

# Spurtle



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Tel: 556 4848

[spurtle@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:spurtle@hotmail.co.uk)

**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER** Free

## RETAIL CRASH v. HOMELY HUSH

Batleys – the cash and carry on McDonald Place – seeks planning permission for deliveries on Sundays (Ref. 14/02893/FUL).

The business had long enjoyed such deliveries in the past, but when it recently appealed to the Scottish Government against a Council (CEC) decision to refuse longer delivery hours, it got a mixed decision: longer weekday hours but an unexpected ban on noisy unloading of lorries on 'sensitive' Sundays.

Neighbours were delighted; Batleys, less so. Objectors to Batleys' latest application have until 10 August to write in (*Breaking news*, 23.7.14).

In a parallel development, CEC last month refused permission for Tesco PLC on Broughton Road to extend deliveries/collections by 12 hours per week (*Breaking news*, 11.7.14). Quite rightly, too – we all need peace sometimes as well as endlessly available frozen peas.



## REMINDE YOU OF ANYONE?



PhD students at Dundee University have constructed digital images of three locals whose remains were found beneath Constitution Street in 2009. This young woman, aged 25–35, died between 1360 and 1435. See *Breaking news* (24.7.14).

## LIVELY MEETING DEBATES SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE

Leith Central Community Council organised a Scottish independence debate at the Calton Centre on 30 June. About 140 people attended.

Malcolm Chisholm MSP and Cllr Joanna Mowat argued for Better

Together. Business for Scotland's Jil Murphy and novelist Lari Don argued for Yes. What followed boiled down to experience v. naivety, worry v. hope, affection for the best of what we already have v. aspiration for what we could do better. It was all more nuanced than that but you get the drift.

No vote was held at the end, but *Spurtle* thought Chisholm and Mowat won much of the argument whilst Murphy and Don were emotionally more persuasive. For all that, a vocal – and perhaps organised – element of the audience seemed predisposed in favour of independence and effectively set the tone.

The mood in the hall was sometimes yeasty, but speakers on both sides counselled against acrimony. See *Breaking news* (2.7.14).



## ACCESSIBILITY PROBLEMS FOR NEW PRINCES MALL PO

The St James Centre Post Office branch flits to 5/6 Princes Mall on 22 September.

It has to move there now because its current premises will soon be knocked down as part of the St James Quarter redevelopment, and because big-enough East End spaces elsewhere are hard to find.

While understanding the reasons for the move, local MP Mark Lazarowicz fears the new site won't be accessible enough for people with disabilities or mobility problems.

Three out of four access routes entail steps or a non-Disability Discrimination Act-compliant ramp.

PO officials agree access arrangements could be better. But they have only so much influence over their new landlord. Alternative branches exist on Elm Row and Frederick Street.

The financial case for opening a PO branch in the redeveloped St James Quarter will be assessed in due course. See *Breaking news* (25.7.14).



## St STEPHEN'S FUTURE – SEEMINGLY SECURE

St Stephen's Church in Stockbridge has been bought by Leslie Benzies, a local resident and boss of Edinburgh-based video-game developer Rockstar North.

He means to 'secure its future whilst providing a renovated local and performing arts centre that will benefit the wider community' (*Breaking news*, 27.6.14). Benzies says he looks forward to welcoming local residents and groups back soon. We have no reason to think this is anything but an extraordinarily generous gesture.

The story was confirmed just too late for our July edition (Issue 231). However, *Spurtle* had had wind of it since April (*Breaking news*, 7.4.14).

We are grateful to our amazingly well-informed and indiscreet readers, whom we make a point of never dropping in it.



## Briefly



At this time of year, when Edinburgh is awash with so many bright young people surfing a wave of **health, beauty and limitless optimism**, we are grateful to Margaret McArthur for alerting us to this **miserable old fleabag**. He appears on the fire station in Dryden Terrace, resembling other downbeat designs at **93 McDonald Rd**.

**Central Edinburgh Book Group** invites new members to its informal **2nd-Tues-of-the-month** discussions at McDonald Rd Library (6.30–7.45pm). On 12 Aug they will examine *The Beautiful and Damned*: you could be one of them.

Congratulations to Bellevue hammer thrower **Kimberley Reed** who last month won through to the final at the **World Youth Championships** in Oregon, USA. She came tenth with a throw of **60.17m**, her best for 2 months.

