

Spurtle



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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

LCCC VEXED BY SLOW PROGRESS ON LEITH WALK

Leith Central Community Council has written to Transport Convener Lesley Hinds to express 'consternation' at lack of progress in repairing Leith Walk (Issue 217). It brands the delays 'unacceptable'.

Some damage occurred during tram-related utility works in 2007. Some is the result of wear, tear and neglect since. In 2011 the Council allocated £5.5m to make good and upgrade, but so far very little work has been carried out (except on Constitution Street) and no timetable has been established for the upper section between Pilrig St and Picardy Place.

The repairs appear to be in a quantum flux: the Council may know their design or timing, but not both at once. There is now talk of a new radar survey of the current underground configuration, but in any case the design life of the reinstatement works is 7 years, after which new repairs – or even an extended tram route! – will cause fresh disruption.

LCCC sees lack of direction and too few results. It also questions whether devolving the job from Transport to a local committee has diluted relevant expertise. Its bluntly worded letter therefore asks Cllr Hinds for:

- increased professional programme management and design resource to speed progress and monitor quality
- a programme representative to attend all LCCC meetings until works end
- detailed feedback on recent CEC consultation with locals to explain Council decisions and restore trust
- preparation of a detailed, realistic project plan against which any future delays can be gauged.

Local councillors attending recent meetings have sympathised with LCCC concerns, but notably stopped short of predicting a universally acceptable response. All may become clear at a meeting between Alan Dean (Leith Walk Partnership Development Officer) and local community councils early this month, though we're still likely to lap the sun before the black holes are fixed.



NTBCC BACKS BRUCE ON BROUGHTON RD

The New Town and Broughton Community Council tackled Broughton Road traffic last month. It will ask the Council about easing problems here – with speed limits or pavement blisters, perhaps.

NTBCC was responding to Suzie Bruce's concerns – featured in Issue 217 – about the 10,229 vehicles per day recorded on this residential street last November.

Mark Lazarowicz, MP – present during the Easter recess of Parliament – said traffic management across all north Edinburgh needs urgent attention. Squeezed between the city centre and the Forth, roads here are already near capacity.

Bruce agrees. Having later attended CEC's meeting on 'Building a Vision for the City Centre' she now fears even more displaced traffic in Broughton if revised uses for Princes, George and Queen Streets ever go through [<http://bit.ly/ZusVwD>].

Eight years ago, Edinburgh residents rejected a congestion charge [<http://goo.gl/0hD8O>]. Are today's spiralling traffic volumes the inevitable result?

SHRUB PLACE PIE IN SKY?

On 4 April EMA Architecture and Design formally submitted proposals for housing to the west of Shrub Place (Ref. 13/01070/FUL).

It plans 165 terraced, flatted and Colonies-style dwellings, following broadly supportive reactions from the public in a pre-application consultation (Issue 216).

More controversially, EMA means to replace the north-east boundary wall with a new, lower, 2m high one; and to encourage 'permeability' of the development via continued access at Dryden Terrace Bridge (*Breaking news*, 9.4.13).

So far so good-ish. But will the plans ever materialise? The site is owned by Shrubhill Developments Ltd, which is in administration and not about to build anything. EMA's plans – if consented – would be a sprat to catch a mackerel in the form of a new purchaser for the site. That owner could potentially rip up the plans and start again.

As one experienced observer commented to *Spurtle*, these proposals are about making the site 'marketable, not necessarily developable'. As far as Shrub Place is concerned, it seems we may not be very much further on after all.

COLUMBA HOUSE CLOSES

Discovery of mould in the Scottish Catholic Archives at Columba House forced the building's closure to the public last month. No. 16 Drummond Place has accommodated the collection for 50 years, but there have been longstanding problems.

Staff will concentrate on treating damp in the townhouse, and on urgent conservation work for the documents affected.

Archbishop Mario Conti, chairman of the Trustees of the Scottish Catholic Heritage Collections Museum, commented: 'We have emphasised for some time that Columba House was not fit for purpose. The latest reports confirm this.'

Transfer of the collection on loan to Aberdeen University's Sir Duncan Rice Library is now likely to be accelerated, despite 90 academics' objections since May 2012. Supporters of the move generally emphasise 21st-century storage facilities there.

