

Spurtle

Find us at: www.broughtonspurtle.org.uk

BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

**October
2010**

No 187

Tel: 558 8574

spurtle@hotmail.co.uk

CEC WANTS HI-TECH DIALOGUE ABOUT CUTS

The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) says it will involve residents in deciding what should be cut and what should be saved as it tries to save at least £90m over the next three years. Broughton's chance will come on Wed. 6 October at Drummond CHS.

'Our City ... our future ... help us decide' is billed as an 'interactive summit' at which 20+ members of the public will use voting pads to prioritise budget proposals drawn up by officials under 8 topic headings. Results will go to a final 'city summit' on Fri. 15 October at the Scotsman newspaper HQ in Holyrood. Here community and city leaders will 'discuss the shared consequences of budget cuts and debate a future of doing things differently'.

CEC Leader Jenny Dawe says 'The engagement will greatly assist us in the budget decision making process and although the end result may be a change to some services, having a dialogue with people in Edinburgh on this scale will give us a far greater understanding of the wider priorities of the city's residents'.

Spurtle is sceptical. Of course Edinburgh faces tough times (and things may well get worse after the UK Spending Review on 20 October). However, with no clarity about who is chosen to attend mini-summits, or

TRAMS: LATEST LACK OF DEVELOPMENTS

As Edinburgh's tram project flounders like a wildebeest with its hindlegs caught between the jaws of a tenacious crocodile, increasingly credible reports suggest the line may, for an interim period, reach only so far as York Place. At first alarmed, New Town and Broughton Community Council (NTBCC) have now welcomed reliable clarification that York Place actually means St Andrew Square, and that a short, snarl-up-inducing stump towards Picardy Place is on no-one's agenda.

Meanwhile, notwithstanding officials' latest words of comfort, Calton Hill residents still fear (partial) isolation (at least by one road) from the rest of Edinburgh through closure of Blenheim Place to vehicles turning right from London Road (Issues 178-9, 184, *Breaking news* 20.3.10, 25.4.10, 13.6.10, *Letters* 21.7.10). In response to 248 letters of objection, City officials recommended a redesigned Blenheim Place junction be trialed without the banned turn to see if it would impact on traffic and the running of trams. Residents welcomed the possible concession with a large measure of caution. So did Transport Committee members who deferred any Traffic Regulation Order decisions until 23 November pending further training on 'complex' legal matters.

The delay also disappointed West End residents. Officials proposing the closure to cars of Shandwick Place had earlier dismissed their arguments about the resultant volume of displaced traffic and pollution across the New Town (Issue 184) as 'unreliable'. Objectors had no opportunity to contest this. In both cases, many argue that making changes now is pointless because the trams project has stalled. See: [http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/45/papers_on_permanent_traffic_changes_go_public].

what importance (if any) their opinions will be given, the process is open to abuse and ridicule. Loaded yes/no questions and X-factor gimmicks such as voting pads merely trivialise local democracy. Stage-managed dialogue cannot disguise that 'doing things differently' or 'a change to some services' mean cuts. It all smacks of a rather desperate and probably futile attempt to divert voters' anger.

To register for a place at the Drummond CHS event, or for a toolkit to organise your own summit, or to express an opinion: email [councilbudget@edinburgh.gov.uk] or write to Freepost RSJC-SLXC-YTJY, Budget, Council Leader, City Chambers, Edinburgh EH1 1YJ. Alternatively, badger your councillors in the usual way and complete Greener Leith's independent poll (*Breaking news* 24.9.10).

REED RISES THROUGH RANKINGS



Young field athlete Kimberley Reed's 2010 summer campaign ended with a haul of ten medals from various schools competitions and national championships. Prepare to be amazed.

Her most prestigious placings were 3rd in the England Athletics AAA championships and 2nd in the UK School games. Her current personal best for the Hammer is 51.02 metres (just 1 metre off the Scottish record with a year remaining at Under-17 level). No wonder she is now ranked 1st in Scotland and 4th in the UK at Under-17 for Hammer, and 2nd in Scotland and 9th in the UK at Under-20. (Incredibly, she is also ranked 5th in Scotland and 25th in the UK for Senior women.) In her *secondary* event of Javelin, she recently threw a personal best of 33.53 metres, propelling her to Scottish No.1 at Under-20.