A sheet attached to the lamppost near **62 Broughton St** advertises an application to build an access road. **Well done, Michael Anderson**, who read the small print and realised the notice refers not to the **blocked-off lane** between Apple Pharmacy and the Stafford Centre, but to **62 Broughton Rd**.

*Spurtle* hears work will start this month on the picnic-rug-sized gap site in **Barony Place**. Plans for a 2-bedroom dwelling with 1 parking space were approved in Oct 2010 (Ref. 99/01132/VARY). This is a less intrusive development than the **'Darth Vader'** proposal of 2012 (*Breaking news*, 3.12.12).

Dermot Ferrigan has **appealed CEC's refusal of planning consent** for him to change the use of a 'garage' to an office on **E. Scotland St Lane**. The case will go before the **Local Review Body on 20 Aug**. The move has again annoyed neighbours, some of whom say they will **call in the Ombudsman** to consider CEC's earlier non-enforcement of: (a) a **demolition order** here; and (b) planning conditions attached to a **separate property** converted by Ferrigan on the same lane. City Centre ward's **Cllr Joanna Mowat** has demitted herself from the LRB as her **outspoken criticism** of the development and support of objectors might make her appear less than impartial.

## Is new Canonmills housing finally on the cards?

New owner Mountlake Ltd has applied for a change of use 'from Class 3 to retail [and] erection of 6 flats and 3 townhouses [and] minor alterations to elevations' on Canonmills Bridge.

This is the latest iteration of Ref. 09/00830/FUL (*Breaking news*, 16.7.14) and we have no idea whether it represents a serious proposal or just an effort to increase the value of the site.

Earthy has in the past expressed confidence about its long-term future here.



## Missing Ruairi



Anyone seen this chap? The four-year-old grey tabby wandered into Barony Place on 15 July and didn't come back. It's not like him, and his owners are now worried. Please email news or sightings to: [ruairi@orr-online.co.uk].

## Cardboard & Concrete



The aristocratic Lord Lapin was one of Charlotte Duffy's 'lugubrious, funny and oddly poignant' cardboard sculptures in Concrete Wardrobe on Broughton Street last month. See the full review online at *Breaking news* (21.7.14).

## Going ... going ...



Goodbye, Shrubhill House. For so long a Prince of Wales on the face of a much loved Leith Walk, the site is being redeveloped by Ziggurat Student Living as five commercial spaces and student accommodation for 260 (*Breaking news*, 4.7.14).

## Sandy Hill's road to nowhere

Over 20 residents around the Sandy Hill between Broughton Road and the Claremonts have responded to the latest shadowy phase of development there.

The mysterious British Virgin Islands-based Provincial Property Holding Ltd has applied to create an access route at the foot of the hill between roughly 62 Broughton Road and the back of Heriot Hill Nursery (Ref. 14/02607/FUL; *Breaking news*, 3.7.14).

Housing is apparently intended to be built into the slope on the site's south-west boundary and 'will not rise materially above the level of the fences of the gardens' at that point. No further detail on the housing is available.

However, neighbours say a 'retaining wall system' built to support the road includes a walkway which would loom over the Broughton Road tenements' back greens, invading their privacy and blocking light.

Locals object to this, and to what they see as various other deficiencies and inaccuracies in the application, including a failure to consider nearby trees, how BT poles would be re-sited, and drainage. Cllr Nick Gardner is supporting them.

## Embo midges and kitchen itches



As Peter Verity of Scotland Street was washing up late one night in July by the kitchen window, he heard a buzz in his ear. It was only when his bald pate began to itch that he realised the wet part of the worktop was covered in midges.

This is not the North West Highlands: 'To have an invasion of hundreds of midges, in a top-floor flat, after a fairly dry summer, seems very odd,' Verity remarks.

'Have they been reported elsewhere in Edinburgh recently – or is my kitchen the site of a local infestation, and if so why?'

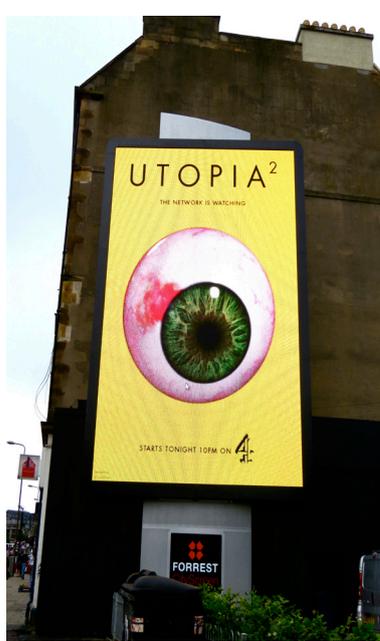
## Forrest Group appeals against Croall Place image conditions

Back in April, Forrest Group narrowly gained retrospective permission for its larger than originally consented digital display hoarding at 10 Croall Place.

