

Belle's View



Hi fans

Rain, rain go away, come again another day - well, at least another day when I am not out in my purple raffia sling-backs! I have spent this week getting drookit on your behalf dear Readers, in the perpetual search for the truth in **Broughton and Bellevue!**

But enough of annoying inclemency. One of my favourite tippingholes, the **Catwalk in Picardy Place**, is undergoing yet another transformation - as of 25 May it will become **Poprokit**. The place has been completely redecorated, and will be hosting a series of mini-club events, showcasing some very talented DJ's. I don't know about you, but ever since **Tony Blackburn** and **Dave Lee Travis** - aka **The Hairy Corn-flake** fell from grace, it 's never really been the same, has it?

This week I popped into out local hot spot of the arts, the **Bellevue Gallery in Bellevue Crescent**, to catch their latest exhibition entitled EH4. If you're going I recommend taking a pair of sunglasses, as some of the paintings are extremely vivid - in particular **Ian Healy's Portrait of a Madhouse** in lime green and tangerine. Just the colours I had my kitchen painted in actually - so reassuring to know that one is keeping up with the latest colour trends!

Talking of trendy - I see that **Just Junk of Broughton Street** now have their own website at www.firebelly.demon.co.uk/junk - so now you can surf the web for those difficult to find art-deco commodes to add to your collection - so useful!

Till next time - just do it!

Persephone Belle

BRIEFLY

On bus routes, Councillor Lazarowicz tells us LRT are looking at changes which will restore the link between Broughton Road and the Lochend area. But they've told him they have no plans to restore a direct link from Broughton to the Western General Hospital - so the Transportation Committee has agreed to make an official approach about this.

Bellevue and Claremont Residents' Association will hold their AGM on Tuesday, 13th June - 7.30pm at Drummond Community High School.

Preparations for planting trees in **St Mark's Park** are part of an 'Urban Forestry' initiative. But maybe too much of the Park could be taken up in this way? Several local residents spoke to our local councillor about this, and he's ensured the plans for more trees have been put on hold until there's been more consultation.

The Community Council's planning subcommittee has registered objections to three planning applications for our area. Castle Rock Housing Association has applied to develop offices on the site next to Gayfield House - the style of windows and roof features are not sympathetic to the House's architecture. They've also objected to the proposed removal of garden space and trees to make way for mews offices at 52 Albany Street; and to a flat roof design and aluminium coping at 3 Hart Street.

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Contacts

Updated 26th March 2000

Bellevue and Claremont Residents Association
Alan McIntosh 556 4848

Broughton Place Residents Association
Judith Hallam 556 4595

Gayfield Association
William McNair 556 4493

McDonald Area Amenity Society
Bob Stewart 557 1267

Redbraes Residents Association
Tam Hay 553 2306

Sovereign Court Residents Association
John Davies, 478 4463

New Town Broughton and Pilrig Community Council
Annette O'Carroll 556 7586

Broughton History Society
David Watt 556 5721

Cllr Mark Lazarowicz
Broughton Ward
529 3283 fax 529 4764
Surgery: Drummond CHS
on Wednesdays from
6 to 7pm

Cllr David Guest
New Town Ward
558 8823 or 529 4268
Surgery at 67 Northumberland
Street on Mondays from
6 to 6.45pm

Malcolm Chisholm MP and MSP
555 3636
Surgery on Saturdays at
Drummond Community High
School at 1pm.

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BROUGHTON Spurtle

No 71

June 2000

THE FLOOD

Puddicky - the aftermath

No-one seemed too sure, but it was generally agreed that living memory went 'way back to about 1947 to recall when the Water of Leith previously overcame Puddicky. This time it was much worse: the events of 26th April 2000, when the waters broke through protective walls and devastated the Logie Green area, will be starkly remembered.

