

Spurtle

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Tel: - 558 8574

spurtle@hotmail.co.uk

BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

“LOGIE GREEN VILLAGE” – A NEW START?

New plans for a “Logie Green Village” on the former Vogue Furnishings shop and adjacent premises in Logie Green Rd and Beaverbank Place have been lodged with the Council.

The 2.8-acre site – now warehouses and wasteland – would be replaced by managed student accommodation (337 bed spaces), 24 private and 8 affordable flats, office space, small-business premises, a café/restaurant, and retail outlet. There would be 106 car spaces,



Beaverbank Place

although students would not usually be allowed vehicles. Developers envisage a new “public square” in Beaverbank Place, new road access from Logie Green Rd, plus landscaping and 114 new trees.

Compared to earlier plans (now withdrawn), the current scheme has 163 fewer student places. This follows detailed pre-

submission talks between officials and developers Carlton (North Wales) Ltd, UK-wide providers of student housing.

Community Council

members and a majority of nearby residents have reacted positively. The area has long been run-down and in need of regeneration. But doubts remain. Are students being crammed into the site like battery hens? How robust are claims that they will not bring cars when sanctions apply only to parking “within the vicinity of the development”?

Also unclear is how the Council will view an influx of 337 students when, in March, it rejected Unite’s plans for 260 students on McDonald Rd partly because it would upset the balance of the community.

Full plans can be seen in Market St (Ref: 08/1365/FUL), and will probably go to the Planning Committee in August.



Logie Green Road

FROM BROUGHTON TO 10 DOWNING STREET EWEN’S BAREFOOT PILGRIMAGE CONTINUES

Drummond CHS teacher Ewen Hardie (pictured right) recently updated *Spurtle* on his campaign against the brutal suppression of Burma’s saffron revolution, when he shaved his head and became barefoot last year to highlight this issue. The warmer weather makes walking barefoot easier and Ewen has reconsidered the validity of his protest. While the winter weather drew attention to his bare feet, he felt that potentially warmer conditions would diminish the impact.

The Burmese people are now even more desperate after Cyclone Nargis, with the military Junta refusing aid to the country, and Ewen now plans to walk barefoot to London to raise awareness of the Internally Displaced People (IDPs) of Burma who live without security, education or health services. He does not intend to carry money on his journey, but hopes instead to be supported by the kindness of strangers for food and shelter. Visiting religious and spiritual sites and other active Burma campaign groups on the way, Ewen will

collect signatures for a petition he will deliver to the Government in London.

His route is not yet fixed, so if *Spurtle* readers have suggestions of places or people Ewen can visit, or would like to join him on the first part of his journey, please contact him. He leaves on 25 June, hoping to arrive in London by 8 August, the 20th anniversary of the 1988 massacre in Burma that ended the last uprising. Read Ewen’s blog at [www.barefeetforburma.blogspot.com] or make a donation to the Burma Educational Scholarship Trust at [burma-trust.org].



Commuters exploit local parking loophole

Pilrig resident Jane Lockett contacted us about parking in St Mark's Park. An increasing number of commuters are leaving their cars there all day for free, without any evident reaction by officials. Ms Lockett has counted up to 25 long-stay parkers on week-days. Many use the central path meant for cyclists and pedestrians, including children going to and from nearby schools. She is concerned.

Spurtle asked the Council what its position was on the subject, and what it intended to do. A spokeswoman said: "Local authority parking regulations only apply to public streets, which means that it is not a parking offence to leave a vehicle in a park. The park management rules that govern these types of issues are currently under review. We have been monitoring the situation regarding commuter parking in St Mark's Park for some time, and we are working on the best way to resolve this issue."

Translation: Watch this space, but don't hold your breath.

Concerns for Powderhall future

Official sources have confirmed that the Powderhall Destructor site on Bonnington Rd will stay open until 2015.

Environment chiefs had hoped to transfer waste sorting to Portobello, but uncertainty over "waste management changes nationally" have delayed the move.

Spurtle sought assurances that investment over the next 7 years would maintain necessary levels of safety for staff and nearby residents. No such assurances were forthcoming.

We also sought clarification about the future of Powderhall Bowling Green after a very well-informed source suggested it would be included in any future sell-off to compensate for heavy ground contamination of the Destructor site.

A Council spokesperson responded: "There are no plans and never have been *firm* plans to sell the land for housing" (our italics).

Spurtle says: Given the large amounts of money at stake, the City clearly wants to keep its cards close to its chest.

However, now is the time for locals to work out their own vision for the site and seize the initiative. Community and City councillors should be proactive in this process.

Nooks and crannies: the Gretna memorial

The jokes went round, the songs went round, unmindful of the foe.

The sentiment by all expressed, "Are we downhearted? No!"

No battlefield, no German foes, for them across the foam.

That dewy morn, alas for them, a soldier's death, at home.

