

McDONALD ROAD RESIDENTS PROTEST

McDonald Road residents have reacted strongly against the Barrat Homes application for planning consent for 171 houses on the British Telecom site. 75 who attended a meeting on 14th March were 100% in favour of setting up a local action group to oppose the application and to press the Planning Committee for a better plan.

The application does not even begin to consider local interests. Loss of light, parking problems and traffic safety, amenities for children and overcrowding were all mentioned by residents at the meeting. There was also anger at the cavalier way Scotdem was seen to have launched into demolition of buildings.

McDonald Area Amenities Society has already put together a detailed letter listing 12 specific objections. If you want to know more about the campaign for better development in the neighbourhood, contact George Reiss at The Flat, 10 Broughton Street (556 6212). If you want to add your voice to the objections, write to: the Chairperson, Edinburgh District Council Planning Committee, 1 Cockburn Street and to Councillor Margaret MacGregor, City Chambers, High Street.

WOODCRAFT SUPPLIES

Picture Framing • Keys Cut
Timber Boards Cut to Size
Open Monday-Saturday
9am-6pm 109 Broughton Street
031-556 9672

BAISAKHI

14th April



Though originally a new year festival for some Hindus, Baisakhi (or Vaisakhi) is now celebrated by Sikhs as the anniversary of the founding of the Khalsa by the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh. From that time onwards Sikhs took up the custom of sharing the same name as a sign of equality. This is why Sikh men are called Singh, which means 'lion', and all women are called Kaur, which means 'princess'.

The festival lasts for three days. Sikh baptismal ceremonies are carried out on the third day. New members drink a special amrit (sugar crystals in water). The Guru Granth Sahib is read continuously over the three days. At the end of the reading the congregation gathers at the gurdwara for hymns, prayers and to share fruit before going home to a vegetarian meal.

In the Punjab, Baisakhi is also a harvest celebration and Bhangra dances are performed all over the state.

THE CENTRE

Centre users, at St Stephen's since being evicted from Broughton Street in December, will need new premises from 1st May. Maybe a shop front, with facilities for a cafe? Any ideas? Phone 557 5846.

Open meetings continue at St Stephen's to the end of this month - Tuesdays at 6.30pm.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

If you have dates for local events in May and early June, please let us know as soon as possible.

Monday 3rd April New Town Broughton and Pilrig Community Council meets in Drummond Community High School, 7.30pm.

Thursday 6th April Spurtle meeting at The Edge cafe, Broughton Street, 8pm.

Thursday 27th April Speaker from the MacLibel Campaign, defence of GreenPeace activists against MacDonalds chain, Drummond Community High School, 7.30pm.

Saturday 29th April Spurtle pot luck supper. Phone Fay 556 4646 for details.

Every Monday Bus from Edinburgh to M77 Protest Camp, Pollock. Departs 6.30am, back around teatime. £3 return. Phone for departure point and booking - 557 5846 or 558 3628.

Every Tuesday Open Meeting at The Centre, St. Stephen Centre, St. Stephen Street, 6.30pm.



THE KRIS
MALAYSIAN RESTAURANT

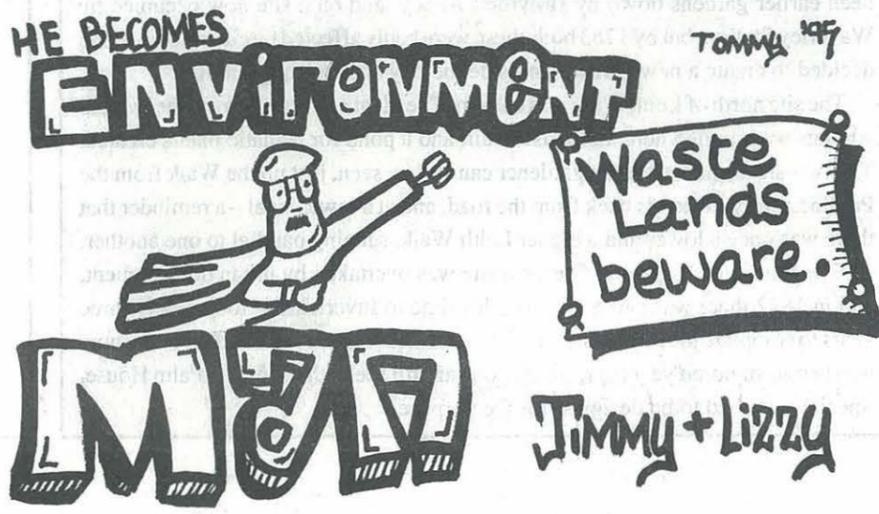
39a Albany Street

We invite you to experience a taste of Malaysia!

