

# Spurtle



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**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free**

## CHANGES MAY CURB CHRONIC 'PARTY FLAT' NUISANCES

New conditions on landlords of problem 'party flats' are likely to be introduced this year.

Many locals have experienced disruption from nearby properties – particularly from short-term holiday lets in tenements – which attract noisy sports fans, stag/hen parties, and self-confident, young thespians with no volume control. Officials within the Scottish Government's Housing and Communities Department have now drafted a Scottish Statutory Instrument which would allow anti-social behaviour notices (ASBNs) to be served on landlords and their tenants.

The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) has been 'generally supportive' of the move, and could serve ASBNs which, for example, limit how many people can be in a property at one time, or require the presence of staff. Failure to comply with an ASBN's terms could result in prosecution.

The development emerged in correspondence last month between Housing Minister Alex Neil and Lothians MSP Shirley-Anne Somerville (*Extras* 1.2.11). Ms Somerville welcomed this cooperative initiative, and the fact that it could be passed before Parliament breaks up for the election in May. But she struck a note of caution, saying '... we can't be complacent, and careful monitoring of the situation will be required to assess whether these changes are enough – or whether we need to go further in due course'.

*Spurtle* also welcomes the changes whilst doubting their effectiveness. The root problem remains businesses directing many party-minded people to non-party-minded residential contexts.

## LOCAL TOURISM DIVIDEND LIKELY AFTER OSCAR NOMINATION



*The Illusionist*, which has specific local connections (Issues 180-1), was one of 5 animated feature films nominated for a Golden Globe in November. Sadly, it lost out to Hollywood behemoth *Toy Story III*.

However, it is one of only 3 films in its category nominated for an Academy Award (Oscar) on 28 February. This is an immense achievement by the (formerly) George St-based animators who socialised extensively in Broughton. It should also result in wider distribution in the US and, potentially, enhanced tourism benefits for Edinburgh. A DVD of the film will be released in the UK on 14 February.

Pictured is the Forth Street building (supposedly a library) from which *The Illusionist's* lead male first views the romantic lead female in a Broughton Place hotel.

## BROUGHTON HALLS REVIVED



Since 1853, the splendid building now known as Broughton Halls at 32a Broughton Street has been a school, a church, a Rifleman's Lodge, a Festival theatre venue, and a nightclub.

After 158 years, it has metamorphosed again into a 6-apartment residence, and a most welcome addition to the 21st-century 'village'. Internal alterations and fine exterior renovation have been effected by Morgan-McDonnell Architecture Ltd. The Scots Jacobean-styled building and its fascinating details have been carefully preserved. There is a sympathetic dormer extension to the roof, but the most radical external change is a new doorway.

Opinions may differ on the latter. Suggestive of Piet Mondrian's linear style, in *Spurtle's* view this is an exciting addition to Broughton's built joie-de-vivre.

## FLOOD DEFENCES NEARER

Phase 1 of the Water of Leith flood prevention measures is expected to begin in March, and will focus on Newhaven Road, and Bonnington to Deanhaugh Street. (See *Breaking news* 9.11.10 for links to plans.)

Changes in the way the Scottish Government disburses funds have delayed the project, but CEC has now appointed contractors to carry out the work.

Lagan Construction, an Irish firm, won the job with the lowest of five applications (£11.5m). The work is estimated to take until December 2012.

However, in light of the trams fiasco, sceptics wonder whether the lowest bid will eventually represent the best value for money.

## Social media explained

Twenty-first-century tools like blogs, podcasts, video and social networks can give a real boost to all sorts of organisations, often for little or no cost. However, learning to use them daunts many people.

That's why expert volunteers with backgrounds in journalism, business, technology and PR are now showing locals involved in charities and community groups how to make best use of social media for free.

Tom Allan – Edinburgh's former *Guardian* 'Beatblogger' – and friends offer approachable, one-to-one help and support across Edinburgh. So far they've helped about 20 people from 8 groups in Wester Hailes and Oxgangs. Local 'surgeries' in or near Broughton are now scheduled for Mon. 7 February (6:30pm, Stockbridge Library) and Mon. 7 March/4 April (6:30pm, McDonald Rd Library).