But the debate has become increasingly bitter (see Issue 210). Most recently, Edinburgh University's Professor Ian Campbell publicly questioned recent management at Columba House and the true extent of the damp (*Scotsman*, 9.4.13). He criticised 'furtive' and sudden announcement of closure, and attacked Conti's 'contempt for scholars' [<http://goo.gl/bipz6>]. Category A-listed 16 Drummond Place came into the possession of the Catholic Church in 1958, and is administered by the Bishop's Conference of Scotland (which is not responsible for the Archives). No decision on the building's future has yet been taken



Briefly



The winner of **Broughton's Got Talent** on 8 March was not Rowan MacMillan (as we reported in Issue 217) but **Rowan Brough** (pictured with trophy). Congratulations and apologies!

Out of the Blue's Flea Market will run, or hop, at the Drill Hall in **Dalmeny St** from 10am to 3pm on Sat 25 May featuring **45 stalls** of clothes, jewellery, furniture, music, books and bric-a-brac. **Entry free. Coffee/cake not free.**

As predicted in Issue 217, the Council has missed its end-of-April target for siting **wheelie-bins and gull-proof bags**. Intractable differences of opinion between residents on the same streets are supposedly delaying progress. The new target date is the **end of May**. Bins and bags cannot be distributed piecemeal because it would cause **'operational difficulties'** in emptying them. Meanwhile, the birds – who may squabble but seem to experience no operational difficulties – **are breeding**.

NTBCC backs local objectors to plans for a 'non-habitable', flat-roofed, windowless wooden outbuilding covering the garden behind **65 East Claremont St** (Ref. 13/00753/FUL). A lack of clarity as to its purpose, a fear that it could at some later date be converted to commercial or residential uses, and the loss of 2 mature trees informed the decision. Planning Convener John Knight fears an **'undesirable ... bad precedent'**.

The young man discovered at 5am on 5 April in a lane off Cumberland St who **later died in hospital** was later identified as **28-year-old Lee Hayburn of no fixed abode**. Police say his death was unexplained, but not treated as a murder enquiry. *Spurtle* extends condolences to **all who ever knew Lee and loved him**.

The newsagent and convenience store at **76 Dublin St** has closed (but only temporarily, we hear). The Pilrig Newsagent and convenience store at **8 Newhaven Rd** has reopened.

Contrary to stories circulating locally, York Place will open to **all** vehicles **permanently** this autumn, NTBCC has been told. Thereafter, surface repairs to **Abercromby Place and Albany St** (and restoration of parking) will begin. Restoration of clockwise traffic around **St Andrew Sq** was announced on 26 Apr (*Breaking news*, 26.4.13).

Pleasing the stickler's ... its not so simple



Spare a thought for Colin and Fiona Whiteford, proprietors of Blue Barbers on Dundas Street.

After they opened in 1999, a neighbour and grammatical stickler regularly berated them for the lack of an apostrophe in their window sign reading 'GENTLEMANS BARBERS'. Last month, 14 years later, they unveiled a carefully amended replacement: 'GENTLEMAN'S BARBERS'.

The Whitefords proudly pointed out this change to a different neighbour and grammatical stickler based nearby, only to find themselves berated for wrongly suggesting the business was the possession of a gentleman rather than a grooming service *for gentlemen*. Can any reader help?

Manxman with a transport tale to tell



Manxman Sean Johnstone last month returned to Broughton and the scenes of his youth from 1968–89.

One such was his late father Brian's shop at 87 Broughton Street – Model Motoring (now Narcissus) – where Johnstone briefly lived in a room at the back barely big enough to swing a model cat.

His father was a true transport enthusiast, and in 1986 invested heavily in commissioning a Corgi die-cast No. 8 LRT Routemaster bus (like the ones running past his window) in a limited-edition of 2,500.

Unfortunately, a fire soon destroyed most of the stock, and the business closed in 1990. Eighty mint-condition examples remain – collectors' items recently rediscovered in an attic – and are now on sale at £50 plus p&p. Anyone interested should contact: [seanbj@manx.net]. See also *Breaking news* (5.4.13).