Next year promises another bumper harvest on the domestic scene, but Kimberley will also target the Commonwealth Youth Games, the European Youth Olympics, and the World Youth Championships.

Proud parents Scott and Gail still seek sponsorship for the local prodigy (Issue 184). Interested parties can contact them through *Spurtle*.

Missing polling cards – no problem ... perhaps

In June (Issue 183) we urged readers to quantify a rumoured local problem by reporting to the Returning Officer and local MP recent non-delivery of polling cards. Mark Lazarowicz, MP then took up the issue with both Council Chief Executive (CE) and the Royal Mail.

The CE said he had investigated every single case of non-delivery, but only one instance had been reported in Bellevue Road. They had been unable to identify the reason for non-delivery. Royal Mail insisted that all the polling cards they received from the supplier were delivered by them.

Several explanations present themselves: (1) There was never a problem (unlikely, since we know of at least four instances of non-delivery in Bellevue Road alone); (2) Residents did not report the problem (unlikely, given assurances received by *Spurtle* and local disquiet); (3) Somebody somewhere has brushed something under a carpet (unlikely given the spotless probity and high professionalism of all concerned). What remains is a minor mystery.

‘Without any specific other cases, I don’t think it will be possible to investigate further for the past election,’ concludes Mr Lazarowicz, ‘but I have emphasised to the Council the importance of ensuring delivery of polling cards, particularly with next year’s election in mind’.

It is worth emphasising, of course, that people do not need a polling card to vote as long as they are actually on the voters’ roll. However, recent events suggest not all parts of the electoral system are working as well as they should.

John Lewis: how permanent?

The St James Quarter project remains on track, with demolition work scheduled for 2011. Earlier this year (*Breaking news* 16.5.10) John Lewis MD Barry Matheson told *Spurtle* they had no plans to relocate while things fell apart all around.

But very strong local rumours persist to the contrary, and the shop’s position now seems to be shifting. In September, well-placed professional insiders flagged issues ‘still under discussion’ before getting the wind up and hastily imposing complete radio silence.

Whatever the truth, John Lewis is pushing ahead with a major £2.5m refurbishment of its women’s fashion floor, due to complete by 19 October: extra space for greater numbers of more designer labels.

Briefly

Broughton’s inaugural **Jazz Festival** got off to a roaring start last month (*Breaking news* 12.9.10). Organisers Dan Hallam, Ruari Wilson, Nick Gould and Joanne Hood hailed it a great success, and are already envisaging a **bigger, better event next year**.

When a new arrival in Edinburgh took his **Dalmatian** for a walk earlier this summer, he was pleased to note a local couple also walked their two dogs, including a Dalmatian, at roughly the same times and places. They got talking, and were surprised to find **both Dalmatians were called Harry**. They were even more surprised that the new arrival and the non-Dalmatian dog shared the name **Tommy**. They were then positively amazed when it emerged that not only were **two of them artists** but all of them had opened art galleries **within quarter of a mile** of each other. Tom Fitchet of **Saorsa** on Rodney St, and Rob Dawkins and Alison Auldjo of **Union Gallery** on Broughton St must now be wondering what else they have in common.

Charity Chic promote ethical and eco-friendly style and demonstrate that **constructive consumerism** can be chic. From 7–9 Oct. they’re holding an **Eco Fashion Fair** at St Andrew’s and St George’s West Church on George St. Times vary so consult *Events*.

Greener Leith seeks volunteers to help with a **clean-up of Victoria Park** on Thurs. 9 Oct. A clean-up in **Pilrig Park** is scheduled for 6 Nov. Tel. 539 4129.

