

Spurtle

October
2008

No 163

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

PARENTS DEMAND ACTION ON ROAD SAFETY

Parents at Broughton Primary School are seeing red over Council officials' slowness in tackling local road-safety concerns.

Last November, Broughton lollypop lady Margaret Montgomery was knocked down and injured for the second time in 12 months on McDonald Rd. Low sunlight had dazzled an eastbound driver who then shunted another vehicle which had stopped to let kids cross.

Soon after the accident, Headteacher Alan Devine and Parent Council Chair Gordon Chrumka twice met a senior Council health-and-safety adviser. They discussed a range of local road-safety problems around the school, and agreed that on McDonald Rd the best solution would be to create a very short single-lane section near the school's eastern entrance.

Since then – despite numerous phone calls and emails – nothing has been done. The suspicion among parents is that departmental budget targets are being put ahead of pedestrians' safety. 'I think this kind of bureaucratic delay is intolerable,' said one. 'Lives are clearly at risk.' Chrumka is now writing directly to the Director of Children and Families demanding action.

Not long ago, Broughton PS was at the forefront

of the Council's Safer Routes to School campaign. Parents were even invited to speak in public about their success in spreading safety awareness. Now, it seems, the Council has lost interest in fulfilling its own side of the bargain.

McDonald Rd is not the only area of concern around the school. Parents have long voiced fears about confusing signage, speeding traffic along Broughton Rd, and vehicles that fail to slow or signal when turning left into East Claremont St.



BOOZE, BALLS AND A RACKET

Colin Jack, a Cochran Terrace resident, has sought help from the New Town/Broughton Community Council in cutting down drunken, late-night disruption in Drummond CHS playground (*Issue 162*).

Addressing the meeting on 1 September, he detailed the problems and made recommendations which include: restricting floodlighting and hours of use; sound-deadening the 5-a-side pitch; greater commitment by school and police to finding and

implementing solutions. He believes locals' Human Rights to 'Respect for Private and Family Life' and 'Enjoyment of Property' are being infringed.

Although there is no suggestion that Drummond pupils are responsible for the disturbance, Community Councillors agreed to seek a meeting with Amey (which runs the school's infrastructure), Headteacher Jon Reid, and Community PC Simon Daley. However, it stopped short of endorsing Mr Jack's calls for restrictions.



ST MARY'S NEARS LIFT-OFF

It is hoped work will begin this month on Phase 1 of the Broughton St Mary's Parish Church refurbishment.

Given Kirk Session approval, all downstairs rooms will be revamped; a new staircase, disabled access, and toilet block built; and office facilities and new kitchen provided. The switchboard, boiler, drains and wiring will be upgraded, and excavation of an area under the church will increase storage capacity enormously.

Groups now using the building will be accommodated in the sanctuary during renovation, returning to the improved and more spacious lower floor by December 2009. Further funds from parishioners and other local bodies are still required (*see 'Briefly'*).

'We're extremely excited that work could start soon as it will make a huge difference to us and to this parish,' said the Rev. Joanne Hood. 'The refurbishment will make the rooms of far more use to a greater number of people in the future.'

Work resumes on Rumbling Bridge replacement



Eagle-eyed locals monitoring progress on the demolition and replacement of the corroded Powderhall Bailey Bridge (*Issues 155, 161*) had, by early September, spotted hardly any progress at all.

Work began on 7 July, but apart from diverting a footpath and creating access for the contractors, not a lot changed. A Council spokesman explained that a temporary bridge carrying power cables had been completed, but Scottish Power Services were unable to undertake the diversion works as planned due to emergency works required elsewhere on their network – hence the hold-up.

Dismantling began in earnest around 9 September and lasted 2 days. First handrails and decking were removed, then a digger pulled the central section of the 52m bridge into St Mark's Park on roller bearings. Here it will be broken up. The old steel trestle piers remain for now, but work is roughly back on schedule. Before the hardwood replacement is built, new foundations must be laid at the top of the banks, and new piers constructed.

In a related development, Richard Berry, a City engineer close to the project, drew *Spurtle's* attention to a series of 17 photos taken as the bridge was built in 1948 (*see left*). Fascinating in their own right, they are interesting too for the backgrounds of a treeless St Mark's Park and the smog-shrouded chimneys of industrial Broughton. Also revealed is the former footbridge a few yards upstream. The photos, related archive material and an archaeological report will be lodged with the National Monument Record of Scotland.

New sign goes under the microscope

A reader emailed us in September about a new, bracket-mounted exterior sign for Hardies at 57 Albany St. 'The company name, in the form of large – and very plastic-looking – letters, has been added to the building's frontage. If every business in the street sported similar advertising, the street would quickly lose the uniform look that lends it character. Is such advertising allowed on an old building in the New Town at all?'

Spurtle investigated, and found that on 27 August Hardies were refused retrospective planning permission for internal changes to the Category A-listed property in a World Heritage Site (Northern New Town). Enforcement were put on the case to ensure compliance. However, we found no mention in the records (Ref. 08/02487/LBC) of the sign outside.