Coast to coast for a good cause



Last month Alisdair Baird walked 94 miles in 5 days to raise £1,000 for the Water of Leith Conservation Trust. Travelling from Helensburgh to Leith, he was joined on the last leg at Balerno by Tula (10), who loves the river more than anywhere else apart from a warm bed. We last reported their fundraising feats in May 2012 (Issue 206). If you wish, you can contribute securely at: [<http://bit.ly/10raOe4>].

Joy overflowing as end to floodwork is in sight



This impressive structure is part of the two giant floodgate sets recently installed on Warriston Road. Reader Neale Gilhooley photographed them, and has been told by the Council that they are required in case water is pushed over the riverside wall due to new, higher defences on the opposite bank.

Contractors Lagan now expect to belatedly complete works on this section, and reopen the route east of Logie Green Road, by 31 May.

Locals will be relieved. 'We still get wakened almost daily at 7.15am by the noise and vibrations of loud, heavy machinery ... often as it trundles off elsewhere,' says Gilhooley. 'They seem to use our end as a plant car park. Worse is that – to meet safety regulations – when each machine moves it makes a loud bleeping noise reminiscent of a cheap alarm clock.'

He suspects Warriston Road may now require resurfacing.

Bird brains and bright ideas

Howe Street's Bon Papillon will feature ornithologically inspired works in *Neighbourhood Birds* from 2 May–1 June. Contributors include: Joyce Gunn Cairns, Janet Melrose, Leo du Feu, Fiona Wilson, Kittie Jones, Stanley Bird, Susan Smith, Blanka Peters, Mary Archibald, Camilla Seddon, Louise Scott and Senja Bownes. (Pictured is Ingrid Nillson's 'The Acrobats'.)



Meanwhile, at Union Gallery on Broughton Street, a solo exhibition by award-winning Annette Edgar will run from 3 May–6 June. Edgar's colour-drenched semi-abstract landscapes and figures have been seen in London and abroad since 2008, and this show marks her return to Scotland. Pictured is 'Moon to Morning'.

Locals enter a room with a poo

Environmental organisation Changeworks helped local parents and children try to set a new Guinness World Record last month for the biggest simultaneous cloth nappy change. Here at the *Spurtle* we are still holding our breath for confirmation of the result.

Thirty-one babies at the Parish Centre on Little King Street were joining others in 17 countries around the world in a rosy-cheeked effort to raise awareness of real cloth nappies' advantages over disposables. These include not going to landfill, and saving carers about £500 in total.

To find out more, and/or to receive a free trial pack, contact [realnappies@changeworks.org.uk] or Tel. 555 4010.



Sunken treasure

This delightful sunken garden is situated outside 1 Gayfield Place and is adjacent to a busy bus stop. It is a caesura of calm, and balm for the eyes with its fine clusters of lavender and annual and perennial flowers. It is in the tender care of a resident at No. 1, whom we salute. *JRM*



No substance to local myth

Rumours about a recently crashed Stealth bomber in the Broughton area are based on a misunderstanding

They stem from confusion over the design and purpose of a new Alpine House currently taking shape in the Royal Botanic Garden (*Breaking news*, 13.11.12). Exterior landscaping began in late April, and interior planting is due to start soon.



Briefly



On 6 Apr, at the junction of Warriston and Victoria Paths. Rebecca Hendry spotted **22 Waxwings**, one of whom appears above.

Broughton Primary School promises a family-friendly summer fair bigger, brighter and friendlier than ever before. **ALL locals are invited on 1 June** to enjoy activities, crafts, baking, stalls and visiting firemen from 1–4pm. Entry free.

Rumours about the future of the former Burger King site at **10–14 Princes St** (Issue 216) were proved true, last month, when **Apple** began recruiting staff for a new store. The 13 website job profiles are long on **love, creativity and flexibility**, but short on **salary and starting date** details [<http://goo.gl/wjhPp>].

Local firms L'Escargot Bleu, The Spice Pavilion, Locanda de Gusti, Smoke Stack, Gardener's Cottage, Cuckoo's Bakery, Valvona & Crolla and Casa Angelina topped the *List's* 2013/14 *Guide*. 60+ others won praise. See **Breaking News (19.4.13)** and tell us about your unsung favourites.

Some 17 volunteers mustered on 14 April to pluck **unlovely items** out of the shrubbery beside **paths around St Mark's Park**. The Council supplied kit. Out of the Blue delivered food. The litter-pick was organised by **Greener Leith** to coordinate with similar **Sustrans** events across the north Edinburgh cycle-path network.