Tesco at 8 Picardy Place is one step closer with listed building consent granted for an illuminated fascia and projecting sign, vinyl window graphics and internal security shutter. The office development at **47-9 Annandale St** is one step back with Lothian Buses plc postponing development in favour of ‘hard standing’ (*Breaking news* 22.9.10).

Speaking in the Scottish Parliament on 9 Sept., **Malcolm Chisholm, MSP** urged campaigners against ‘drop-off’ charges at Edinburgh Airport to **support trams**. ‘I hope that we will unite across party divisions in the campaign to get the trams up and running as soon as possible,’ he said. ‘No one can possibly believe that the failure of the trams project would in any way be in the interests of Edinburgh or Scotland.’

Mark Lazarowicz, MP was clear whom he would back for the **Labour Party leadership** well before announcement of the result on 25 Sept. ‘**I’m voting for Ed Miliband,**’ he told *Spurtle*.

The 160th Brownies meet once a week in Broughton St Mary’s Parish Church (Bellevue Crescent) for **games and crafts, fun and educational badges**. Some spaces for 7–10-year-old girls remain. Contact: Liz (Mob. 07727879520) or Rachel (rachdakin@hotmail.co.uk).

Police promise improvements

Lothian and Borders Police (LBP) have introduced improved coverage for their city-centre Safer Neighbourhood Teams. Two sergeants and 18 officers will now cover 3 beats, providing better policing levels at night. The 4–5 officers per beat will, however, be tasked to attend emergencies elsewhere.

Meanwhile, LBP launched a Community Commitment on 1 September designed to increase public confidence, give local people the chance to play a greater part in how they are policed, and improve two-way communication.

Community officers will: ensure the public know who they are and how to contact them; be visible and accessible in each community; prioritise local concerns; hold regular community meetings; work with the public to identify local problems, and work with others to solve them; provide regular updates on progress.

LBP will also: answer 90% of 999 calls within 10 seconds and 90% of non-emergency calls within 40 seconds; attend emergencies within 10 minutes in the city, 20 minutes elsewhere; and help the public to understand how to report crime, and what happens once they do.

Room for more Gaelic?

In Issue 186 we touched on CEC plans to expand Gaelic Medium Education (GME). A report issued on 7 September has now highlighted difficulties (see *Extras* 1.10.10).

Reopening Bonnington PS as a dedicated Gaelic resource would cost £600K and tie up a saleable asset valued at £1m. Expanding provision at Leith Walk and/or Tollcross PSs would cost up to £1.6m. Although Scottish Government funding could cover much of these capital sums in 2010–11, the Council’s net funding contributions would also rise from current levels of £441K to nearly £1.1m per year by 2014. These costs would be met from savings elsewhere within the Children & Families budget. No easy job.

Officials will revisit the Scottish Government and parents and management at schools to identify the ‘best solution at best value’ before reporting again in November.

With school budgets already stretched, GME’s relevance to Lowland, schoolchildren, and alleged past parental motives for choosing GME to secure favourable secondary-school placements later, will face careful scrutiny.

Thoughts on Faraway Mountain



In Issue 186 we invited readers' thoughts on Atsuo Okamoto's Faraway Mountain. Mure Dickie, Financial Times Tokyo bureau chief, responded.

It was one of the many pleasures of Edinburgh at Festival time to bump into some cutting-edge Japanese sculpture in good old Gayfield Square. My first irreverent thought on seeing the taller of the two works was that somebody had machine-gunned a sarcophagus. But on closer inspection, the pieces were revealed as an interesting effort to bring lightness and transparency to heavy stone by an artist clearly passionate about his chosen medium.

The ghost horses of Broughton

From time to time, two superb police horses make their stately way up Broughton Street. As they near Picardy Place, we may imagine them vanishing under the arch to Broughton Street Lane. When we approach that entrance, could that be the sound of hooves sparking on cobblestones and the creak of a cart?

The Lane bisects Picardy Place and Forth Street, with mini Piranesi archways to and from Broughton and Union Streets. In 2010, it appears superficially nondescript, a gallimaufry of two car parks, offices to let, and shuttered buildings *et al.* Traverse it when the rain is horizontal, and a vintage film noir by Huston or Melville might spring to mind.