The decision outraged those 16 people who had objected on the grounds that it is an eyesore and a dangerous distraction, but they were slightly appeased by CEC restricting the displays to static images which could not change more than once every 15 seconds.

Forrest has now appealed to the Scottish Government to have these conditions dropped., but it is already ignoring the condition about image frequency, with adverts changing at 5-second intervals (*Breaking news*, 14.7.14)

You can monitor the appeal at the DEPA website (Ref. ADA-230-2006).



## Rodney Street Triangle blooms

In Issue 214, David Watt fulminated about the deplorable state of the No-Man's Land plot at the foot of Rodney Street (see also *Breaking news*, 4.2.13). Behold, his diatribe has borne results! The triangle is now transformed from a nullity to a marvellous horticultural gem. Unlike Miss Jean Brodie's aside on 'such serviceable flowers', this comprises an exhilarating grove of astrantia, bergenia, geranium, pieries, rudbeckia, falimum and stachys worthy of the Botanics. Bravo, CEC! [For a 'Downhill Peregrination about Broughton in Bloom', see *Breaking news* (1.8.14).] *JRM*



## Going underground

A steady stream of inquisitive locals toured the eight-day archaeological dig at Haddington Place last month, *reports Eileen Dickie*.

Volunteer workers carried on with great patience and good humour, professional archaeologists from Addyman Archaeology were informative and enthusiastic, and Sutherland Forsyth from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, who co-ordinated the whole event, was a welcoming presence every day.

Work so far has uncovered the former Botanic Garden's original entrance gate, undulating topography, improved soil, a well, and a cobbled pathway. A carved clay pipe bowl, many sherds of terracotta plant pot, a buried barrel of lime, a medieval gaming piece, and evidence of much later 19th-century industrial activity have also been uncovered.



## Spurtle's summer brain-teaser

Our quiz with an exciting but unspecified prize was launched in July (*Breaking news*, 7.7.14), and already – well in advance of the 1 September deadline – literally dozens of local readers, pensioners, adorable schoolchildren, family groups, work combines and cryptic-clue enthusiasts across the globe have joined in the fun by submitting literally no solutions to [spurtle@hotmail.co.uk]. Baffled late-comers should start with the last clue and Google obvious keywords. At present, providing even one right answer would win you the whole thrilling kit and caboodle.

## Briefly

*Naked Among Thistles* – an anthology of creative writing by emerging and established authors on issues of **LGBT+ identities and mental wellbeing** – is now available free in a variety of digital formats. Visit: [<http://goo.gl/0i8Mg7>].

*Street Food Thursdays* are regular events at the 'Tram Stop Market' outside St Mary's Cathedral on Broughton St (11am–7pm). A variety of vegetarian dumplings, gourmet burgers, spicy chicken wings and Mexican delights have featured so far.

The **unreliable results of Cuckoo Bakery's** latest undependable **monthly survey of Independence Referendum voting intentions**, based on customers' purchases of politically iced cupcakes, were released on 4 July. **Yes: 35.3%. No: 50.4%. Undecided: 14.3%.**

CEC has applied a **rubberised coating** to precipitous steps beside **the big slide in King George V Park**. It is hoped the new surface will afford them some protection from **thoughtless clumsy children**.

Pupils (and parents) receiving **unexpected results** for National, Higher and Advanced Higher exams this month should not panic. **Skills Development Scotland's** free expert helpline is on 0808 100 8000 (8am–8pm, 5–6 Aug; then 9am–5pm until 13 Aug). **Alternatively**, visit [[www.myworldofwork.co.uk](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk)] or [[www.facebook.com/myworldofwork](http://www.facebook.com/myworldofwork)]. **Q&A Twitter sessions** will run from 2–3pm on 5–8 Aug at [[@mywowscotland](https://twitter.com/mywowscotland)].

**The Fringe is here**. For all those wishing to broaden their horizons **without going anywhere new**, challenging or thought-provokingly different, this map identifies **local venues**: [<http://goo.gl/WbFXra>].