To find out more about Edinbuzz Social Media Surgeries, visit the website ([www.edinbuzz.net](http://www.edinbuzz.net)), blog or Facebook page where you can sign up to the events, and discuss what you'd like to see from them in future.

## Bellevue news and blues



We reported last year on the shoddy, mixer-maxter 'repair' of Bellevue Crescent's fissured pavements (Issue 180).

During the recent glacial interlude, their ungritted surfaces were negotiated only by the intrepid or foolhardy. When

the ice finally melted away, many of the old cracks reappeared and further repair is clearly required. On one section, we counted 15 trip hazards within 30 yards.

The Crescent is one of the UNESCO World Heritage Site's jewels. Its pavements are anything but. This applies to many other streets in the New Town. Why is their repair and upkeep of seemingly least consideration in maintaining and consolidating the capital's prize asset?

More positively, the risible pavements between the Crescent's 'island' parks and the Bellevue thoroughfare are now being widened and should be significantly more pedestrian-friendly in the near future.

## Help for the jurmummed

Three 'girls' freshly returned from working down south in the 'luxury lifestyle sector' have now set up their own lifestyle management and concierge service in Broughton.

Based in Union Street, TLC Scotland offers tips on heels and 'it' bags, and practical help with everything from stalking for bankers and fishing for CEOs to wedding and children's party organisation. Also offered are attic clearing, last-minute snazzy waistcoat provision, and recipes for celeriac remoulade. For tips on homemade mayonnaise and cleaning one's jewels with Alka Seltzer, look no further.

Doubtless, Holly, Lucie and Celia are exactly what is needed by Edinburgh's many time-poor and tapsalteerie citizens. Unfortunately, however, this correspondent (AM) has lost their contact details.

## 'Pledge to make a green difference!' says SEZ

Last month, we introduced the Start Eco Zone (SEZ) in the St James Centre (*Breaking news* 5.1.11). As part of their campaign to target 4 areas where people can make a difference (energy, food, waste and travel), this month they are inviting visitors to pin a 2011 green pledge to the shop tree and be entered into a raffle to win an Eco hamper. A range of planet-friendly items are on sale as usual (e.g. bags, jewellery, even horseshoes), but this month's bargain is a kettle at £10.99. Pop in for a chat and refreshment, or free use of the computer and WIFI. SEZ is opposite the cashpoints by the Little King Street entrance.

## Broughton birds observed

Broughton participants in the RSPB's Back Garden Bird Watch (29-30 January) reported mixed results on Twitter.

After one hour's observation, some boasted 15 species and extravagant flocks of goldfinch (Cochran Terrace). Others, in more Arctic E. Claremont Street and elsewhere observed absolutely nothing.

Overall, anecdotal evidence suggests local bird numbers are down this year, probably due to an exceptionally cold December. If you live in Broughton and took part in BGBW, please tell us your results.

## Tellin' Tales at Drummond

After the success of last year's student and parent literacy evening 'I'm a parent help me out here', Drummond CHS are repeating the event with this year's emphasis on storytelling.

The evening is open to students, parents and the local community. It's free and takes place on Thurs. 11 February, 6.30–8.30pm.

The programme includes: drama and music performances, examples of work by S1 students, animation workshops, creative texting, storytelling workshops from senior students, short stories written by students at our partner schools in Kenya, crèche, Fairtrade café, bookshop and lots of freebies ... a fun way to spend a winter's evening.

For more details contact: Hazel Kinnear; Tel: 556 2651; email [admin@drummond.edin.sch.uk](mailto:admin@drummond.edin.sch.uk).

## Profile: General Kazimierz Dworak (1895–1954)

A commemorative plaque at No. 109 Great King Street records this as a residence of General Kazimierz Dworak of the Polish Brigade.

