

What a life!

For obvious reasons Broughton resident Andrew would rather not be identified. He's a sergeant with the Lothian and Borders Police. His father, who had been a policeman, had discouraged him from entering the force, so he knew what he was letting himself in for. A year or so from retirement he doesn't regret that decision.

Starting off as a beat constable at Gayfield Square, then in West Pilton and Muirhouse, he eventually moved to the CID and worked in most of the city divisions, with spells in the Stolen Cheque and Credit Card Squad and the Serious Crime Squad. While with Serious Crime he worked on the Robert Black case. Black was convicted of abducting and murdering several young girls, including Caroline Hogg from Portobello. This was a long and complicated case, involving a great deal of leg work in the London area gathering evidence.

Following promotion Andrew was posted to his old hunting ground at Gayfield Square as shift sergeant, supervising and training beat constables. Two years ago he volunteered for the unpopular post of

cells sergeant at St Leonards Police Station. He and his small team can have up to 50, sometimes violent, prisoners incarcerated over a weekend. These can include those heavily dependent on drugs or alcohol and suffering from highly contagious ailments. [Editor: But there are also those arrested while demonstrating on a point of principle!]

To be an effective officer he says you need to be honest and fair, with a strong character, confidence and the ability to manage effectively. He is currently one of the Division's sergeants' representatives of the Police Federation.

He's enjoyed the great variety of work the job has thrown at him, but is looking forward to putting shift work behind him and having a better social life with friends outside the force. In the CID pitting your wits against criminals and finding evidence involves a lot of grind - not like you see on TV.



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BROUGHTON Spurtle

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Streets ahead!

McDonald Road rebuild

Local residents now have dates for the rebuilding of McDonald Road, working up towards Leith Walk (from the section previously done) in three phases. The first phase is due to start in December and run through to March, the second will come in summer next year, and the final phase in 2001. Plans are on display at McDonald Road Library: minor changes are still possible, and suggestions welcome.

Island paradise

The City Council is ready to go ahead with the new traffic island in Broughton Street (near Albany Street). There's a delay because a water main is to be relayed in the street soon, and the Council doesn't want to do the work only to have it dug up shortly afterwards. Our local councillor has asked East of Scotland Water chair Councillor Cairns to help get things moving as quickly as possible.

Europcar keep clear

The Council has had "Keep Clear" markings painted on the pavement outside Europcar in East London Street. The situation has certainly improved during most of the day, but the pedestrian way is still too often blocked first thing in the morning.

Redbraes Association

Redbraes Residents Association is up and running. They are currently preparing comments on the Council's plan for their new play area, to be in place by the end of the current financial year. And they plan to argue the case for community use of the neglected

Councillor Lazarowicz has been in touch with City Development staff again to try to ensure compliance with the markings.

Consultation

In-depth consultation on how to tackle the knock-on effects of the Princes Street car ban has begun. A recent meeting of the New Town Forum for Urban Living (!) heard Council officials outline draft proposals which include some quite radical ideas for removing rat-runs and making streets safer in the Broughton area. It's possible that 20mph zones covering a large part of Broughton could be part of the package. We understand these proposals will be sent out to local organisations in October, asking for responses by the end of November; officials will analyse these during December, and present a revised plan to the Council early in the new year. Local residents at the meeting gave a "broadly favourable" reaction to the first draft of the proposals. But someone asked how all this will be affected if the daft Princes Street "Galleries" plan survives the current public enquiry and goes ahead: the response was "a helpless shrug"!

pavilion in their local public park. Meanwhile, those members who are Council tenants have been told fences and footpaths around their houses are to be fixed; and that new windows will follow in 2001-2002.

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BRIEFLY

"Section 28 promotes bullying. Section 28 hurts children. Get rid of it now." That's the message from Outright Scotland, based in Broughton Street. This is the infamous section of the 1988 Local Government Act which denigrates gay and lesbian relationships. One way of getting rid of it north of the Border would be an amendment to the draft Scottish Education Bill. So Outright Scotland have printed postcards asking for the repeal of Section 28, and are asking as many people as possible to post them to Sam Galbraith MSP, Minister for Education (phone or fax 228 6147 for further information).