Lunch 12 noon - 2.30pm,

Monday to Saturday.

Dinner from 6 to 10.30pm



BROUGHTON SPURTLE

Broughton • Gayfield

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FREE Issue number 14

April 1995

DRUMMOND PARENTS SPEAK OUT

Parents at Drummond Community High School have taken the lead in protesting against proposed cuts in Lothian Region's education budget. Charlie Miller, Convener of Drummond School Board said, "a 1% cut in Lothian Region's education budget doesn't sound much. But when we saw what it would mean for Drummond - staff reductions, increased school meal charges, higher costs for adult education classes and lets, fear of larger class sizes - we decided to ask the Headteacher not to implement the cuts. We are calling on parents to say 'no, enough's enough' and start by coming to a public meeting in April".

The Drummond School Board believe that every area of pupils' education will be affected:

- Capitation allowances for buying books etc. will be reduced by 6.5%
- Letting fees, evening class fees and charges for school meals will be increased.
- The Headteacher will have to cut up to £20,000 to meet cash targets.

At a meeting organised by the Education Department for School Board members, Education Convener Elizabeth Maginnis reacted angrily to this move, accusing Drummond parents of making an empty gesture and unfairly putting their new Headteacher on the spot. Scott Ballantyne, another School Board member told us that she seemed to see Drummond parents as the opposition, rather than the Tory government!



Headteacher's view

But Headteacher Frank McGrail reacted differently to the parents' move: "I'm very pleased with the School Board's activities in publicising the strength of feeling about the cuts. But I can't say I will not apply the cuts. The bottom line is that they hold the purse strings. What they're saying is here's what you would have got, here's what you're getting, tell us how you're going to spend it." He blames central government policy for the education budget cuts which are bound to affect the quality of service provided by Drummond and the other schools in Lothian Region. He says that Lothian Region itself does not have much choice but to apply the cuts or to face rate capping. The government's position is hypocritical, given its stated commitment to decentralisation. As far as implementing the cuts in Drummond goes, he will endeavour to minimise the effects on the curriculum and the provision made for students and adults.

He regrets not being able to start in Drummond with a broad, generous outlook, rather than the 'penny-pinching' attitude that he has been forced to take towards such budgets as lighting and heating. He says that despite talk about cash targets and lists of figures, in the end it comes down to people. Inevitably some people who have worked hard and shown commitment will have to leave Drummond or have their time cut.



Guru Gobind Singh - see back page.

Cuts vox pop - see page 2

Parent voices on the education cuts



"What's the point of glossy Charters for education, when they're going to cut education to the bone?"

Maggie Mellon, mother of two children – one at St. Mary's Primary, one at nursery.



"Parents and teachers should follow the line of the largest Scottish teachers' union, the EIS, by only voting for candidates in the current council elections who have made a clear commitment to maintaining and increasing education spending"

Pam Mason, Drummond PTA member.



"As a parent I'm extremely concerned about the education cuts, and the effects they have now and in the future. Education is the most important thing we can give to our children, and it should be a priority"

Jackie Messer, mother of two children at Broughton Primary.



"The children of today are the adults of tomorrow, and if we don't give them the best we can, it affects not just them, but the country as a whole."

Linda Brown, Broughton PTA member, mother of three – two at Broughton Primary and one at home.



"A 1% cut in Lothian Region's education budget doesn't sound much. But when we saw what it would mean for Drummond – staff reductions, increased school meal charges, higher costs for adult education classes and lets, fear of larger class sizes – we decided to ask the Headteacher not to implement the cuts."

Charlie Miller, Drummond School Board.

CAN WE SHAPE OUR OWN LOCAL ENVIRONMENT?

- Last month we gave front-page treatment to residents' worries about flats proposed for McDonald Road. We had no hesitation in doing so – whatever the pros and cons of the planning application. We want local people to have more influence on how their own area develops. Even the best plans shouldn't go past on the nod!
- We'll continue to cover local campaigning on traffic – whether it's lobbying the Regional Council or taking more direct action. There's plenty scope here for improving the quality of life in Broughton area.
- And this month you'll find news of our local community high school's environmental project in Hopetoun Crescent, on page 3. Staff and students have taken the initiative, and then involved professional planners.
- It's important to question the plans of developers and local government. But the Drummond initiative suggests something more exciting. Can we get together and come up with a vision for our own local area? Then talk to the powers-that-be accordingly?

Too ambitious? We hope there are readers who'll want to consider the possibility seriously. Comments welcome!

DRUMMOND'S NEW HEIDIE

Our local high school has a new headteacher. Spurtle went along to interview him.