Not quite Robert Burns's standard, writes *Bill Dunlop*, but possibly the only memorial in verse to match the large stone in Rosebank Cemetery marking the communal



grave of the victims of the Gretna rail disaster of 1915. There may be folk who have heard of the accident, but possibly fewer who realise the soldiers who died in the accident or resulting fire rest together in Broughton.

Schools are forced to stand and deliver

Parents at Drummond CHS and Broughton PS have written to politicians protesting against the 1.5% budget cut imposed by Edinburgh's troubled Children and Families Department.

The new education cut follows claw-backs late last financial year, and has left the schools tens of thousands of pounds short.

The City's Lib-Dem/SNP Administration is convinced Edinburgh faces a financial black hole. "Whether this is true or not," says Gordon Chromka, Chair of Broughton Primary's Parent Council, "indiscriminate cuts to school funds – regardless of individual circumstances – are a panicky, clumsy and destructive response."

Spurtle says: When "efficiency savings" are demanded at gunpoint of already efficient schools, the main losers will be children.

Election win for Spurtle writer

Spurtle team-player Adam Ramsay, who writes on student and environmental issues, has been elected President of the Edinburgh University Students' Association for 2008–09.

He will be Edinburgh's delegate at National Union of Students (NUS) conferences and events, and take a leading role in voicing students' concerns at local and national levels. His slogan was "Cut the cost of student life", and he presented a range of policies to push the government for fairer student support. He also promised "to make Edinburgh the UK's greenest university".

Adam is a Broughton resident and a 4th-year Philosophy and Politics student. He is the Scottish representative of "People and Planet", Edinburgh's largest campaigning society, has walked 2100 miles across the USA fundraising for international humanitarian concerns, and has been instrumental in democratising NUS Scotland. In what spare time he has, he climbs, canoes, swing dances, drums and juggles – activities which should serve him well in what **Spurtle** feels sure will be a shining political future. *JRM*



Reading the writing on the wall

In the light of renewed Police efforts against city-centre “vandalism” (see “Briefly”), *Spurtle* investigated graffiti in Broughton.

Our survey found most local examples are limited to mews lanes, sides or rears of public buildings, parks and playgrounds. The spots suggest a fear of getting caught and a respect for private property – solid bourgeois values in line with the view that most graffiti-ists are middle-class.

Most tagging seems personal not gang-related. As for the large-scale examples, we found: the usual smut but no racism or sectarianism: 1 spectacular use of the word “slag”, but with the surname thoughtfully disguised; and 1 declaration of love – Stuart and Sharon, we hope you’ll be very happy together, and careful. Most of our graffiti-ists show no interest in politics and are as bad as ever at spelling.

There are few really well-drawn examples. Colourful and stylised lettering appears in St Mark’s Park, but around Scotland St Tunnel is hampered by uneven surfaces. Distinctive caricatures of 3 or 4 young men recur throughout N. Edinburgh, from Albany St Lane to the Rocheid Path, and are of professional standard (see left).



Best are the stencilled works: the gloomy “McDonald’s Clown” on St Mary’s church, “Soul Music?” at the junction of Hart and Forth Sts, and “Joustiers” – a ghostly Cromwellian lobster at the end of Dublin St Lane S (see above). These works – cleverly executed, thoughtfully placed – come closest to artistic statement or social comment.

Graffiti has the power to ruin, bully and offend; and to beautify, tease and stimulate. Graffiti is as old as the city – perhaps we should concentrate on improving not eradicating it. *AM*

Briefly

Lothian and Borders Police have dedicated an officer to co-ordinating their response on city-centre **vandalism and graffiti**. PC David Robertson will be based at the West End – *Tel.*: 221 2040/2049.

After years of campaigning by parents, staff and local councillors, **Broughton PS** has finally regained control of its heating. Radiators controlled from a remote site by a **faceless official** could not be adjusted in the school, often leaving kids and teachers either too cold or – even with fans on and windows open – broiling. Now **thermostatic radiators** are to be installed at the City’s expense, with annual savings estimated at £3000.

A **nationwide photo competition** to show what people love about **local parks** is being run by the Heritage and Big Lottery Funds, with a **top prize worth £1000**. So, whether it’s rose-beds or dog dirt, fountains or broken glass, mellow fruitfulness or burnt-out cars, get snapping. The **closing date is 6 Aug**. See: [www.postcardsfromthepark.org.uk].

Mark Lazarowicz, MP has joined calls to increase **aid for small businesses hit by tram preparations**. He is pressing the Council to: **waive rates** for affected firms; increase the size and eligibility criteria of **cash grants**; extend aid to those operating **near but not on tram routes**; and **promote local shopping** during and after the works.

Councillors Blacklock and Chapman successfully argued against granting a retrospective licence to the **Lantern Guesthouse** in Windsor St on 14 May. They raised concerns over **anti-social behaviour** (stag nights and hen parties), and preservation of the area’s **architectural heritage**.

A **new patchwork/quilting group** has started in Bellevue Chapel, Rodney St. It meets on the first Monday of the month, 10am–noon. **Materials provided** to get you started. All welcome.