Bryant Homes have lodged a new planning application to develop offices and 380 flats on the Powderhall site. The high proportion of family-sized, 3-bedroom houses is welcome; but such a large development inevitably raises some concerns - about traffic access, and future demands for schooling, for example. Representatives of Bryant Homes will attend the Community Council's October meeting to answer questions.

Developer Lilley's plans for flats, pub and offices on the site of Neighbours and adjacent sites on Hopetoun Crescent and McDonald Road have gained general local approval for their mixed-use nature, and the amended Hopetoun Crescent frontage which now follows the lines of the neighbouring Georgian building. But the McDonald Road frontage just doesn't look right in the drawings. (Comments or objections to Director of Planning, 1 Cockburn Street.)

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Poll tax – enough is enough



Our local Anti-Poll Tax Group outside the Scottish Office in the early 1990s.

The poll tax is history – dead and buried long since. But now Edinburgh Council's finance convener, Councillor Child, says she needs tougher sanctions to use against those who didn't pay the discredited tax.

A report in the mainstream Press had her calling for the threat of prison to be available, but Councillor Child told **Spurtle** she did not advocate imprisonment. We asked her what she thought of the cross-party move at the Scottish Parliament to abolish poindings and warrant sales – a major threat used against poll tax non-payers. She told us she did not want to see them go unless and until new powers are in place to help collect outstanding debts!

The poll tax was defeated by an alliance of those it made unfair demands on, and those who could have paid but refused – to help kill it off, and in solidarity with those the tax really threatened. Most who could pay without hardship have since done so: some as soon as abolition was announced (including

our current MP); some when the tax actually came off the statute book two years later; others later and reluctantly, anxious about leaving the more vulnerable non-payers in the lurch – each had to make a personal decision, in a messy situation where we knew money was needed for services but councils were still chasing worse-off non-payers.

Councillor Child hasn't reassured us that she's not still doing just that. She talks of negotiating a "payment level and period which reflects a person's ability to pay"; in other words, being realistic about how quickly the money can be squeezed out of an individual – regardless of whether they should have been asked to pay in the first place! And yet she admits the poll tax was "an unfair, regressive tax, not based on the ability to pay"!

In that case, we suggest that harassing those who helped to destroy it is not the most appropriate way of tackling any financial problems the Council may be facing.

The Scottish Parliament

Spurtle has now sat in on two of the Parliament's committees. Apart from one committee clerk who'd forgotten the public's interest was to be encouraged, the experience has been a positive one: security staff and committee convenors are welcoming; and there's the sense of MSPs really getting down to business. If you want to sample a committee, phone the Visitor Centre to check the timetable of meetings and book a seat: 348 5411.

Some individual MSPs have been acting a bit daft from time to time; and some members of the Executive may have unhealthy relationships with lobbyists. But on the whole behaviour on the Mound has compared favourably with that of the Press. And how much have we, the public, been doing to help make Scotland's new Parliament work?

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!

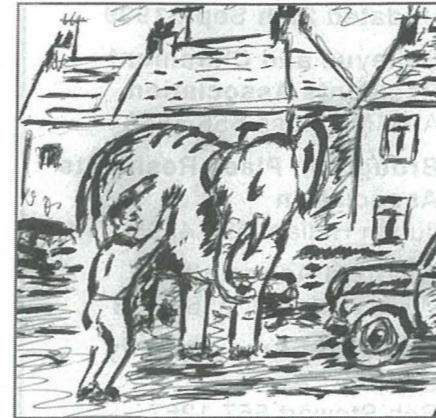
We'll support people looking for a fair deal, but not protect privilege. We're not connected with any political group or party. And we don't get a grant from anyone.

