

Spurtle

BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER

No 146 broughton.spurtle@blueyonder.co.uk **Free**

**April
2007**

Tel: - 668 3701

Briefly

On the night of **30th April**, Calton Hill will be ablaze once more with the **20th Beltane Fire Festival**. Once again, pagan spirits will take over the summit in a blaze of colour, passion and drumming in a revival of the ancient Celtic fertility festival to welcome in summer. There are all the familiar pagan characters – the May Queen, the Green Man and many more. Very educational, although if you tire of the spectacle or are deafened by the drums, you might be tempted to slope off elsewhere on the hill and do a little al-fresco fertility rite of your own (a Beltane tradition, we're told!). Tickets are just £5 for the whole shebang, which lasts from 9pm-1pm. You can either buy online at www.beltane.org, toddle up to The Hub on Castlehill, or phone 473 2000.

The man behind Jack McConnell's silver-fox bouffant is revealed at last: Albany Street snipper **Charlie Kivlin**. Hairdresser Kivlin has been cutting the First Minister's locks for some time now, by all accounts, although no word on just how he achieves the distinctive mini Don King look. One of the tricks of the trade, we guess. We wonder where other party leaders go to get their hair chopped (was Tommy Sheridan a DIY-with-clippers man once upon a time, for example?).

St Mary's Cathedral on Broughton Street had it fixed for them recently when Sir Jimmy Savile and Cardinal Keith O'Brien helped launch a special ambulance that would take severely disabled people on pilgrimage and on holiday. A hive of activity these days: the cathedral also played host to a 'cleaning party' (refreshments provided, bring your own elbowgrease) to get the place spick-and-span for a special mass celebrating the second anniversary of Pope Benedict XVI.

THE MAY ELECTIONS

Spurtle Hustings

As for previous elections, Spurtle is planning hustings in the lead-up to 3rd May. One will feature candidates for the Scottish Parliament, the other those seeking to become our local councillors.

The City Council election will be a whole new ball-game: fewer and bigger wards, and a different way of voting.

Broughton Ward will be consigned to history. The bigger part of Broughton will be within a new Leith Walk Ward along with Pilrig and parts of Bonnington and Canonmills; plus areas across Leith Walk, on both sides of Easter Road and as far east as Hibs Stadium. But a sizeable chunk of Broughton will be in a different ward altogether, City Centre: East London Street; Broughton Place; Hart, Forth and Union Streets; Picardy Place; Gayfield; the main road up through Rodney Street and Broughton Street, and everything westwards from there.

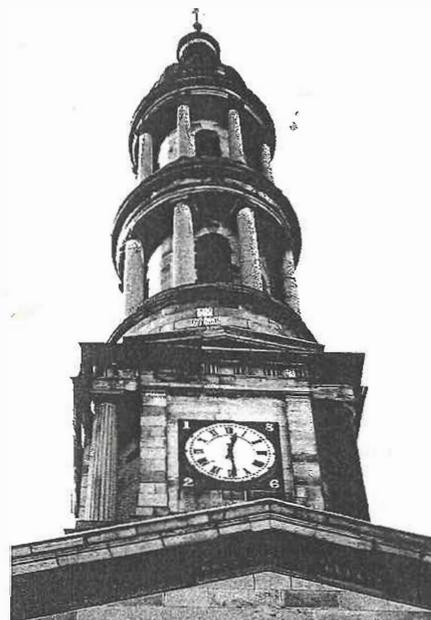
There will be 17 wards instead of the current 58. Either 3 or 4 councillors will be elected for each ward: 4 in the case of Leith Walk Ward. The way you vote for councillors is changing to a form of proportional representation known as Single Transferable Vote (STV).

For the council elections you'll be asked to rank the candidates in order of your preference: 1 for your first choice, 2 for your second choice and so on. When voting is over the votes will be counted electronically using STV. Each voter gets one vote, which can transfer from their first preference to their second preference and so on, to get as proportional a result as possible.

Spurtle will hold a hustings for the Leith Walk Ward. The Community Council are planning one for City Centre Ward on 24th April.

Spurtle hustings for Scottish Parliament: Wednesday 11th April, 7.30pm at Broughton St Mary's Church, Bellevue Crescent. **Spurtle** hustings for Leith Walk Ward, City Council: Monday 16th April (*same time, same venue*).

(To confirm details, look out for posters!)



Reid All About It



*Drummond CHS is a major presence in Broughton with the equivalent of 45 full-time teaching staff, 20 non-teaching staff and 480 pupils. Five weeks into his post, **Spurtle** visited the new Headteacher to find out where he's from, what he's doing, and how he plans to develop the school in future.*

Jon Reid is married and in his mid-30s. Originally from Aberdeen, he is a Biology and Education graduate of Stirling University and a former Depute Rector at Larbert High School near Falkirk. With 14 years' teaching experience, he refutes any doubts about his comparative youth. 'The important thing is not age but ability and prior experiences ... judge me on the impact I've made in the past and the potential I have to make a difference in future.'