Under Sections 6 and 8 of the *Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act*, planning consent is required for changes to buildings of national importance.



Expressed consent would also be required if the sign were illuminated. Following our enquiry, Enforcement are now looking into the matter yet again.

Hardies are a firm of chartered surveyors, describing themselves on their front door as 'property and construction consultants'.

Bonnington PS to close by Christmas

As predicted (*Issue 160*), Bonnington Primary School is to close in December as the Council's troubled Children and Families Department tries to rationalise the school estate in the wake of falling pupil numbers.

Two options are being considered. First, all children would be offered places at Leith PS with the current catchment area being divided between neighbouring schools, including Broughton PS in 2010/11. Second, children would be offered places according to realigned catchment areas. (In practice, most parents have already reacted to uncertainty by placing their children elsewhere, thus effecting the Council's ends for them.)

Either way, 5 extra nursery places would be created at Broughton, and parts of Trinity Academy's catchment area would be realigned to Leith Academy and Drummond CHS. The latter move, however, requires referral to and approval by Scottish Ministers and would not happen before 2010/11.

Comments on the proposals should be sent by 7 October to Gillian Tee, Director of Children and Families, at Council Headquarters, 4 East Market St or to: [cf.propertyreview@edinburgh.gov.uk].

Local actor's Fringe hit

Actor and Broughton resident Matthew Zajac has won a 2008 Fringe 'Stage Award as Best Solo Performer' in *The Tailor of Inverness*: a partly autobiographical rediscovery of his father's war-affected experiences in Poland, Russia, Germany, Iran, North Africa, Italy and Scotland. Inverness-based production company Dogstar also won a prestigious *Scotsman* Fringe First Award for the play. Thought-provoking and moving, *Tailor* enjoyed critical and popular acclaim throughout its run at the Assembly Rooms. Next for Zajac: 3 months with the Swedish National Theatre.

A message to readers

Thank you for reading the *Spurtle*: Broughton's unique and independent paper.

We aim to: report local news and interests accurately; report without party-political, religious or commercial bias; make connections between local events and the wider world; and generally stir things up a bit. Staff are unpaid volunteers. We seek publishable contributions, views and information from all readers.

Here's the crunch. Our production costs are rising. Since the paper is free but has very limited scope to increase advertising revenue, subscriptions are *vital*. The yearly cost to have a copy delivered each month to your door or email address is £12. Subscriptions now run from 1 October each year. Donations of any amount are never knowingly refused.

To support the *Spurtle*, please write to us at: *Spurtle*, c/o Narcissus Florists, 87 Broughton St, Edinburgh EH1 3RJ. Any cheques should be made out to: *Spurtle*. Remember to include your preferred postal or email address. Thanks again.



Step it gaily on Broughton Road

Pedestrians on the south side of Broughton Rd can again travel heel for heel rather than head-over-heels now that Network Services have replaced paving slabs from Broughton Point (left) to the foot of Rodney St.

Parts of the southern footway will get similar treatment in financial year 2009/10 as will Arthur St. In 2010/11 so will East Claremont St.

Every year, sections of local pavement are assessed and graded 1-5. A proportion of the troublesome 5s are then addressed as part of a 3-year capital budget.

Blaspheming teenager hanged

Thomas Aikenhead, an 18-year-old medical student at Edinburgh University, was the last person in Great Britain to be judicially executed for blasphemy on 8 January 1697.

The previous summer he had allegedly dismissed theology as 'a rhapsody of feigned and ill-invented nonsense' comprising 'poetical fictions and extravagant chimeras'. He had also inveighed against the Bible and the Trinity, scoffed at Christ's incarnation, expressed a preference for pantheism, another for Muhammad over Jesus, and denied the Creation. His arrest followed a crackdown by the Scottish Privy Council on atheistical texts held at the University, and information laid against him by friends.

Aikenhead's public hanging at the Gallow Lee has been variously interpreted since as: proof of the clergy's dictatorial powers; the last spasm of the old order before the Enlightenment made radical thought and free expression easier; and typical of 'God-fixated' states murdering to suppress ideas. One is reminded of Afghanistan's Sayed Perwiz Kambakhsh (23), currently facing the death penalty for downloading material about women's role in Islamic societies.

A Canadian admirer of Aikenhead hopes to commemorate him, and recently contacted Snr Conservation Officer Dorothy Marsh asking where the 'Gallow Lee' was situated. She consulted City Archives' Richard Hunter, who identified a 'knowle' and 'gibbet' on the *Middlefield* where *Shrub Hill House* was later built (c.1799): both of which local placenames remain well known.

The sandy knowle (last used for an execution in 1752) has gone; Aikenhead's controversial legacy remains. See: [www25-temp.uua.org/.../thomasaikenhead], and for Grant's account of the knowle [www.oldandnewedinburgh.co.uk].