Frank McGrail is Edinburgh born and bred. He went to St. Peter's Primary School and Holy Cross Secondary School. He thought of a career in nursing, but in the end opted for teaching. Starting at Tynecastle High, he got promoted posts at Portobello before returning to Tynecastle as an Assistant Head.

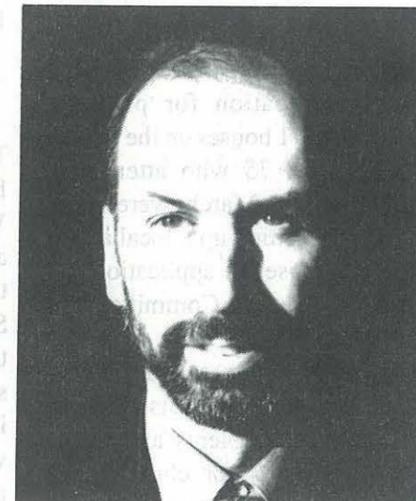
He's married, with two children of school age. He's a man of many interests, including one-off experiences like abseiling off the top of Craigmount High School as a fundraiser! He supports the HIV AIDS organisation Cruisaid, and wears a small AIDS awareness ribbon. Next term he will be encouraging staff and students at the school to take part in a fundraising walk on behalf of the charity.

"I see the job of the Head as providing the opportunity to give a school a sense of direction by encouraging people to share ideas on how an effective school should operate. I would like to build a team approach where people with different ideas flourish and develop but learn to work together in friendship.

There's a tremendous range of encouraging, exciting things happening in Drummond. There's a warmth and a caring atmosphere in this school.

I am keen to build on the excellent learning and recreational activities available to the community at present, and to encourage all communities to look on Drummond as a font of life-long learning opportunities.

There's a buzz about the place. Just last week a kid asked me, do you like being heidie at Drummond, how's it going? A nice straight, direct question! I didn't even have to think, I was able to say 'Yes, I really like the School!'"



A LOCAL NATURE AREA FOR ALL

Schoolchildren from Drummond Community High School are taking part in a long term project to upgrade this small area of historic trees. This is the start of a programme to turn the crescent into a 'Local Nature Area' with the help of the EDC Planning Department.

We hope to put up bird and bat boxes to encourage a wider range of animals into the Crescent, and to encourage the growth of native species of trees to eventually replace the fine but ageing eastern European oaks already there. Path building and planting are also part of the plan.

Most of the children involved with the project come from DEAP, the after school environment club for Drummond pupils, and we have already had an enjoyable clean up session and barbecue!

If the project is to be successful we will have to have the co-operation of the local community. The area looks derelict at the moment, and the open space between the trees is used by some people as a dump for litter of all kinds. Nevertheless the children are very keen and are ready to put in a lot of work, so in a few years time Hopetoun Crescent could become a place of tranquillity and natural beauty for the benefit of the whole community.

HOPETOUN CRESCENT

Hopetoun Crescent was once the site of Edinburgh's Botanic Garden. There had been earlier gardens down by Holyrood Abbey, and on a site now occupied by Waverley Station, but by 1763 both these were badly affected by city smoke. It was decided to create a new garden – outside the city and free of pollution.

The site north of Leith Walk was chosen. The plant collections from the two old gardens were united here, hothouses built and a pond for aquatic plants created. The two-storey house for the gardener can still be seen, just up the Walk from the Public Library. It stands back from the road, and at a lower level – a reminder that there was once a lower and a higher Leith Walk, running parallel to one another.

Eventually the Hopetoun Crescent site was overtaken by urban development, and in 1822 there was another move, this time to Inverleith. It took nearly three years to complete the removal of all the trees including the West Indian palm, now nearly two hundred years old, which you can still see in the Tropical Palm House. Special carts had to be designed for the purpose!

THE EDGE CAFE

60 Broughton Street

Open Daily

9am (early in the morning)
to 1am (late at night)

Licensed bar

Hendersons' food

Friendly mixed atmosphere

10% off to students with ID

THE 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!

We'll support people looking for a fair deal, but not protect privilege. We're not connected with any political group or party. And we don't get a grant from anyone.

Contributors to this issue: Tim Puntis, Annie Scanlon, Jane Meagher, John Dickie, George Reiss, Tom Perman, and Tom Worthington.

If you'd like to help write, produce or distribute the BROUGHTON SPURTLE please contact us as soon as possible! We publish about once a month.

BROUGHTON BOOKS in Broughton Place are our "postbox". You can put a letter addressed to us through their letter box at any time OR PHONE – 556 7928 or 556 0903