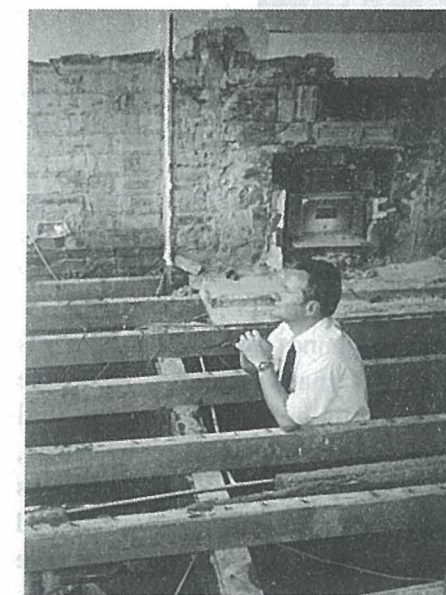
The sandbags pictured below may already have passed into local lore - they are gone and work begun to repair the breach - but the long-term effects on inhabitants are only now beginning. The picture of Muriel and Eric Watson's home in Logie Green Road gives graphic evidence of that. As they joined the other spectators to watch their local stretch of waterway rise with the rains, they little thought that they would soon be facing six months out of their home, "lucky" to

have got that lease on somewhere else nearby. Likewise, neighbour Donna Murray, who just went up to bed as the waters lapped around the ground floor below - and went to work the next morning. "I had only recently started a new job and there was no more I could do here." They make them resilient in these parts!

And as homes were destroyed, possessions skipped and the still-lingering scum and stench took over, they had to be. The presence of one or two residents still remaining in their homes only emphasises how like a ghost-town these streets have become. Following the anger and confusion at the public meeting for locals on 15th May, remarkably those we spoke to now seem philosophical about "just getting it all put right". **Spurtle** wishes them and all the residents of Logie Green well.



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Eric Watson in his Logie Green home.

What next?

Putting it right means restoring homes, securing the surrounding land and establishing what "lessons have been learned" for the future.

A big worry for families who've had to evacuate is the security of their houses while they stand empty. The City Council has now arranged for its mobile security team to visit Logie Green several times each night. In a letter to residents who attended a public meeting on the crisis, local councillor Mark Lazarowicz also says roads and public footpaths damaged by the flood have already been inspected by Council officials and will be repaired as speedily as possible.

Broughton's MSP and MP, Malcolm Chisholm, told **Spurtle** that he thinks four types of action are needed now: a full explanation of how the disaster happened; practical preventive measures, such as strengthening walls; a review of planning rules, to give more weight to flooding risks; and "preparation for the worst possible future scenario".

Local worker on trial over GM foods



Simon Hackin is the volunteer co-ordinator for a team of volunteers that helps to maintain Scotland Yard Adventure Centre –

the local play facility for children and young people with disabilities and special needs. But he's also chair of Edinburgh Greenpeace Campaign Group – which led to his arrest in faraway Norfolk last year. Here he tells us why.

You cannot avoid the GM foods issue. We may not be able to avoid the consequences of this global experiment. As a result of the debate, the sale of organic food has dramatically increased, and supermarkets have battled to promote anything but GM foods. Governments have backtracked and U-turned like fairground dodgems. Nine farm-scale trials have been stopped due to public pressure.

Last July, I took action against a farm-scale trial of GM maize in Norfolk. I and 27 others, under the banner of Greenpeace, were arrested after pulling up and loading into bags the uprooted maize. Our aim was to completely remove this form of genetic pollution. We wanted to be

accountable for our actions and accepted the consequences. This maize was soon to pollinate and scatter itself throughout the local and wider environment.

These farm-scale trials had been started before the meeting of the Government's own scientific committee. It failed to look at the wider impacts or the transport of pollen and genetic material by soil micro-organisms, bees, local deer or farm machinery. It was a trial of trials, a let's-wait-and-see attitude – not a proper scientific experiment.

We should be cautious of releasing this genie from the bottle. We will not be able to get it back in. There is already enough evidence of its effect on wildlife and potential effects on human health to adopt the precautionary principle. The way forward is to examine the rich diversity that the natural environment offers; not a push for profits and monoculture.

My trial continues. I'll soon be back in Norwich, a second trial at the Crown Court, defending a charge of criminal damage. A jury will again have to decide whether I had lawful excuse for my actions. Maybe the actions of those who have allowed the recent GM contamination of oilseed rape should be cross-examined too.

Volunteers wanted

The Roundabout Centre of Gayfield Place need volunteers for their summer play scheme, 3rd-28th July at Drummond Community High. Phone Emma Crawshaw to find out more or arrange an interview – 556 1168.