Born on 7 January 1895 in Rzeszow, Poland, he went on to become a leading (and much decorated) specialist in the automotive wing of the Polish Army in Scotland during World War II, and co-founded the first motorised brigade. He was a close associate of the celebrated General Maczek and fought alongside him in the campaign of September 1939.

The Polish 1st Armoured Division was an Allied military unit created in February 1942 at Duns. In the early stages of the war, it was stationed in Scotland and guarded 200 kms of British coastline. At its peak, it numbered c.16,000 soldiers, 380 tanks and 470 guns. Together with a motorised brigade formed in France, it contributed to the liberation of Western Europe.

After the war, the majority of its soldiers opted not to return to Soviet-occupied Poland and remained in exile, many in Scotland. General Dworak died in London on 3 September 1954.

Alas, he seems now to be largely forgotten in this country and little is known of his time in Great King Street. *Spurtle* would welcome any further details. *JRM*



### Gallery round-up

Running until Mon. 14 February at the Union Gallery is *Small and Perfectly Crafted*, a varied exhibition of modestly sized and eminently affordable paintings (see *Breaking news* 20.1.11). *Being Human* follows on Thurs. 20 January: a 'powerful and compelling study of the human condition in the 21st Century' featuring works by Audrey Grant and Martyn McKenzie.

Worrying news from Axolotl Gallery which opened on Dundas Street in Feb. 2010. Co-owner Sarah Wilson says disappointing footfall means hours may soon be restricted to weekends. In the meantime, more exhibitions will be focused at the related, Leith-based AXO Gallery on Queen Charlotte Street.

Northumberland Street's Gallery on the Corner will run a David Peacock retrospective from 2–26 February. His 'Get in Line' is pictured above, and a review will follow online soon.

### Enthusiastic Pilrig Fiddlers



The Pilrig Fiddlers group was founded seven years ago by Della Penny to promote Scottish traditional folk music classes for children and their families, writes *Harald Tobermann*.

Like the *Spurtle*, the Fiddlers have been aiming for a local audience, albeit one with a more musical agenda, delivered with the help of some of the best young fiddle tutors in Scotland, including: Mike Vass, Eilidh Steel, Morag Brown, Sarah-Jane Summers, Fiona Dalgetty, Amy Geddes, Rona Wilkie and Gregor Borland.

A new Absolute Beginners class starts on 28 January, then continues on Friday afternoons during term time in Pilrig Church Hall, just off Leith Walk. To stir things up a bit, there is also – for the first time – a Mixed Instruments Group: (just about) any competently and enthusiastically played instrument is welcome. There are also a limited number of places in some of the other classes – from Intermediate to Advanced.

Prospective fiddle students can make contact by email (fiddlesticks@PilrigFiddlers.org.uk) or Tel. 0131 554 7698 (eves).

## Briefly

*Spurtle* now has a **Facebook page** (Broughton Spurtle). Other ways to access/spread hyperlocal news and opinions are by email, telephone and postal addresses (pp. 1, 4), and Twitter (@thespurtle).

The new **Express** supermarket on **Picardy Place** opened on 20 Jan. Early pricing policy suggested keen competition for lunchtime trade (*Breaking news* 21.1.10).

A new **Claremont Court Residents Association** has formed (*Breaking news* 18.1.11). **Next meeting:** 7:00pm, Wed. 2 Feb., Broughton Primary School. Contact: [claremontcourt@hotmail.co.uk].

Part of **Edinburgh World Heritage Trust's** mission is combating fuel poverty and seeking a marriage of 'sustainability and heritage conservation'. Community-led regeneration and food gardens are already on the agenda. **Send more ideas** to: info@ewht.org.uk.

A woman was **robbed and assaulted on Mansfield Place** at 6:40am on Fri. 14 Jan. A jogger who came to her aid was also attacked. **The suspect** – who fled towards Bellevue Place – had a thin nose, was white, 5'8", early 20s, of slight to medium build with short, curly blond hair. He wore a black Adidas tracksuit top and dark bottoms. **Info. to:** Tel. 311 3131; anonymously, Crimestoppers Tel. 0800 555 111.

