gl/rfFPzb](http://goo.gl/rfFPzb)] and [[goo.gl/VYwPtt](http://goo.gl/VYwPtt)].

On 10 Sept the **Gayfield Association** (GA) held its first ever picnic for members and invited locals. Those who attended in **Gayfield Sq Gdns** brought their own **drinks and nibbles** to share. There was an excellent turnout. The rain stayed away. **The sun even shone**. Old friends got the chance to chat while new friendships were formed. The GA thanks all who attended and, especially, **Valvona and Crolla**, Elm Row, who generously donated delicious pizzas.



Is this **Broughton's narrowest pavement**? The photo, taken at the NW end of Barony St by reader Beatrijs Subboys, shows a **31cm shoe** for scale.

Police Scotland's **Operation Pumpkin** will tackle Halloween-related disorder later this month. Shops selling **fireworks and/or alcohol** to hoodies (except ghostly monks) will receive close attention.

## Look out for: Kingfishers

Kingfishers are widely associated with the comparatively warm rivers and ponds of England, but are surviving more and more in Scotland, including along the Water of Leith and in the Botanical Garden. I have not heard of them successfully breeding here, but this can surely be only a matter of time.

The Kingfisher family is widespread and includes the Kookaburra of Australia. Despite their name, most species of kingfishers do not hunt in water but snatch insects, small reptiles and rodents on open ground. Recent research has shown that it is the fishing scion of this family which is the latecomer.

Nevertheless, these birds have become masters of the art. Perching on low branches by the water, they plunge head first with great accuracy, despite the refraction of the water's surface, to snatch trout fry, minnows and invertebrates which populate our increasingly clean waterways.

Despite their stunning plumage, Kingfishers are hard to see; shy of people, they fly away, quickly disappearing from sight. They are predominantly an electric blue-green with a bright orange chest. Strong white patches are visible around the neck if you are lucky enough to catch them sitting still or even hunting. They have a high-pitched distinctive call that they utter in flight, often the only warning that this diminutive predator is around. — *Miles Forde*



Photo: *Andreas Trepte, Wikimedia Commons*

## Calling new and old subscribers

Every autumn, we ask readers to dip into their pockets and make a modest contribution towards keeping the *Spurtle* financially afloat and locally accountable.

The sum raised in this way supplements whatever we raise through advertising, and allows us to remain unfettered by grants and therefore editorially independent.

Annual subscriptions cost £15, for which a printed copy can be delivered to your door. For hard-to-reach doors, a postal subscription costs £22. If you don't want to receive a copy and would rather pay a smaller amount, that's fine – we're grateful for anything we can get.

Please make cheques out to 'Spurtle' and deliver to the Narcissus address on p.4. For electronic transfers, see the 'About us' page on our website. Thank you in anticipation.



## Mink on the slink

A reader reports spotting a North American mink recently under the bridge closest to Inverleith Terrace Lane. According to the Water of Leith Conservation Trust, live-trapping these voracious and invasive carnivores in semi-urban settings is expensive, difficult, and just as likely to end up catching cats and domestic children.

Trust Manager Helen Brown says mink first escaped here from a fur farm in Balerno, and for a while sightings of them outnumbered otter sightings 20:1. That ratio has now reversed, partly because native otters will not tolerate more than the occasional hunting foray by them.

Mink, it seems, are mostly a problem for fat, bread-filled ducklings on the canal. Nevertheless, Brown asks the public to report sightings of otter and mink so that the situation can be monitored. When getting in touch, give a date, time of day, exact location and grid reference if possible. For more see: [[goo.gl/cDV5q1](http://goo.gl/cDV5q1)]. Photo: *Wikimedia Commons*.



## Moreover ...

Planning permission is sought for a 3-storey 3-bedroom development on Dublin St Lane South (Ref. 17/04143/FUL). Its architect says the design would strengthen the **form of the street** and is a contemporary interpretation of a traditional mews building. Seen **from the north at pavement level**, we fear it would resemble an overbearing boxer with one eye swelling shut and his gumshield falling out.

Edinburgh Council Planners, Edinburgh World Heritage, and Historic Environment Scotland are **developing a strategy** for the protection and maintenance of the **capital's setted streets**. Until 11 Oct you can give your views on the subject in an **online survey** here: [goo.gl/SQqHGL].

Although any new **Ross Bandstand** in W Princes St Gardens will lie outwith its New Town and Broughton bounds, the NTBCC will take a **close neighbourly interest** in it. *Spurtle* understands that a range of opinions concerning the venue exists within the **Cockburn Association**, some taking a wait-and-see approach and others feeling that one should not only **look a gift horse in the mouth** but also pull all its teeth out and examine them under a microscope.

While we're on the subject of **North American imports** (see p.3), let's talk about one of Broughton's newest streets. It lies athwart Beaverhall Rd and is called **Hatters Lane**. The name is a nod to the **hat factory** established by Captain Hamilton next to Beaver Hall around 1683 (see goo.gl/ksGn8j). For some time, Hamilton had a monopoly on the manufacture in Scotland of hats made from imported (American) **beaver pelts**. In case you're interested, **milliners** were originally retailers of goods (including hats) from Milan.



Last month, *Spurtle* joined the Independent Community News Network. ICNN aims to 'promote quality journalism, help to address the democratic deficit in news-poor communities and [...] create more jobs in journalism at the local and hyperlocal level'. To find out more, visit: [goo.gl/nqayR9].

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**Deidre Brock MP**  
Edinburgh North and Leith



**Regular Surgeries**  
**Leith:** 1st Friday of the month 1-2pm, 166 Great Junction Street  
**Leith Walk:** 2nd Friday of the month 3.30-4.30pm, McDonald Rd Library  
**Stockbridge:** 3rd Friday of the month 1-2pm Stockbridge Library  
**Royston/Wardieburn Community Centre:** Last Friday, 4-5pm  
[dbrockmp.scot](http://dbrockmp.scot)  
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**LEITH CENTRAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL**



A forum for local people who want to engage with and work for their local community.

**Participate in local democracy.**

Make representations to City of Edinburgh Council, other public bodies and private agencies on everything that matters locally.

**Next meeting at 7pm on 16 October**  
Nelson Hall, McDonald Rd Library  
[leithcentralcc.co.uk/meeting-dates](http://leithcentralcc.co.uk/meeting-dates)

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## Ben Macpherson MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Edinburgh Northern and Leith Constituency

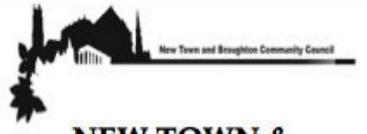


### Constituency Surgeries

(no appointment necessary)

<b>Every Monday:</b> 5-6pm at Leith Library 28-30 Ferry Road Edinburgh EH6 4AE	<b>Every Friday:</b> 4-5pm at Royston/Wardieburn Community Centre Pilton Drive North Edinburgh EH5 1NF
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## NEW TOWN & BROUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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

**You're very welcome to attend.**  
Come along and make a difference at our next meeting  
**7.30pm, 9 October**  
Broughton St Mary's Parish Church, Bellevue Crescent  
[www.ntbcc.org.uk](http://www.ntbcc.org.uk)