Outline plans to redevelop the **surprisingly large site at 52 Annandale St** as flats (Ref. 14/02568/PAN) will go on display there on 12 Aug from 3.30–6.30pm.

Are you a dog walker? **Friends of King George V Park** ask in their latest *Newsletter* that you do not let your loved ones immediately relieve themselves on beds at the **Logan St entrance**. Instead, keep them on a lead until well inside, they say, 'where they can **let rip unhindered** and with our blessing'.

**Bird news:** Bellevue Place's Christina Thomson welcomed the annual return of 8 swifts on 22 May. They are drawn, she's sure, to the **several ponds and attendant insect life** in local back gardens. She has also noted **greenfinches** and a pair of wrens whose **extraordinary sweet song** resounds in the southern park of Bellevue Crescent.

# Moreover ...



Who can explain this **unblinking shadowy presence** in Bellevue Crescent? Neighbourhood Watcher? Wren monitor? Duane Hanson?

Colin Sell, pianist on BBC Radio 4's *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue*, turns cinema buff at the **Filmhouse** on 7 Aug. The event will raise funds for Mansfield Place HIV/Hepatitis C charity **Waverley Care**. Tickets £10 from [www.filmhousecinema.com](http://www.filmhousecinema.com) or Tel. 228 2688.

Farewell to **Itrat Mohammad's** Croall Newsagent's, now shut. Welcome **Hollywood Nails**, which have grown in its place. More copies of the *Spurtle* are now available at **McDonald Rd Library**.

The **lingering pong** at the west end of Eyre Place has been explained. We hoped it owed something to an old **jobby-congested lade stream** underground (Issue 220). But expert advice seen by *Spurtle* now suggests a sewer is jammed by **solidified granolithic material** thanks to 'someone at some time' ill-advisedly tipping a **load of cement mortar** down the pipes. Shifting the blockage 'is not likely to be easy'. Prunes won't do it.

**TG Tip:** In this great summer weather, get into the habit of **carrying water around with you**. You'll be better hydrated, and probably won't spend money on fizzy drinks. Just drink water ... much better for you.

*Inspired!* – **MacMillan Cancer Support's** 2014 art exhibition – will run from 14–17 Aug at 22 Queen St. Work by new and established artists is available to buy but free to view.

**Jo McDonald's** beautiful and ingenious sculptures in paper are on show this month at **McNaughtan's Bookshop** on Haddington Place. Her pieces combine subtle meditations on reading and printed culture with astonishing craftsmanship. Pictured is a detail of her '**Mortal Coil**', courtesy of the artist.



**Spurtle Team:** F.Booth, J. Dickie, T. Griffen, M. Hart, J. MacDonald, A. McIntosh, J. R. Maclean, T. Smith, D. Sterratt, E. Taylor-Smith. Post: Spurtle, c/o Narcissus Flowers, 87 Broughton St, Edinburgh EH1 3RJ. Printed by Minuteman Press, Elm Row.

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

Email: [Malcolm.Chisholm.msp@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:Malcolm.Chisholm.msp@scottish.parliament.uk)

## Marco Biagi MSP



MSP for the Edinburgh  
Central constituency

Constituency Office:  
**77 Buccleuch Street**  
**EH8 9LS**  
Tel: **0131 348 6482**  
Tel2: **0131 668 3642**

Constituency  
office surgeries:  
Every Monday 6.30pm  
Stockbridge Library  
surgeries: second  
Monday of the month  
1:30pm

[marco.biagi.msp@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:marco.biagi.msp@scottish.parliament.uk)



## Alison Johnstone MSP for Lothian Region



On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:Alison.Johnstone.msp@scottish.parliament.uk)

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Edinburgh EH1 3RJ.



Property Management

## 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.lazarowicz.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:mark.lazarowicz.mp@parliament.uk)  
[www.marklazarowicz.org.uk](http://www.marklazarowicz.org.uk)

**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:

4 August  
& 8 September  
at 7.30pm

**Broughton St Mary's Parish  
Church, Bellevue Crescent**

[www.ntbcc.org.uk/contact/](http://www.ntbcc.org.uk/contact/)

## AMDECORATING

Your local painter & decorator **Alastair McAlpine**  
Tel: 0131 553 6589 **Mobile:** 07866 222 656 [alastairmc Alpine@btinternet.com](mailto:alastairmc Alpine@btinternet.com)