Edinburgh World Heritage is funding extensive conservation work to restore the William Playfair-designed building at **13 Elm Row** to its original 1821 appearance.

Isle of Man-based **Prosper Holdings Ltd** seek an extension of planning permission for **11 new units on Broughton St Lane** (Ref. 07/01631/FUL). The 0.07ha site now hosts 31 car parking spaces.

Few Edinburgh citizens will be **struck down by trams**, believes Alasdair Sim (**CEC's Interface Manager – Edinburgh Trams**). Last month he told the NTBCC how trams emit a variety of **hoots, honks and bells**, have brakes the equal of any other road vehicle, and an emergency electro-magnet which **stops them dead** (the trams, not the pedestrians).

Reader John Kyle describes the surface of the **Rocheid Path** as 'unusable in places' and 'a disgrace'. He wants it macadamed in the same way as the continuation to Inverleith Pond. **What do you think?**

Moreover ...



Tottenham Hotspur crashed out of the Europa League last month after losing on penalties to FC Basel. Was there wailing and gnashing of teeth on **Northumberland St**, where the rear gate of one property is adorned with **not one but two splendid cockerels?**

Broughton's vibrant Swedish quarter – **Joseph Pearce's Bar on Elm Row** – will welcome the return of summer by screening the **World Championship ice hockey match** between Sweden and Canada on 9 May. On 18 May, it will show the **Eurovision Song Contest from Malmö**. *Spurtle* advises tactful customers to *Tag en lök med till begravningen*.

Newly bonded **Friends of Pilrig Park** will run a second clean-up of the area on 11 May. Time TBC.

LGBT Helpline Scotland, a new national service staffed at the Howe St Centre for Health and Wellbeing, will replace the Lothian LGBT Helpline **from 7 May between noon and 9pm on Tues and Weds**. Volunteers will deal with issues including sexuality, gender identity, hate crime, sexual health, relationships and LGBT law. Tel. 0300 123 2523.

How to describe something irreversibly damaged, beyond use and fouled up? **Local wordsmith and miserabilist Peter Verity** suggests 'contraminated'.



Annual General Meeting

Monday 27 May 2013, 7pm
McDonald Road Library

Chair and Secretary
will be elected.

Prospective candidates
please contact Roland
Reid in advance.

Leith
Central
Community
Council
LCCC

contact: leithcentralcc@blueyonder.co.uk
0131 554 3060 tinyurl.com/LCCCagm13

Spurtle Team: J. Dickie, T. Griffen, M. Hart, F. Harvey, A. McIntosh, J. R. Maclean, T. Smith, D. Sterratt, E. Taylor-Smith. Post: Spurtle, c/o Narcissus Flowers, 87 Broughton St, Edinburgh EH1 3RJ.

Malcolm Chisholm MSP Edinburgh North and Leith



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Saturday surgeries:
Leith Library, Ferry Road: 10am.
Royston Wardieburn Community
Centre, Pilton Drive North: 12 noon.

Email: Malcolm.Chisholm.msp@
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Marco Biagi MSP Edinburgh Central



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Surgeries:
Every Monday 5pm: Constituency Office
2nd Monday of the month:
11am-12noon St Bride's Centre
1pm-2pm Stockbridge Library

NB. No Surgeries on Public Holidays.

Email: marco.biagi.msp@
scottish.parliament.uk



Alison Johnstone MSP for Lothian Region



On the 1st and 3rd Monday of the
month during term time I hold a
surgery for Lothian residents at the
Scottish Parliament between 11am
and 1pm.

Please call to book a surgery
appointment or to arrange another
time and venue that is convenient for
you.

Contact me on 0131 348 6421
Alison.Johnstone.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

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Friday advice sessions:
4.00pm **Stockbridge Library**,
no appointment necessary;
5.00pm **5 Croall Place**;
other surgeries throughout the
constituency – phone for details

New Town/Broughton Community Council

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

Next Meetings:

Monday 13 May
Monday 3 June

at 7.30pm

Broughton St Mary's Parish
Church, Bellevue Crescent

secretary@ntbcc.org.uk

AM DECORATING

Your local painter & decorator **Alastair McAlpine**
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