

BIG BROTHERS AND SISTERS
Children's agency looks for helpers in Broughton

Big Brothers and Sisters is a registered charity that provides adult volunteer mentors to children aged 6 to 16 from lone-parent families. "Mentors and the children spend a couple of hours every week having a laugh, and doing everyday things like playing Nintendo or football in the park, a trip to the cinema, or just having a chat over a milkshake. Our current mentors tell us that they get just as much out of it as the children. We are particularly keen to recruit men as mentors, as we have a growing number of boys on our waiting list who would really benefit from having a positive male role model in their lives", Director Claire Gordon told **Spurtle**.

If you would like more information on Big Brothers and Sisters, to volunteer or to find out about getting a mentor for your child, contact Pegs on 556 2636 or visit www.mentors.org.uk.



New Town Broughton and Pilrig Community Council

represents your views to the City Council and other public bodies. We need to find out what your views are on planning, transport, environment and licensing matters. Get in touch with us or come along to our meetings on the first Monday of every month (except for public holidays) in the Library of Drummond Community School. Anyone is welcome to attend.
Contact: Jessica Miller, Secretary, 558 1025

Contacts

Bellevue and Claremont Residents Association
 Yvonne Pryor 466 1144

Broughton Village Association
 Stephanie Harvey 557 2762 (daytime)

Friends of Hoptoun Crescent Garden
 Eileen Dickie 556 0903

Gayfield Association
 William McNair 556 4493

McDonald Area Amenity Society
 Bob Stewart 557 1267

Redbraes Residents Association
 George Hosey 467 6151

New Town Broughton and Pilrig Community Council
 Jessica Miller 558 1025

Broughton History Society
 John Dickie 556 0903

Drummond Community High School
 556 2651

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

Malcolm Chisholm MSP
 Phone 558 8358 for details of Saturday surgeries.

Mark Lazarowicz, MP
 557 0577
 Phone for surgery arrangements during the summer.

BE A VOLUNTEER AT CONTACT POINT DROP-IN

We urgently need volunteers for evening sessions at our city centre drop-in.

Join one of our existing teams on Monday, social activities or Tuesday Art Group.

For more information phone: Bernie on 622 1865

BROUGHTON **Spurtle** aims to:

- provide a contact point for local people who want to get together and change things
- help local action groups publicise their work
- make connections between "the news" and people's own lives in Broughton
- and generally stir things up a bit!

Spurtle team for this issue:
 Norma McKendrick, Ken McKay, Gavin MacGregor, John Dickie, Alan McIntosh, Eileen Dickie and Tim Puntis.

BROUGHTON BOOKS in Broughton Place are our "postbox". You can put a letter addressed to us through their letter box at any time
PHONE and FAX :- 556 7727/0903

BROUGHTON Spurtle is now on the World Wide Web on www.tpuntis.demon.co.uk

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Mark Lazarowicz
 Member of Parliament for Edinburgh North & Leith



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 Please contact Constituency Office for details of Advice Sessions.

BROUGHTON Spurtle

Free No 106 Independent

COMMUNITY ROUTE VIA DRUMMOND 700 sign petition - but steps demolished

Petition

We the undersigned:

- (1) Appeal against the removal of the steps in Cochran Terrace - which would permanently close a safe route to school for primary-aged children, and a long established community path.
- (2) Ask for a written guarantee from the City Council that community access to Drummond playground will not be cut back. In particular that it will remain accessible:
 - a) in the evenings, until dusk
 - b) throughout weekend daylight hours
 - c) during school holidays; and that the PPP contract with the private management company does not allow it to impose any such cutback in the future.

The steps from Cochran Terrace to Drummond's playground were demolished on Monday, 14th July. The previous week City Council officials had agreed to meet a 'Save Our Steps' delegation and receive a petition against demolition on Wednesday 16th!

That meeting went ahead, and the petition was presented. Over 700 signatures came from:

**Current staff and students at Drummond
 Drummond adult students and community users
 Parents and children at three local primary schools
 And hundreds of local residents.**

Some of those local residents had also signed statements witnessing how long they had used the community route from Cochran Terrace to Bellevue (some going back to the 1930s). Those statements were forwarded to the City Council through the Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society, with their opinion that they "seem to us to show that the route meets the conditions to be a public right of way, and as such should be kept open".

The Deputy Director of Education at the meeting told the delegation that he hadn't known the steps had been demolished. He said the Department would be concerned if there had not been adequate consultation with the local community, but that he would have to hear the Head Teacher's side of the story before making a judgement on that. He said he would arrange another meeting as soon as possible after Councillor Aitken, Executive Member for Education returns from holiday.

The delegation argued that demolition could still be an opportunity rather than a disaster: "the old steps are gone, but they could be replaced by a new pathway more suitable for young families and the elderly alike - integrated into the landscaping planned by the school".

Spin doctors at work?

Continued on page 3

August 2003
 tel - 556 7727
 556 0903

BRIEFLY

Broughton Road Project have been looking at some **high-quality play equipment** using timber components wherever possible, and they are now going to apply for grants. They also want to consult locally about their proposals, and Tesco in Broughton Road have agreed to let them set up a table in their entrance to help do this. They'll be there with their plans on Thursday, 7th August, from 3 to 7pm.

