

What a life!

Drystane-dyker, interpreter, measuring scales production technician....here's number four in our series on Broughton folk who do unusual jobs or other activities.

Are you old enough to remember feeling rather embarrassed as you crept in to pledge those family jewels inherited from your grandmother? Then months later walking down the street and smiling at a passer-by who didn't seem to recognise you? That man could have been Ian Inglis of Bellevue Gardens, who worked all his life as a pawnbroker, a manager for over 40 years, until he retired three years ago.

He was given a job at the Equitable Loan Company in the High Street, on the recommendation of his aunt who ran Duncanson's pawnbrokers in Stockbridge, the day after he left school in 1945. He remembers not being allowed into the Little King Street office the day the Theatre Royal finally burnt down across the street in 1946.

"You don't recognise anybody outside the office" was the advice he got, when taking items to pawn was something much more private and confidential. People mostly brought clothing, later on electrical goods etc. - and always jewellery. He had to assess the customer before deciding how much to lend.

There used to be 30 pawnbrokers in Edinburgh, now there are only two. Duncanson's, where he ended up, has now taken over the old Herrald's building in Queen Street. "They're just like shops these days", Ian says.

The huge variety of people and objects that passed through his hands always made his work a pleasure. "You got no more hassle than many other jobs. But you always gave a fair price because you needed their custom. You got to know whole families, but most people still wouldn't acknowledge you if they saw you in the street. It's all different now."

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Rubbish update

After Bellevue Place resident Pippy Tyler's complaint to the Council about inadequate information on the rearranged rubbish collection, she received the following comments from RPMacDougall of Environmental and Consumer Services:

"The decision to reschedule routes and times was taken in order to introduce savings, offer best value and accommodate the introduction of the wheeled bin service which is being phased in throughout the city....I would expect that teething problems should be ironed out in the near future...."

When the wheeled bins are introduced, the problems of early/late presentation, burst bags, spilled refuse, etc., will cease and the service will be more efficient."

Yes, but what about the problems with wheelie bins?

Contacts

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BROUGHTON SPURTLE

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BROUGHTON Spurtle

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No Parliament on Calton Hill

The Holyrood site has a lot going for it. But it's a pity they didn't choose an even better one, just up the street from Broughton!

We agree with our MP that what happens in the Scottish Parliament is more important than where it is (see page 2). But we're still worried by the

way the decision was made. Sources within the Labour Party suggested to the mainstream media there were party political reasons for rejecting Calton Hill. Whether that's true or not, this was certainly a top-down decision rather than the "people's choice" we might have expected Donald Dewar to favour.

Access Denied

Readers may remember back in the summer of 1995, we reported the appearance of a new gate and fence on Calton Hill which effectively denies public access to part of the park. This part of the park is the grassy slope opposite the St James Centre. **Spurtle** reader Spike Flack, who first drew our attention to this piece of nonsense said at the time "...it's Calton Hill and it's ours in Trust. Mr Mackay of the Parks Department says this (gate) is a temporary measure - I don't believe him and there is a strong smell of fish."

How right Spike has turned out to be. **Spurtle** is hearing an increasing number of complaints about the gate being locked. On contacting Mr Mackay at the Parks Department we were told that this part of the park should be open "during the hours of daylight." This came as a particular surprise to **Spurtle** supporter

Tim Puntis who is one of the complainants. "Since the new year I've been up there in mid-afternoon about five times" says Tim. The gate has been locked on four of these five times, including at 1.30pm on 24th January.

In fact the story gets even stranger than that. Mr Mackay tells us that it is not the Parks Department employees who are responsible for locking and unlocking the gate, but a local resident. This person has a garden which adjoins the park at this point and clearly would like the gate locked all the time. Apparently this is just what happens!

*Mr Mackay has told us that if this matter is not resolved, he has the power to remove the gate in its entirety. **Spurtle** can tell Mr Mackay that the gate is still often locked in the middle of the day and calls on him to take the gate away forthwith.*

Progress
on
Hopetoun
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Spurtle speaks to MP

*Our local MP Malcolm Chisholm is back on the back benches after resigning from the government over cuts to lone parent benefits. **Spurtle** asked him about his future.*

You just have to re-adjust, because it is quite different not being in government. One particular problem with the Scottish Office (which I suppose is one of the several reasons we want a Scottish Parliament) is that you've got such an incredible amount of policy packed into one government department run by a handful of ministers. I was enjoying what I was doing. But it means I can be more free in the areas that I get involved in: to take one example, health policy which I was cut out from, so I can now address that kind of issue again. And you have more time to get involved in the constituency - so that's another benefit.