BROUGHTON BOOKS in Broughton Place are our "postbox". You can put a letter addressed to us through their letter box at any time
PHONE – 556 0903/7727
or fax 557 6752

BROUGHTON Spurtle is now on the World Wide Web on <http://www.tpuntis.demon.co.uk>

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Local parking survey



Parking in Broughton – a jumbo problem

- "It's not local car owners who are the main problem, it's commuters travelling into town and leaving their cars in this area to then walk to work." That was the general opinion of those responding to the recent survey carried out by the Community Council and Bellevue and Claremont Residents Association.

The survey covered East Claremont Street, Annandale and West Annandale Street, Melgund Terrace, Bellevue Place, Street and Road and East London Street.

Greenwatch walkabout

Last month we floated the idea of a "greenwatch walkabout" to take stock of the good, the bad and the ugly in Broughton's open spaces. One Sunday morning in September a dozen adults, with accompanying children, put the idea into practice.

The group included members of the community council and local residents associations. Starting at the Big Foot in front of the Cathedral, zigzagging our way down to Scotland Yard and ending up in Hopetoun Crescent a couple of hours later produced three pages of comments and suggestions. For example, things we liked included planting that had matured well in Picardy Place, open space in Gayfield Garden, hanging baskets and window boxes in Broughton Street, the quiet site of Barony Place play area, the raised flower bed in Bellevue Place,

148 survey forms were returned – a quarter of those distributed.

- * 45% of respondents owned a car
- * 71% were not satisfied with current parking arrangements
- * 33% favoured extending parking restrictions in the area, 34% were against
- * 36% said yes to a residential parking zone, but 50% said no
- * 66% would like to see transport alternatives for car users.

Complaints included speed inappropriate to residential streets; heavy vehicles using Bellevue Street and East Claremont Street; commercial vehicles belonging to larger local businesses parked on the pavement or double-parked; and employees' cars "dumped" in the area. Suggestions included an Edinburgh ban on students bringing cars into the city – as in some other university cities.

The full survey results have been handed on to Councillor Lazarowicz, to be fed into the ongoing consultation on traffic measures for the Broughton area.

the Council's major improvement to the East Claremont Street central reservation, and the transformation at Hopetoun from dump to community park. What we hated included parked cars encroaching on the space in front of the Cathedral, barren roundabouts, dog dirt in parks and litter everywhere.

Suggestions included more sculpture in parks and open spaces; advice and discounts to encourage planting pots and window boxes, maybe negotiated through residents associations; better signposting for the play area in Barony Place; greening of Green Street; joint Council/local initiatives on litter; and many more. Now we're working towards an action plan: if you have ideas for your own street or elsewhere in Broughton, write to **Spurtle** c/o Broughton Book, Broughton Place; or phone John Dickie on 556 0903.

BRIEFLY

With LRT's Shrubhill site coming onto the market there's been widespread local discussion about what sort of development would benefit nearby communities. One idea, from a McDonald Road resident, is gathering support: a **fresh food produce market**; and possibly a craft artisans' market alongside it. We hear this idea has now been forwarded to the Planning Department.

"Detailed design work continues apace", says the latest bulletin from the Mansfield Traquair Trust. "The principle of the conversion is that changes to the interior will be visibly and deliberately modern, reversible and as light as possible, being largely steel and timber. The few external alterations will match the existing materials and design features." The lighting for different parts of the building is being carefully designed: in particular, "the design of the nave lighting is critical as the paramount consideration is that the murals must be properly lit and the view not impaired".

Waverley Care Trust, provider of services for people living with HIV and AIDS, is recruiting volunteers for its November training course.

Volunteers are needed during the day, in the evenings and at weekends, in areas including the Solas cafe, child care and reception at Milestone House. If you might be interested contact Peter Yates on 441 6989.

A toffee apple factory in Drummond Place? Yes, some years back tenants in a basement flat there turned their hands to just such a venture. We picked up this snippet of local lore while enjoying a party to celebrate the diamond wedding anniversary of **Spurtle** supporters, the Girlings. Congratulations, Frank and Elizabeth!

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