AM

Nooks & crannies: rustic gems

In Issue 160 we highlighted the Scottish National Portrait Gallery's often unnoticed courtyard garden. This month we celebrate two miniscule but equally unexpected oases of calm.

Pictured is one of two 'step' gardens outside No. 6, Huntly St. They also have a Zen-like quality whose simplicity belies great artistry and ingenuity, and that on the verge of another pounding thoroughfare and blight of metal. We salute whoever transformed these improbable niches into mini Botanics, for shared delight.

They are charming echoes of another secluded retreat around the corner. Canon Lane is one of several leafy cul-de-sacs in Edinburgh seldom seen by visitors. It has the allure of a real country lane. One listens for the clip-clop of a horse by a hedgerow where the honeysuckle convolves with the rose. Wander along it, as this writer did, and you are liable to meet a friendly marmalade cat, or stumble upon a windfall of apples. If you meet humans, they are unlikely to pass you by with glazed eyes and mobile-phone glued to the lug. In fact, they may even stop and say hello. JRM



Briefly

Three cheers for **Checkers Too**, the Broughton St carry-out. A sign on its counter says in black and white: 'Please refrain from using your mobile phone in this shop. You will not be served under any circumstances.' **Staff explain:** 'We can't hang around waiting for people to finish their calls. And anyway, it's just plain rude.' **Quite right.**

Participants, donors and cheering throngs are sought when fundraisers for the St Mary's Church refurbishment begin a **sponsored walk** in St Mark's Park at **2.30pm on Sun. 5 Oct.**

Broughton History Society will meet on 6 Oct. at 7pm in Drummond CHS. Nick Bates will relate '**Tales from the Bridge**' - a light-hearted view from the former Captain of the QE2. Members free, visitors £2. **Not suitable for canoeists.**

At **7.30pm on 6 Oct.** in Drummond CHS, local resident **Judy Conn** and **PC Simon Daley** will outline plans for a **youth centre in Scotland St Tunnel (Issue 161)**. See the noticeboard by the Apple Pharmacy on Broughton St for further details.

Residents of Melgund Tce, E. Claremont St, Macdonald Rd, Bellevue, Hopetoun and Annadale Sts up to the roundabout are invited to join the **revived local residents association**. AGM in Drummond CHS at 6.30pm on 28 Oct. All welcome. Subs: £2 or £3.

The '**Doggie Fun Day**' held in Queen St Gdns last month was a great success. £406 was raised to **train dogs for disabled people** in Scotland. Further events planned.

In Aug. we asked if any reader could translate the **mysterious Cyrillic message** daubed in red and white on the Stafford Centre. The intriguingly signed **P. Kropotkin** has written to say the message 'seems to be Russian for "You're clever Jim and Ian"'. We heartily thank P. Kropotkin, although now find ourselves as curious about his or her identity as we were about the graffiti in the first place.

Planning permission is being sought to convert 56/56a Broughton St (formerly Ritchie's the clockmaker) into a **groundfloor French restaurant and basement delicatessen** (Ref. 08/03156/LBC). The Petit Paris group already has two branches in Edinburgh.

The **Yoga Room** at 5, Forth St has expanded into the space formerly occupied by Gert and Lil. Activities include meditation, massage training, and Ashtanga Yoga. See: [www.ro-yoga.com].

Belle's View



Hi fans

Ahhhh, there's a coolness in the air – get the heating on! What **autumnal antics** are afoot in happening Broughton?

Conkers galore! The leaves are twirling from the trees, and if the trees could talk, what *would* they say? Find out at the Botanics' **Talking Trees Storytelling** event on 19 Oct. (drop in 2–3pm, Exhibition Hall, free, age 5+). Snuggle up for stories of **trees and travellers, magic and marvels!**

Another way to warm up on a chilly evening is throwing a cocktail party! **The Cocktail Emporium** at 44 Broughton St can help with everything for your super-swish do – a cocktail menu, ingredients, glassware, and a list-to-purchase-from. It also does signature cocktail giftpacks based on individuals' 'idiosyncrasies'. **Mmmmm – I'd be a Taboo-and-lemonade with a maraschino cherry and pink umbrella.**

Need new, funky warm clobber? Check out **Joey D's** on Broughton St, and his new online shop [www.joey-d.co.uk]: all items specially created using **recycled** fabrics fashioned in his own distinct style. Regularly featured in TV ads, worn by stars such as **Brian Cox** and glamour-puss-about-town **Kimberley Stewart**, each item is unique. So if you like it, buy it!

Till next time!

Persephone Belle



New Town/Broughton Community Council Vacancies for 5 Community Councillors

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

Next meeting
6 October at 7.30pm
at Drummond CHS

For details please contact:

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5.00pm 92 Pilton Drive
6.00pm Constituency Office

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Printed by DupliQuick, 22A Great King Street, Edinburgh EH3 6QH

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