Spurtle: Do you miss the extra ministerial salary - or did you not have time to get used to it?

Malcolm: I suppose everybody likes having money. But I still have my MP's pay, and I certainly think MPs are well enough paid.

Spurtle: Alex Salmond said recently that members of the new Scottish Parliament shouldn't be allowed to have other jobs?

Malcolm: Yes. I don't see how any MP can do their job properly if they're doing another job.

Malcolm Chisholm on welfare reform and Scotland's Parliament on page 2

Malcolm Chisholm on Welfare Reform



Spurtle: We admire your stance on principle over the cut to lone parent benefit. But was it not possible to stay in government and fight your corner there?

Malcolm: You've got to balance those things up. It's quite legitimate to stay in government and not be happy about everything that's happening - you can achieve things in government that you can't achieve out of government. But I suppose everyone has a dividing line beyond which that general principle wouldn't hold, and for me that came at the point of lone parent benefit cuts - I had far more problems with that than I'd had with things that had happened previously.

Spurtle: But you've been quoted as saying you fully supported government policy on welfare reform?

Malcolm: I don't have a difficulty with the idea of modernising the welfare state, because I'm neither a big 'C' nor a small 'c' conservative! The welfare state was set up 50 years ago when things were different; and there's no reason why we should be particularly keen on the welfare state as the Tories left it. And I don't have a problem with the general principles that have been outlined for modernisation: we should have a benefit system which helps people who want to go into work; and the principle of supporting people in genuine need is absolutely right. Every specific proposal that comes up for the welfare state we'll have to judge against those principles. I'd be concerned about what could happen in relation to disability

benefit, although we haven't actually got any specific proposals on that yet.

Spurtle: Yes, the only specific example we have to go on is the lone parent cuts - so isn't it natural that people should be a bit suspicious?

Malcolm: It's certainly understandable. Part of what I've been saying to the government is that those two things are not consistent: you say you want a comprehensive, coherent look at the welfare system, but you've started with just another Tory cut - literally a Tory cut, because they proposed it. I and the other people who voted against it would like to think some good came out of it. It doesn't appear at the moment that we have achieved a rethink on this specific policy, although we will go on arguing for that. But it still may have had some more general effect, in terms of making the government very careful not to do anything so crass in the future.

Spurtle: So what's the government's main priority: to make the benefit system work more fairly and efficiently, or to save money?

Malcolm: I'm not quite sure, since I'm not a member of the government any longer! But I'm going to take the Prime Minister at his word when he says that he is going to protect those in need, and when he says that he is going to construct a system which is helpful to those moving into work. I'm going to apply those principles to any changes. I don't know if that will result in less money or more money being spent on social security. But in some respects it could result in more. For example, we have to stop housing benefit being withdrawn at such a steep rate when people go into work. It's crazy that someone should have come into my surgery this morning and said look, I want to go to work but I'm better off not working because of housing benefit.

Spurtle: Do you see yourself getting back at some later stage, offered a post in the present government?

Malcolm: On the face of it, it doesn't seem very likely. They don't really like people resigning and then making it worse by going on about it afterwards.

- on the new Parliament

Malcolm: Long before that vote, and before the referendum indeed, I had expressed interest in going to the Scottish Parliament. But these things are not in my gift.

Spurtle: What do you feel about the parliament house being sited at Holyrood instead of Calton Hill?

Malcolm: I didn't feel that strongly about the actual siting. Holyrood is still in the city centre; and although it does have some transport difficulties, they can be addressed.

Spurtle: But was the way the choice was made entirely satisfactory?

Malcolm: They did consult, although some people will say they should have consulted more. But I think it's more important that we have this consultative cross-party committee on the actual procedures, standing orders and so on of the new Parliament.

Spurtle: Some senior Labour people told the mainstream media that it couldn't be Calton Hill because that site would encourage nationalistic sentiments?

Malcolm: If somebody did say that, it may be the opinion of that individual. If anyone seriously thinks the site of the Parliament is going to determine whether Scotland becomes independent or not, I just think that's nonsense.

Spurtle: What about the recent Scottish Office paper, suggesting hundreds of parking spaces under the building - one for each MSP, plus more for staff and visitors?