Coming from a 'ginormous' comprehensive – 1800 pupils, of whom he was directly responsible for 600 – Reid was attracted by Drummond's smaller size and the chance to know most of the students and staff on a more personal basis.

He was struck straight away by the school's warmth: "It's calm, it's orderly, relaxed and very friendly – the children speak to you, which isn't always the case in secondary schools.' He was also impressed by the staff, who already enjoy a national reputation for innovative and effective aspects of their work. 'They're the most dedicated and motivated teachers I've ever met,' says Reid. He's clearly proud of the school and points to its above City of Edinburgh average in getting students into further and higher education, and to recent success in steering a pupil through to Oxford University.

Drummond should do more to trumpet its excellence, he stresses. As part of this, academic, sporting, community and enterprise achievements will be celebrated in mid-June at a new high-profile prize-giving ceremony. Using a traditional format, it will be a chance to showcase the very best of the school to parents and the wider world.

But there's room for progress and the new Head has moved quickly to consult staff and pupils about changes. He plans to introduce a prefect system involving senior students, to tighten up on timekeeping and the dress code, and to improve behaviour standards in and around the school.

Reid sees more parental involvement in school life as vital to Drummond's future. His priority, though, is to ensure 'teachers of excellence are in every classroom providing really high-quality learning. That is the only way to guarantee school improvement.' Central to his plans are learning, teaching, and achievement – 'I am absolutely committed to a situation whereby if a student walks in through the door in their first year they will progress in whatever subject to whatever level they want by the time they walk out in P5 or P6.'

Reid supports the community ethos of the school, and is keen to strengthen Drummond's links with feeder schools, local residents and groups. He's also in favour of continued out-of-hours access to the playground, and believes Amey (Drummond's private partner) shares this view. Together they're looking to develop responsible and considerate use of this space in future.

How long will such a vigorous and ambitious figure stay at the school? 'I'm here to make a difference,' says Reid, 'and a sustainable improvement for staff and pupils. I'm not going to let folk down. I can't promise to stay forever but I can promise I'm not going to leave until the job is done.'

Readers wanting to know more about life in the school can log on to its new and regularly updated website at: <http://www.drummondhigh.com>.

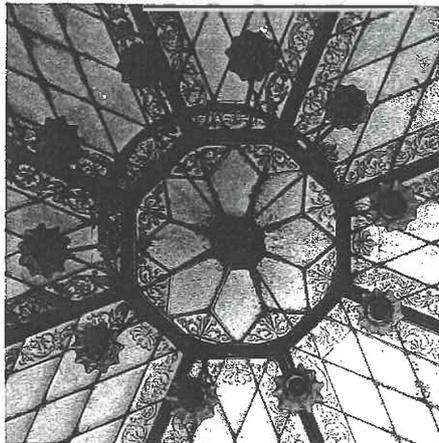
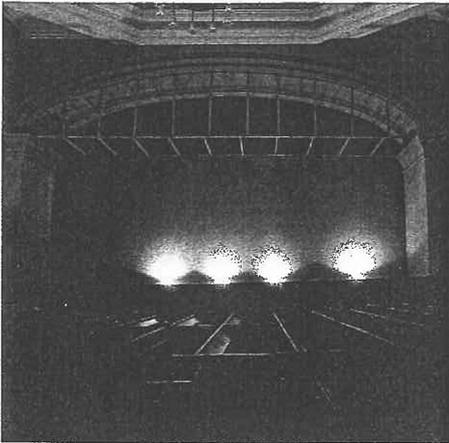
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Spurtle hustings:

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House Of Glas Shines Again



John Ross Maclean writes:

Walk along Barony Street and you will pass by a building shrouded by tarpaulin and scaffolding, suggestive of a film-set for some dark Victorian scene. Its curious name also has a ring of the arcane.

This is the Glasite Meeting House. In fact, it is one of Broughton's least conspicuous early 19th century churches, whose unadorned severity perhaps reflects the austere ethos of its 18th century founder John Glas and his followers. The latter included the celebrated physicist Michael Faraday and mercantile families such as Pullars of Perth, Waterstons, and the famous Sandemans wine merchants.

The building was designed by Alexander Black and built in 1834-35. The preserved interior, which consists of blind-arched walls, box pews, a superb high pulpit, and a diagonally-beamed ceiling, with a fine octagonal dome has the charm of 'a faded Victorian building' (Gifford, et al., *Buildings Of Scotland: Edinburgh*).