Broughton History Society’s AGM and Members’ night will be on Mon. 1 June, 7–9pm in Drummond CHS. **Richard Love** will give an illustrated talk on his **Mount Everest expedition**. Members free, guests £1.

The Gayfield Assoc’s **AGM** will be in Lyon & Turnbull (Broughton Place) at 6pm on 9 Jun. Guest speaker: **Adam Wilkinson, Director of Edinburgh World Heritage**.

Take a deep breath. **School term ends on Friday 27 June**.

Botanics cottage survey underway

The Friends of Hopetoun Crescent Gardens (FHCG) and their supporters have been working with the present-day Botanics to preserve the “Gardener’s Cottage” in Haddington Place – the last standing relic of the original Botanics site in Hopetoun.

An archaeological survey of the building and surrounds, gathering detailed data on all the stonework, is now in progress. The deadline for removal of the building to accommodate the Rezidor Hotel (see Issue 153) is Oct. 2008.

Further developments are pending, which *Spurtle* will report on when they are clarified.

The FHCG would appreciate information on the ownership and occupancy of the cottage from c.1950. This will provide a valuable contribution to the story of the building and its part in the history of the Botanics. Contact FHCG Secretary Andrew Johnston, *Tel.*: 557 3351.

Street railings – defence or hazard?

I have always hated pavement railings, *writes Adam Ramsay*.

They divide the road to enable cars to drive faster without consideration for pedestrians.

I know they are meant to make things safer by ensuring that we cross at the right place – *but they don’t work*.

Next time you’re at the Broughton St/London St junction, watch as people trying to cross end up walking along the road, separated from the safe haven of the pavement by the railings. This frustrates many pedestrians. Last month a cyclist was killed on S. Clerk St. He needed to get onto the pavement, out of the path of an oncoming truck. He was stopped by railings.

Recent research confirms that street designs which remind pedestrians, cyclists and drivers that they are using a shared space make streets much safer. “Naked Streets” (as they are known) encourage everyone to take responsibility. It is always sad when it takes a tragedy to galvanise politicians into action on behalf of the public whom they represent. Hopefully the Council will address this issue, and look at street designs which don’t just prioritise cars.



Belle's

View

Hi fans



Harrumph – Estelle! Get the screw-top back on the Pimm's – just when we thought summer had arrived, we appear to be caught up in a cauld blast! What's to warm us up this month in chilly (for June!) Broughton?

Never mind the great Baltic outdoors – why not spend a lovely cosy afternoon watching movies at the **Avant Garde Film Afternoon at Leith Co-operative ACE Cinema** (17 West Montgomery Place). Part of **Ladyfest Edinburgh** [www.ladyfestedinburgh.com], Screen Banditas presents an afternoon of film and music featuring works by American director **Maya Deren** and Scottish filmmaker and poet **Margaret Tait**. Sunday 1 June, 12 noon, free – but bring your own popcorn!

Still shivering? A warm welcome is to be had at the **Annandale Mosque** open day (8 Annadale St Lane) on Wednesday 4 June, 2–4pm. Learn all about Islam, watch prayers taking place, and have a chat with the members of the Mosque as part of **Leith Festival 2008** – more festival events at [www.leithfestival.com].

Need a good square meal to warm you up? Try out the new Polish restaurant at 73 **Broughton St – Pani Solinska** (that's Mrs Solinska to you!) is dishing up great Polish-inspired food. And fear not – its not all cabbage and dumplings – owner **Dorothy Nowak-Solinska** is particularly proud of her Polish-Scots fusion dish, the **haggis peirogi!** Look out for their beer and bigos night, extensive vodka selection, and regular Eastern European music slots – *Na zdrowie!* [www.panisolinska.com]

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.

Next meeting
2 June at 7.30pm
Library: Drummond CHS

For details please contact:

Chris Richardson 07952 755 854
chris_richardson1001@hotmail.com

Malcolm Chisholm MSP Edinburgh North and Leith



Constituency Office:
86-88 Brunswick Street, EH7 5HU
Tel: 0131 558 8358
Fax: 0131 557 6781
Saturday surgeries:
9am Leith Library
10.30am Royston/Wardieburn
Community Centre
12pm Stockbridge Library

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 Theatre Workshop,
42 Hamilton Place
5.00pm Ainslie Park Leisure Centre
6.00pm Constituency Office

Contacts

Broughton History Society
Patrick Tyler 556 5036
Broughton Primary School
556 7028
Broughton Project Group
Stephanie Scott 557 2762 (day)
City of Edinburgh Council
General: 200 2000; *Fly-tipping:*
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
Broughton Village
Sarah Macauley 557 2724
Claremont Court
Jim McSharry 556 0655
Gayfield Association
William McNair 556 4493
Hillside & Calton
alastair.cairns@yahoo.co.uk
Hopetoun
hopetounvillage@hotmail.co.uk
Pilrig
Heather Wilson 229 6494
Pilrig Heights
gordon.verdi@gmail.com
Powderhall
www.powderhallvillage.org.uk
Redbraes
George Hosey 467 6151

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