Malcolm: I hope the new building will set a good environmental example in at least two respects: in being a very energy-efficient building; and in keeping the number of car parking spaces to a minimum - what that number would be I can't just pluck out of the air. If the actual MSPs set an example, as well as the employees in the building, that would be a good thing.

Good news for Hopetoun

In our turn-of-the-year edition **Spurtle** reported on fears that proposals for balanced development in the Hopetoun area were receiving scant attention from the powers-that-be. "The speed of demolition and housing going up is frightening!"

Since then Hopetoun Steering Committee members have met the Council's planning convenor, and things have begun to move in a more positive direction. Design briefs for 16 sites in the area are being drawn up by planning officials, and an action plan will go to planning committee in March. Meanwhile the Community Council have asked to be given time to examine the current planning

application for the Blandfield House site.

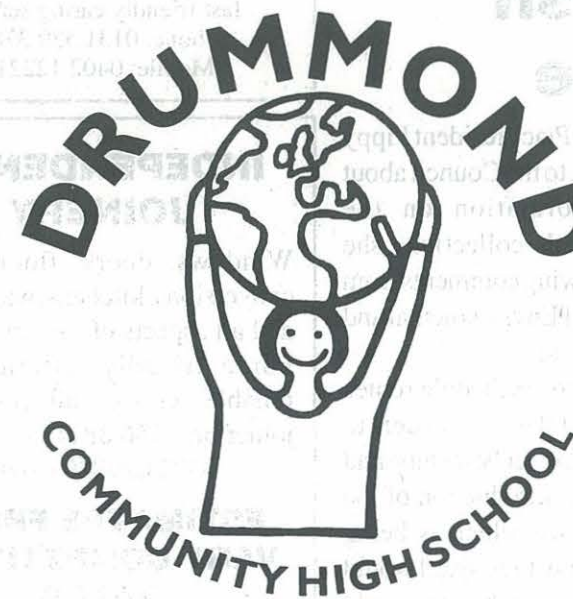
All this will be on the agenda of the Community Council's meeting on Monday 2nd February, 7.30pm at Drummond Community High - anyone interested is welcome. And some important advice from Community Council secretary Allan Wilson: don't be put off writing in to comment on planning applications because you don't think you'll make it within the 2 weeks specified when they appear in the newspaper. Your comments are likely to be considered if they reach the City Council before an application goes to committee - which can take much longer.

95 McDonald Road

The former generating station including offices, stack and former printing works are now listed buildings. Historic Scotland has given them CATEGORY B status,

recognising them as being of more than local historical and architectural interest. This means that any external alteration will definitely need planning permission, and any internal alteration will require at least consultation with the planning department.

Congratulations to local residents who helped to make this happen.



Drummond Community High School has a new logo, thanks to a competition amongst the students. First prize went to Kirsten Corrie, for the winning design shown above. Jodie Otway won second prize, and Aniela Korabinska third. The project was organised by recently-retired School Board chair Charlie Miller; the PTA ran a table sale and a raffle to raise the cash for prizes; and the judges were local councillor Margaret McGregor, graphic designer and ex-School Board member Scott Ballantyne, and John Dickie from the **Spurtle**.

BRIEFLY

- Carol Finnigan of Bellevue Road wants to draw attention to the computers for schools scheme, and encourage readers to help collect vouchers towards two Apple Stylewriter 4500 printers for Broughton Primary School. Ask for the vouchers when you shop at TESCO, between 2 February and 12 April. If you're a Broughton Primary parent give the vouchers to your child to take into School; otherwise post them or take them in yourself.
- Hearing of the Edinburgh Brick Company's challenge to the compulsory purchase order on Mansfield Place Church was postponed, and will now come back to the Sheriff Court in March. Meanwhile both City Council and Mansfield Traquair Trust are exploring other ways of getting urgent work done on the murals.
- Some of the recently relaid setts in East Claremont Street are working loose. As reported in the 'Evening News', Douglas Strang of Bellevue Street (a retired engineer) found more than 25 "deficiencies" in the road. But local residents won't know the extent of the problem until the contractors come back in February to carry out remedial work (at their own expense).
- Still in East Claremont, a reminder to drivers including owners of vehicles with registration numbers
D766 OSD
B382 WYN
H943 LSG
M289 RCF
that the crossing points marked by white lines, textured paving slabs and black posts are designed for pedestrians, including parents with pushchairs and folk who's sight's impaired.