But history is not entirely effaced. Consider the sturdy building which now comprises the splendid Outhouse pub, and the shuttered edifice nearby (pictured). These were clearly stables with haylofts above and are assuredly of more than film noir vintage.

The Lane backed on to Picardy, originally a village of 13 houses created in 1730 to accommodate cambric weavers from St Quentin, Picardy who helped to establish the production of linen in Scotland. By repute, the weavers were resourceful high-achievers. Very likely, they would have had allotment gardens as well as stabling for the horses and the transport which conveyed linen products to the city and the bustling port of Leith.

This is partly surmise. The definitive history of Picardy Place and its offshoots in the lane remains to be written. When did the horses become ghostly memories and when were the stable doors closed for good? Do the police horses flinch with pride or sorrow as they pass by Broughton Street Lane and go on obediently up the road and out of sight? *JRM*

The Gallery on the Corner

The agreeably named Gallery on the Corner of Dundas and Northumberland Streets opened in March 2010. Stepping inside it is to enter a zone of light, and to experience art and craft of fine distinction. This is a gallery with a very special ethos. It represents and supports inclusive artwork produced by artists who have a disability, mental



Dreamcatcher by Josie Pople.

health problem, or who come from a disadvantaged background. It provides a platform to exhibit and sell their work in the heart of Edinburgh's gallery district.

From 1-16 October, as part of the national Mental Health Arts and Film Festival, the gallery hosts the 'Open to All' exhibition, whose theme is Creativity, Recovery and Wellbeing. It will showcase the creative gifts of people who have personal experience of mental distress and whose art has played a key part in their wellbeing and recovery. This promises to be an exhilarating exhibition which will be shown to advantage in one of the most charming and enlightened galleries in Edinburgh.



Briefly

Broughton History Society next meets on Mon. 11 Oct. at 7pm in Drummond CHS. **Eric J. Graham** will talk on 'The Opening up of Calton Hill'. Visitors £2, members free. Don't mention Blenheim Place.

Joey D of 54 Broughton St was invited to exhibit his unique recycled garments and accessories at an exposition of **eco-friendly Scottish businesses** staged in St Andrew Square garden on 6 September. The event was keenly enjoyed by the **Prince of Wales** who, with a wide smile, accepted a handsome **Joey D tweed handbag** on behalf of his wife the **Duchess of Cornwall**.

Bellevue resident **Fiona Manson** contacted us last month asking if any readers had photos of her grandfather **Robert Bruce's grocery**, at 32 Rodney St until c.1969 (*Breaking news* 10.9.10). **Donald Graham**, now of Staufen, Germany, emailed with his memories as a delivery boy for the shop during the 1960s, toiling uphill every day and demolishing mountains of cardboard boxes around a sleeping cat (see *Letters* 1.10.10).

Welcome to Curiouser and Curiouser, a gift, prints and framing shop which opened at 93 Broughton Street on 16 Sept.

Arts and crafts, homebaking, light lunches and refreshments for sale at **Broughton St Mary's Parish Church**, Bellevue Cres., on Sat. 23 Oct., 10:30am-1:00pm. **Bring your own blether**.

Congratulations to **Narcissus Flowers** whose Scottish-themed posies for the Queen and Pope were admired by an estimated **1 billion TV viewers** on Day One of last month's papal state visit.

Congratulations also to **Locanda di Gusti** (formerly Bella M'Briana) on E. London St. for gaining a prestigious **AA rosette** for the excellence of its cuisine. Recently, Ron MacKenna, the *Herald's* restaurant critic, considered it to be **arguably the best Italian restaurant in Scotland**.

Planning permission has been granted to convert **No. 65 Northumberland St** from previous use as a care home back into a townhouse (Ref. 10/01928/LBC). Historic Scotland welcomed the **conservation gain**, on condition proper care was taken over **astragals**.

One new CEC **cost-cutting proposal** is to group school janitors in **secondary-school clusters**. How this would apply here, where Drummond's PPI jannies are **employed privately** by Amey upon different terms and conditions to state primary-school jannies, is unclear. **It is almost as if no-one has thought things through**.