On the second floor is the remarkable 'Feast Room' where worshippers ate meals, usually of soup, which caused the Glasite fraternity to be called the 'Kail Kirk'. Meals were transported to the feast room by means of a dumb-waiter located near the basement kitchen. Three of the original feast tables remain in use today. The room also features two massive moulded fireplaces (costing 30 shillings each

in 1836), and an original clock is still functioning. This imposing room is now known as the McWilliam Room, in commemoration of the distinguished architectural historian, Colin McWilliam, whose daughter is the well-known novelist Candia McWilliam.

The Glasite Meeting House remained as a place of worship until 1989, when it was generously gifted by the remaining congregation to the Cockburn Conservation Trust which has been instrumental in major restoration of the building ever since.

Spurtle can now reveal that the tarpaulin and scaffolding which has camouflaged this fascinating and important building for several years will be coming down imminently. Of its future use, Peter Burnam, Convenor of the Glasite Meeting House Committee writes: "The vision (of the Committee) envisages a future for the GMH as a new 'landmark' building in the city, welcoming to all, and increasingly useful to as many sectors of society as possible."

(Spurtle will report on the work involved in achieving this exhilarating vision in a forthcoming issue.)

OBITUARY

Leslie Thomson



Friends recently met at Warriston Crematorium to celebrate the life of Leslie Thomson, who died suddenly but peacefully on 20th March. Leslie and her late husband Ian lived in Barony Street for many years. Before and after her marriage Leslie

was a much loved nurse and they were both actively involved in political causes, including the Broughton anti poll tax group in the 1990s. You didn't dare criticise the National Health or the Co-op when Leslie was within earshot! Well-known on the Edinburgh folk music scene where Ian was a singer, they took a lively interest in all branches of the arts. And they were staunch supporters of *Spurtle* from the beginning!

When Ian died Leslie moved to Broughton Road where, in spite of her long and debilitating battle with arthritis, she continued to show her

great love of life and of the people around her. Friends and family alike told how she always shrugged off her own problems and showed more concern about theirs. And her storytelling gift was remembered with relish.

Our sympathy to her daughter Lindsay and all those closest to her.

Have you got a story?

***Spurtle* needs you.**

Phone 07985 213435 or e-mail
broughton.spurtle@blueyonder.

co.uk

Belle's View

Hi fans



Like a swally and a fag, and drive a rhino-bumping 4x4? El Gordo's budget will have gladdened your heart no end! What's for cheer in swinging Broughton?

Thunder Lightning Strike! Estelle and I swooned at the news that **Mansefield Church** is hosting **Smirnoff & The Electric Cabaret** on **20 April** (doors 20:00 £7 from www.ticketweb.co.uk) featuring **The Go! Team** with DJ guest **Lemon Jelly's Fred Deakin**. The evening also features burlesque dancers, jugglers, beat-boxers, and the fabulously-monikered **Bruce Airhead**, who inserts himself inside a 6ft wide balloon, then bursts out as Elvis Presley!

Need more burlesque? Monthly **Acme Workers Club** at the **RAF Club at 11 Hillside Crescent** (5.30pm-12.30am, £6, 0131-556 9332 for dates), where "modern workers go to socialise" promises jugglers, contortionists, burlesque artists, plate-spinners, drag acts, ventriloquists, comedians, magicians, sideshow freaks and musicians. For "ladies and gentlemen with a sense of humour and nice friendly attitudes", it's cosily hosted by **Uncle David** and **Auntie Joan**, with a tantalising raffle prize of a big fat chicken!

After all that tassle-birling, you might need a quiet stroll and some fresh air! **Gardens Open Day** (5 May) is your chance to snoop round some lush private gardens, normally only accessible by scaling the fence at night! Handy ones for Broughtonites are **Queen Street Gardens**, **Drummond Place Gardens** and **Regent Gardens** – dig out the picnic basket, fill with Tunnock's tea-cakes and slip on the flip-flops!

Till next time!
PERSEPHONE BELLE

Spurtle is about your life in Broughton.

We aim to inform on local affairs; raise local issues; publicise the work of local action groups; make connections between the news and people's own lives in Broughton; and stir things up a bit! We'll support people looking for a fair deal, but not protect privilege. We're not connected to any political group or party. And we don't get a grant from anybody to finance the paper.

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Friday advice sessions:
4.00pm Stockbridge Library
5.30pm Constituency office



New Town/Broughton Community Council

Vacancies for Community Councillors

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

The next meeting on Monday 14th May, 7.30pm at Drummond Community High School.

Secretary: Pat Eccles 225 4633
E-mail: pat.eccles62@wanadoo.co.uk

Contacts

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Gayfield Association

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New Town/Broughton Community Council

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Broughton History Society

Patrick Tyler 556 5036

Drummond High School

556 2651

Cllr Trevor Davies

Broughton Ward 529 3221

Surgery at Broughton Primary School
Weds, 6.30pm-7pm, Term-time only.

Cllr David Guest

New Town Ward 558 8823 or

529 4268. Surgery at 67

Northumberland Street, Mondays,
6.30pm to 7.15pm

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