

# Spurtle

February  
2008

**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER**

No 155

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Free

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## PROFIT NOT PEOPLE A PROBLEM

Over 100 residents have objected to Unite plc's plans for student flats and "associated facilities" at 130 McDonald Rd, formerly Martin & Frost.

They are against overshadowing by four 3-6-floor blocks, and disturbance from the proposed 295 occupants. Extra numbers would adversely affect pedestrians, schools and drains, they said, and minimal parking would impact on local streets. Design and materials were not in keeping, nor would plans allow fire engines and rubbish lorries proper access.

"Local people feel it's becoming overdeveloped here and that profit, not people, is the driving force behind planning decisions," says Jackie Bell, a campaign representative. "We want something more in proportion with the surroundings, coupled with improvements in infrastructure. There are no local sports and leisure facilities, or housing for the elderly despite dense population. GP and dental practices are also overstretched."

Malcolm Chisholm, MSP and Mark Lazarowicz, MP helped win more time for objectors after Unite submitted plans just before Christmas. A decision is expected at the Planning Committee meeting on 13 Feb. See ref. 07/01518/FUL at: [<http://citydev-portal.edinburgh.gov.uk>].

## FORUM SETS CUTS GUIDELINES

The controversial cross-party forum to discuss school cuts met twice last month.

On 10 Jan. members agreed criteria for evaluating schools. They set 3 headings: educational outcomes (results, school inspection reports, teaching and ethos); value for money (running costs, pupil numbers), and school rolls (pupils, parental choice, catchment areas). It was agreed that use of the criteria would be a guide and that the forum would take account of wider qualitative information when detailed proposals are discussed. The forum consists of 10 political, religious, teaching and parental representatives, including Lynda Flex, Chair of Drummond's Parent Council. None of them is permitted to comment and minutes are not made public. *Spurtle* went to press before the second meeting on 31 Jan.

Optimists claim the order in which schools will finally be judged – primaries, nurseries, then secondaries – already suggests a tactical victory for Drummond. Sceptics highlight vagueness in use of the word *guide*, and say nothing is yet resolved.



*Broughton Primary School's P7 football team has won 5 out of 6 games this season, scoring 40 goals and making it to the 2nd round of the Inspectors Cup. Kyle Houldcroft-Doig and Jamie Dishington (above) were also selected for Edinburgh Schools in November's national Primary Inter Association Sevens Final.*

## KENYA CONCERNS LOCALS

Drummond students have been closely monitoring events abroad after political turmoil in Kenya. January's disputed election results sparked widespread rioting, intertribal violence, and heavy-handed crackdowns by the authorities. Many Kenyans were forced to leave their homes and some face food shortages.

Drummond's Kenya Youth Group (KYG) contacted its partner schools – Muthambi Boys and Muthambi Girls – in Chogori, a rural area to the East of Mount Kenya. Although not itself a trouble spot, many boarding pupils come from the crisis-stricken west of the country. So far it is believed all students returned to the schools safely after the holidays, but Mandy Toogood, KYG Coordinator, says talking to teaching staff has proved more difficult than usual as phone cards there are now in short supply.

The KYG is made up of S4 pupils who aim for better communication and curricular links between the schools. It's an equal partnership, with funds raised by staff, pupils and parents going to young people's education in both countries. In June 2007, 8 students and 4 staff visited Drummond for 10 days, taking part in a range of lessons and activities with their Edinburgh counterparts.

## Briefly

The next meeting of the **Broughton History Society** will take place at 7pm on 4 February at Drummond CHS. A talk on “**The Story of Eric Liddell**” will be given by **Sue Caton, his niece**. Guests’ entry £1, members sprint in for free.

Friends of **Glenogle Baths** fear they will not be included in Edinburgh Council’s 2010/11 **Capital Investment Programme**, to be announced on 21 February. To correct this, the friends are alerting all relevant heritage bodies to the situation, issuing an information pack, and urging as many people as possible to present the Swim Centre’s case to their local councillors. For further information and practical support, Tel.: 467 4765.

**Schools** close for the **mid-term break** on 8 Feb. and reopen on 19 Feb.

Spotted on Broughton St – a baffled shopper trying to **withdraw cash from a parking meter**. The confusion began with a pavement sign advertising the **new ATM in Rapido’s** carry-out. Send us your tales of tangles, comic or tragic, with street furniture.

**Mark Lazarowicz, MP** has urged the government, regulator and energy companies to ensure people can **heat their homes affordably**. Initiating a parliamentary debate last month, he called for an increase in, and extension of, the **winter fuel payment**, an additional fuel voucher, and measures to prevent those who can’t use direct debit from paying higher rates. He also argued for the setting-up of minimum standards for energy suppliers’ “social tariffs” (currently unregulated reductions for vulnerable groups); and for further support and financial backing of **energy-efficiency initiatives** across the UK, especially those targeting private landlords (see Adam Ramsay, p. 3).