City-centre PC **Dane Harrison** says police are not connecting three **serious late-night assaults** - 2 in Stockbridge, 1 in West Scotland St Lane over recent months (see *Breaking news* 21.8.10, 1.9.10).

Moreover ...



Anent our July exposé of the mystery scribe who stencilled 'BUT I'M SOFT INSIDE' on Forth Street's pavement (Issue 184), we discovered another of his/her cryptic messages on North Bridge 'DO YOU COME HERE OFTEN?'. Also, dear readers, if you look closely at the pavement just up from the Union Gallery in Broughton St and outside The Street bar on Picardy Place, you will discover 3 minute, permanently wagging dogs (see *Breaking news* 1.10.10). Oh where will the Winkie lead us next?

In 2009, Broughton Rd's Royal Navy and Royal Marine Club **signally failed** to hoist Nelson's 'England expects every man to do his duty' from its flagstaff on **Trafalgar Day**. No members knew how. Can *Spurtle* readers supply the necessary **historical, nautical, and knotting expertise** to celebrate 21 Oct. properly, if only as a **mark of disrespect** for French President Sarkozy's **abhorrent policies** towards the Roma?

Since launch 12 months ago, the *Spurtle website* has attracted readers from worldwide. Most are from the UK, but some visit from **further afield**: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Romania, Russia, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, Tuvalu, Uruguay, United States, and the US military. Of these **the most intriguing is Tuvalu** – a tiny, collection of fast submerging atolls in the South Pacific. Can anyone identify our reader(s) there, or explain their interest?

Controversial plans to build two 3-storey dwellings in the garden of **27 Great King St** have been approved (Ref. 10/01744/FUL) despite objections by the Cockburn Association and 13 neighbours. See *Breaking news* (15.9.10) for details including alleged 'alien materials', 'hazardous overflows' and 'costly unpleasantness'.

Broughton St has had 2 delightful, now sadly departed dinosaurs lurking in the undergrowth. Now we hear of a **flamingo** gracing our midst. If you have spotted it, please tell us of its location by email or in writing to us c/o Narcissus Flowers. Be sure to include your name and address. The first correct answer picked from the **shoogly Spurtle hat** will win a **£15 book token** with our compliments.

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@scottishparliament.uk
Tel. 0131 348 6823
www.shirleyannesomerville.org

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

Mark Lazarowicz
MP for Edinburgh North and Leith



Constituency Office:
5 Croall Place, Leith Walk, EH7 4LT
Tel: 0131 557 0577
Fax: 0131 557 5759
mark@marklazarowicz.org.uk
www.marklazarowicz.org.uk
Friday advice sessions:
4.00pm Stockbridge Library,
42 Hamilton Place
5.00pm Ainslie Park Leisure Centre
6.00pm Constituency Office

Spurtle Team: John Dickie, Maria Hart, George Hosey, Alan McIntosh, John Ross Maclean, David Sterratt. Post: Spurtle, c/o Narcissus Flowers, 87 Broughton St, Edinburgh EH1 3RJ. Printed at Broughton St Mary's Parish Church.

New Town/Broughton Community Council

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

Next meetings:

4 Oct. & 1 Nov.
at 7.30pm

Drummond Community
High School (Library).

mowats@blueyonder.co.uk

Broughton

Property Management
Letting your
property?

Bring this Spurtle
for a discount of
£25
from the first let

info@broughtonproperty.co.uk
0131-478-7222
61-63 Broughton Street
Edinburgh, EH1 3RJ.



y u i o p
IT services

PC gone mad?
Call John and get it fixed.

t: 07771 784 058 / 0131 557 9577
e: john.robinson@yuiop.co.uk
Computer support and consultancy
for small businesses and individuals

AM DECORATING

Your local painter + decorator

Alastair McAlpine

Tel: 0131 556 4841

Mobile: 07866 222 656
alastairmc Alpine@btinternet.com