Scottish Parliament

By the time you read this, the result of Brian Souter's discredited "referendum" may well be public. We hope the majority of Scots will have treated it with the contempt it deserves; but whatever the outcome it should not affect the nerve of the Scottish Executive and Parliament. We're optimistic that Section 28 will indeed be repealed. But we're a bit worried that some MSPs may seek a damaging amendment to the guidelines for local councils – changing the inclusive support for "stable relationships" to a divisive exclusion of all forms of family except those based on marriage. We just hope that only a very small minority, if any, will go down that road.

The front benches may not have been particularly inspiring over the past few weeks, but it's been a good time for backbenchers. Labour MSPs joined cross-party support for Tommy Sheridan's bill to abolish pointings and warrant sales, over-ruling the Executive on this issue. One of them, John McAllion (who had co-sponsored the bill) summed it up: "We will have a wiser, more experienced Executive as a result. It was the first big test of the sovereignty of the Scottish Parliament and it has passed resoundingly".

Perhaps it's natural for party leaders to feel uneasy about challenges to their authority. The confidence and clout of backbenchers is being built on the solid work done in Parliament's committees. MSPs of all parties may find it necessary to defend the more "troublesome" committees against the machinations of their party leaders!

Greening Broughton



The last time the gang from Leith Walk and St Mary's Primary Schools did their bit planting spring bulbs in Hopetoun Gardens it was dreich November. This time they were joined by students from Drummond Community High on a well-deserved sunny spring day, to put down summer wildflowers. And as the flowers multiply over the years, spare a thought for those community-minded enough to make Broughton that bit more pleasant to live in.

Broughton's a good place to live – but it could be even better. What can be done to make good use of local open spaces, and bring a bit more greenery to our area?

We set the ball rolling last September with our Sunday walkabout. Since then more ideas have come in from local residents, so we've produced a document pulling them all together. We're suggesting that different ideas might be put into practice by different combinations of people: the City Council, Community Council, residents associations, local businesses, schools, and individual residents. And we're investigating sources of funds.

We want less

litter

dog dirt

graffiti

cars taking over open spaces



We want more
window boxes

trees, shrubs, grass, flowers

benches

good play equipment

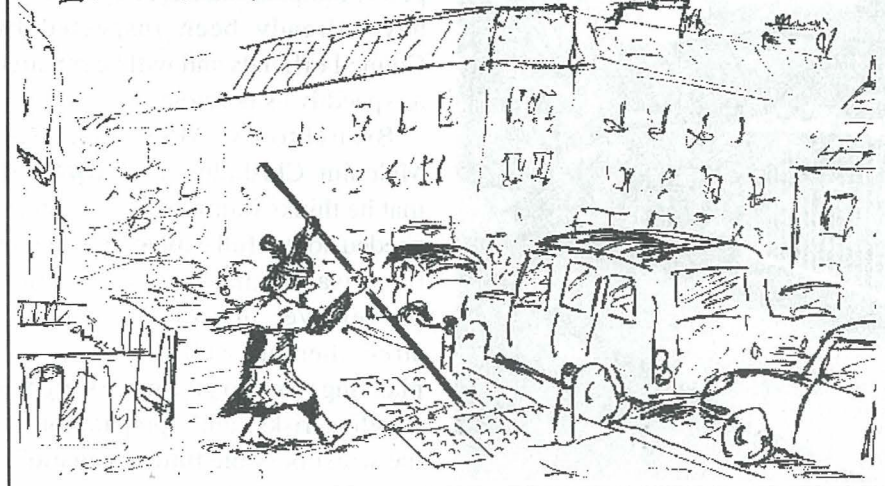
sculpture

"softening" of buildings



Add your ideas to those already gathered. Write to us, c/o Broughton Books, 2a Broughton Place; or phone John Dickie on 556 0903. If you'd like a copy of our document for yourself or a group you belong to, phone the same number.

SUPER GRAN CROSSING
E. CLAREMONT STREET



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.

Spurtle team for this issue:

Eileen Dickie, Norma McKendrick, Ken McKay, Gavin MacGregor, John Dickie, Jane Coville, Alan McIntosh, Tim Puntis, and David Aitken.

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