Lynne McTaggart of **Salon LA** has **won an appeal against the ban on timber decking** outside her listed Broughton St premises. As reported in *Spartle*, the Planning Dept called the basement change an “alien” and “incongruous addition” in April 2007. **Scottish Govt officials disagreed**, and reprieved the decking for 2 years. Let’s hope we may soon welcome an **alfresco California-style hot-tub** to improve the area still further.

*Spartle* has reverted to **black and white** while negotiating with new printers. **We are neither blue nor in the red, but very much in the pink.**

## Rumbling bridge to rust in pieces

The metal bridge in St Mark’s Park is to be replaced in 2008 as corrosion proved too costly to repair. City Development will site a new timber bridge in its place in an operation lasting 5 months. During the as yet unscheduled building phase, foot and cycle traffic will be diverted through Powderhall.

Like the neighbouring bridge upstream, the new span will be made from ekki: a durable West African hardwood from a renewable source. The wood requires no preservative and little maintenance, and the bridge – to carry cables as well as people over the Water of Leith – will have a design life of 120 years.

The old “rumbling bridge” – enjoyed by all for the gaps in its floor, its slippery surface after rain, and perceptible swaying when crossed by overweight dogs or joggers – is a Bailey Bridge. These prefabricated structures were developed during World War II by the British Army, and this one was acquired by the Corporation from the Ministry of Supply in July 1947. See one manufacturer’s website at: [www.dodsonmacrae.com].

## Fresh safeguards for at-risk trees

The Council has issued draft “Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Guidelines” to improve tree protection on development sites. Send comments to City Planning by 10 Mar. See: [http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/internet/Environment/Planning\_buildings\_i\_i\_/Planning/Development\_quality/CEC\_development\_quality\_handbook\_consultations].

Readers will recall the sad felling of 6 Norway maples on Logie Green Rd last July. The apparently healthy trees stood outside the former Vogue shop, then the object of a planning application by Palmerston/Unite Group plc. That application has now been withdrawn after problems arose over the Water of Leith flood plain, a nearby chimney, and industrial contamination of the ground.

## Townhouse to be a home at last?

Planning permission has been sought to convert No. 51–3 East Claremont St into a 4-storey home, with a new extension at the back and parking for 2 cars. Change of use from commercial to residential purposes has also been sought.

Newbridge-based developers East Coast Property acquired the 1827 Grade-A listed building for £800,000 in August 2007. It had lain empty since a serious fire in May 2007, at which time it was about to become a backpackers’ hostel.

The man behind East Coast Property is Shaf Rasul, a Scottish entrepreneur who made an estimated £102m fortune in IT before diversifying his activities in 2006. Last summer his company was briefly involved in proposals for flats at the Martin & Frost site on McDonald Rd.

Residents contacted by *Spartle* welcomed the Townhouse’s return to domestic use. Previously the property has served under various names and managements as a gym club, gay sauna, and swingers’ club. More or less noisy occupants over the last 80 years have included: the Highland Light Infantry Club (1929–62), the Royal Highland Fusiliers Regimental Association (1962–71), the E.S. Social Club (1971–74), the Wireworkers Social Club (1974–82), and the Transformer Motor and Generator Social Club (1982–84).

## Greenbacks sought for local green space

Council officials have promised the Broughton Project Group (BPG) £50,000 towards the cost of making a new playground and community garden off Barony St, writes *Stephanie Scott*. After consultation, plans have been made and BPG has approached the Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust to find matching funds.



## Platform sought for super model



*John Dickie writes:* In the current Broughton History Society newsletter, Alan Rees tells how he came to own a model of the old Scotland St Station and railway yard.

In the late 1980s, Alan helped to set up Scotland Yard Adventure Centre (now known as The Yard) which occupied part of the former railway site. Hearing about a well-researched model of what had once stood there, he was tempted and bought it from maker David Elbourne in Rugby.

“When assembled, the layout in four sections measures 10’ x 5’ and rests on stands 3’ high”, Alan explains. “It contains realistic features such as tracks, platforms, huts, etc. and comes with 70 period bits and pieces including wagons, trucks, lorries and cars. It can be electrically operated, although this needs an overhaul.” The (above) photo of part of the model shows the tunnel which took the line up to Waverley, and the steps down to the passenger platform from Summerbank. The real-life brick terracing which supported the steps is still visible today.

For 12 years the model was stored and exhibited at shows by a club in Portobello. Now it’s in Alan’s garage and he’d like to find a new home for it, “preferably on sale, but this is negotiable”. Anyone interested and wishing to view can Tel.: 332 7317.

## Yesterday’s streets remembered

Sometimes a simple list of names rings like poetry. Here, George Grahamslaw, evoking his youth during the 1930s, recalls some local shops and amenities that have long since gone: “... Jack the newsagent in Mansfield Place; Scott Lyon the baker on the corner of Broughton Place (the best ever bran scones); Cormack the grocer; Swanston the dairy; McDonald the confectioner in East London St; McKenzie the ironmonger at the corner of London St; Brooke, Bond’s tea depot at the corner of Cochran Terrace; the Ritz cinema in Rodney St; the Theatre Royal on Broughton St with its pantomimes; and Mr Napier the piano teacher in East London St who was unsuccessful in passing on to me his enthusiasm for the instrument.” These and other memories appear in a new collection of reminiscences published (£2 per copy) in aid of Broughton St Mary’s Church. Contact Kay Walker there for details.