**Filming** in Eurocars (**E. London St**) on 16 Jan. was for part of a new Kate Atkinson thriller – *Case Histories* – expected to be broadcast on the BBC this autumn.

Planning Aid for Scotland will host a public meeting to discuss the **proposed Biomass plant in Leith** on 9 Feb. Forth Energy will attend. **Leith Central Community Council** will vote to support or oppose the scheme at its next meeting on 21 Feb. (See *Extras* for all details.)

Use of the hut in **Redbraes Park** as a local café and community hub may stop now that the Council has tripled the rent and granted only a 1-year extension to the lease. **Cllr Louise Lang** is looking into the problem.

**Broughton History Society's** next meeting will entail Patricia Andrew examining '**Images of Broughton: Overlooked and Looked Over**' at 7:00pm on Mon. 21 Feb. in Drummond CHS.

Broughton St's **Olive Branch deli** now boasts sofas and free WIFI. Not what we'd choose to **put in a panino**, but apparently popular with the nibblerati.

State schools break for the **half-term** on Fri. 11 Feb. and resume on Tues. 22 Feb.

**Malcolm Chisholm, MSP** has backed a simple but positive scheme called **GIFTASHIFT**. Participants donate 1 day's earnings to the good cause of their choice. 'It is a very **impressive and worthwhile** initiative,' he writes, 'and I shall do all I can to tell people about it.' Find out more at [www.giftashift.com].

# Moreover ...



**Signs of the times.** Many thanks to reader David Young, whose photograph – taken at the foot of the Mound, looking north – eloquently captures the current, absurd complexities of city-centre road travel.

Good news from **Villeneuve Wines**, whose pavement A-board announced **'WINE DETOXES YOU\*'**. Following in tiny print was a sobering qualification: **'\*WINE DOES NOT DETOX YOU'**.

In the week to 17 Jan., **no planning applications or decisions affecting Broughton** were made at all. A source suggests this may be the first complete ceasefire for 15 years.

On 17 Jan., **Leith Central Community Council** voted to back the campaign for a moratorium on **large biomass plants** in Scotland.

**Broughton Primary School** is girding itself for a visit by **Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education**. Staff – last inspected in 2002 – will at some point receive 3 weeks' notice in which to anticipate with pleasure a process characterised by **'transparency and mutual respect'** (according to HMIE). Parents have been asked to complete an online survey.

**Background:** [www.hmie.gov.uk/aboutus/inspectionresources/].

A **campaign** has started against CEC's proposal to develop housing in a plot adjacent to **Inverleith Park**. Opponents say it was donated as a **common good** and cannot **legally or morally** be sold: [www.inverleithpark.co.uk/#/save-the-park/4546597877]. **Cllr Tim McKay**, Economic Development's Depute Convener, promises **community consultation** before a decision is made.

Plans for a **modern house** in **Hart St** have unexpectedly re-entered the planning process. See *Breaking news* 26.1.11.

Love is in the air ...



as Tesco opens for business

**SHIRLEY-ANNE SOMERVILLE**  
MSP – Member of the Scottish  
Parliament for Lothians  
(Scottish National Party)



**SURGERY TIMES:**

- Every Monday 10.00–12.00pm at the Scottish Parliament
- Call or email for an appointment
- Other times by arrangement

Email: shirley-anne.somerville.  
msp@scottish.parliament.uk

Tel. 0131 348 6823

www.shirleyannesomerville.org

## New Town/Broughton Community Council

The Community Council  
represents the views  
of local residents to  
Edinburgh City Council

Next meeting:

Monday 7 February  
at 7.30pm

Drummond Community  
High School (Library).

secretary@ntbcc.org.uk

**Malcolm Chisholm MSP**  
Edinburgh North and Leith



Constituency Office:

5 Croall Place, Leith Walk, EH7 4LT

Tel: 0131 558 8358

Fax: 0131 557 6781

Saturday surgeries:

9am Leith Library

10.30am Royston/Wardieburn

Community Centre

12pm Stockbridge Library

Email: Malcolm.Chisholm.msp@  
scottish.parliament.uk

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