The former church at Mansfield Place Centre will be open to visitors on three Mondays and three Saturdays during August - in the mornings: Mondays 4th, 11th, 18th and Saturdays 9th, 16th and 23rd August, 10am to 11.45am.



Our local Community Council has found a new Secretary. She's Jessica Miller, of Bellevue Crescent, seen above with her son Noah. She told Spurtle that her two young children are going to grow up here, so she's eager to get involved in local affairs and encourage others to do so too. "Quality-of-life-wise, Broughton could go either way. It's up to us!"

FROM PALESTINE TO BROUGHTON

“We touch fingers through the wire, we cannot shake hands”

Last month we quoted from reports by Andrew Dickie, currently a solidarity volunteer in the West Bank. Andrew was brought up in Broughton, and went to London Street Primary and Drummond Community High. Here's an extract from a more recent email.

Jenin, Palestine, 23rd July

Today we again visit the village of Anin. This is a village that has been hit hard by the Wall. Most of the villagers' land now lies behind the Wall on the

village, but have been warned that the gate has now been locked permanently. We now plan to meet and talk through the wire of the Wall. As we approach the gate accompanied by some local friends, we see a group of five or six women and children accompanied by one man approaching from the other side. The young boys are soon ducking under the gate, crawling their way through a maze of razor-wire. They reach our side in safety, and soon

The border police seem in doubt who to tackle first—the Palestinians closest to them, the Israelis, or our group through the fence from them. They settle on haranguing us all in Hebrew and Arabic. An army Humvee pulls up a short distance away. The area has suddenly become highly militarised. All this because some local people want to get home and some Palestinians, Israelis and Internationals want to talk. We and the Israelis move away from the gate so we can talk through the wire of the fence. We touch fingers through the wire, we cannot shake hands. The border police shout at us to stop touching the wire. We stop but stay close to the Wall, talking and swapping phone-numbers for a minute; until one of our Palestinian friends tells us that a local man on the opposite side of the Wall has been arrested by the border police. He had touched the wire too and had been bundled into their armoured jeep. Our Israeli friends negotiate his release by offering our departure from the area. Both our groups move away slowly, making sure that the local people are allowed to leave unmolested.

Five days later Andrew phoned home immediately after taking part in direct action at the same gate. A group of 40 international volunteers and 50 Israelis forced the gate open and cut holes in the fence, supported by 200 Palestinian demonstrators. Israeli armed forces used tear-gas and rubber bullets. Andrew was hit: skin broken, but “not serious” – he assured his anxious parents!



An earlier confrontation when Andrew (back to the camera and inset) narrowly escaped arrest when helping to remove an Israeli road block.

Israeli-facing side. Technically the farmers still have access to the land, but the only gate is locked as well as being protected by razor-wire and regular army patrols ...

We five Internationals (UK, USA, Dutch, Danish, Canadian) had hoped to meet some Israeli friends in the

bundles of what looks like food and clothes are being passed through the razor-wire. As our three Israeli friends approach a border police jeep roars up, spilling its heavily-armed occupants out in front of the gate. The young boys quickly return through the wire to join their mothers and sisters.

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Spin doctors at work?

- Away back in March, Drummond's Head Teacher sent out a circular which included the statement: "I have received representation from the local community, which appears to be evenly divided on this issue". That may or may not have been true in the first week or so after she announced the steps were to be removed, but it certainly isn't now: yet in spite of all evidence to the contrary the original circular continues to be used unaltered.
- When the 'Save Our Steps' delegation met the Deputy Director of Education he told them he was under the impression that local opinion was equally divided on whether or not the steps should be closed.
- Since then a different Education official has gone farther: "we found that many in the area supported the removal of the steps. Indeed, the records kept by the Head Teacher reveal more people have come forward supporting the closure than have opposed it".

But there are those 700 signatures on the petition, plus opposition from the public meeting in April, the Community Council, Bellevue and Claremont Residents Association and the School Boards of two local primaries!



A bit of Summer Madness for Friends of Hopetoun Crescent Garden. Their first AGM is on 11th September, speaker from Botanic Garden, details to be announced later.

DRUMMOND LAWN TENNIS CLUB

Local green space at risk



Tucked away up the lane between Bellevue Crescent and Scotland Street is our local tennis club. Its lease runs out in two years time: already several developers are interested in buying the site for housing, so the club's future may be in doubt.

Originally founded by the Former Pupils' Guild of Mary Erskine's, the club moved to its present site in 1913, and tennis has been played there ever since. In 1946 membership was opened to all, and the name changed to Drummond Lawn Tennis Club.

But it's not just a tennis club that's at

stake. Apart from the courts themselves there's a wild area where children play, and a small patch used as an allotment. All part of the same lease from the City Council, taken together they represent a valuable green space it would be a shame to lose. "It's a tranquil spot – just like a country lane", says Bellevue Crescent resident Chandra Aitken. "And those beautiful lime trees might go too!"

Two years may seem a long way away. But so often we find ourselves making a last-minute stand against threats to our local environment. Better to start talking to the City Council now!

EVENTS

11th - 16th AUGUST
 St Mary's Church, Bellevue Crescent open to visitors, 10am - 4pm.
 Your chance to see round historic church.

7th - 25th AUGUST
 Grid Iron Theatre's play 'Those Eyes, That Mouth' at 32 Abercromby Place (they didn't get their licence for 6 Mansfield Place!) 5pm and 10pm. Except Wednesdays.