## A warming thought

I have just had a chat with the Energy Saving Trust, writes *Adam Ramsay*. Apparently the average student in Edinburgh would save £200 and 1.6 tonnes of carbon a year if their landlord insulated their flat. Yet the landlord would save nothing, and so usually doesn’t bother. I know some students who can barely afford to heat their digs. At this time of year, they wear hats, gloves and scarves indoors.

Edinburgh-based politicians have been pushing measures to address this issue, with speculation that Lothians MSP Robin Harper will bring a Home Energy Efficiency Bill to Holyrood, and with North and Leith MP Mark Lazarowicz recently highlighting the issue in a debate at Westminster. Change is certainly needed.

In the meantime, although the voluntary Landlord Accreditation Scheme – created to promote high standards of tenancy management – intends tightening its energy efficiency standards, it seems that unless explicitly invited by tenants they will not check if accredited flats are truly efficient. Is it just me who is surprised by this?

## Nooks and crannies: High endeavours and an inward light

*Ross Maclean writes:* Pause at No. 32 York Place and you will note a modest plaque in the shape of a palette which indicates Sir Henry Raeburn’s occupancy of the house from c.1798–1809. The house contained reception rooms, galleries, and pre-eminently a studio which the great portrait-painter had adapted for his use.

The douce frontage reveals little of the radical alterations within. From the west end of York Lane, look up at the rear elevation and a very different picture is revealed. In order to maximise the fluidity of light for his sitters, Raeburn greatly enlarged the north-facing windows. He also installed multi-leaved shutters to control the flow of light. Art historians have observed that many of Raeburn’s portraits from this period are more dramatically “lit” than previous ones.

In front of these very windows, with their backs turned from the northern lands, were posed “The Macnab” and “Macdonnell of Glengarry”, pictures regarded as two of Raeburn’s most luminous masterworks.

Although much has changed in our cityscape, we can still look “far over the Forth” with a quickening of the heart, and marvel at the light as Broughton’s celebrated neighbour did all those years ago.



# Belle's View

Hi fans



A very happy 2008 to you all! Never mind the wind and rain – haul yourself out of that zip-up-to-the-chin full body slipper, there's plenty afoot in **Broughton** and **Bellevue!**

“Getcha head in the game!” I beg your pardon? The youthful among us will be thrilled that smash-hit Disney show **High School Musical** arrives at **The Playhouse** this month (18 Feb.–1 Mar., £7.50–£30.00). Staged for the first time in a spectacular live touring production, it has a plook-tastic 34-strong cast and live orchestra. Swoon at hunky **Troy's** unbelievably blinding white teeth and smooth basketball moves, and gasp at **Gabriella's** breathtaking scientific genius (for a girl!) as they sing and dance in pursuit of their dream to be the leads in the big school show! School plays at **Drummond CHS** were never like this!

Ca' the yowse! If you fancy having a bit of a warble yourself, come along to **Drummond CHS** for the **Sing World Music** evening class. Songs are taught by ear in Gaelic, Maori, Liberian, Latin, and even boring old English! Call 556 2651 for details (Tuesdays, 6.45–8.45pm, 10 weeks £42.50, concessions available).

Got stubborn post-Christmas lardy bits? **Virgin Active Health Club** (550 1650 or [www.virginactive.co.uk](http://www.virginactive.co.uk)) at the **Omni Centre** offers a stylish, spacious and truly dynamic exercise environment with world-class facilities and classes in **Cardio-wave**, **Nautilus**, **Kettlebells** and **Power-plate** – crikey! But if that all sounds a bit too tiring, you can just have a massage and slob out in the sauna, jacuzzi, spa, and steam room!

Till next time

PERSEPHONE BELLE

## New Town/Broughton Community Council

### Vacancies for Community Councillors

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

For information on next meeting, please contact  
Chris Richardson 07952 755 854  
@: [chris\\_richardson1001@hotmail.com](mailto:chris_richardson1001@hotmail.com)

## Malcolm Chisholm MSP

Edinburgh North and Leith



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86-88 Brunswick Street, EH7 5HU  
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Fax: 0131 557 6781  
Saturday surgeries:  
9am Leith Library  
10.30am Royston/Wardieburn  
Community Centre  
12pm Stockbridge Library

## Mark Lazarowicz

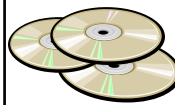
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Friday advice sessions:  
4.00pm Stockbridge Library  
5.30pm Constituency office

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0845 230 4090; *Special uplift:*  
529 3030; *Translation:* 242 8181

**Drummond CHS** 556 2651  
**Lothian Buses** 555 6363  
**McDonald Road Library**  
529 5626  
**St Mary's Primary School**  
556 7128

### RESIDENTS GROUPS

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