

# Spurtle

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**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free**

**May  
2010**

**No 182**

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## PICARDY PLACE TESCO: NO TRAMS CONTRIBUTION

It is a revelation some will say adds insult to injury: Tesco will make no financial contribution to tram construction following its successful application for planning permission at 8 Picardy Place (Issues 179/80).

City officials have confirmed that unlike other developments in close proximity to the line, Tesco here is exempt because the listed property is being reorganised internally rather than built from scratch, and because it already enjoys a Class 1 retail licence.

By contrast, it was change of use at 1-5 Baxter's Place (Issues 168, 171) that meant Fitzpatrick Design Collection in 2009 faced a £327K contribution to convert the buildings into a hotel.

Planning Department sources tell *Spurtle* there is no way around current regulations. 'It is technically impossible for us to demand a payment. It would be unreasonable even to request some payment on a voluntary basis.'

Tesco – which publicly prides itself on commitment to communities – has thus gained bargain-price access to a prime site close to a publicly funded tram stop. *Spurtle* has no doubt this is legal, but it does not resemble natural justice.

For background information on City Development's December 2007 policy on Tram Developer Contributions, go to 'Extras' online.

## RECORD AUDIENCE FOR HUSTINGS



Photo courtesy of Eileen Dickie.

In its 16-year history, *Spurtle* has organised many traditional hustings for candidates aspiring to Westminster and Holyrood governments, or the City of Edinburgh Council. This year a record 200 people flocked in on 21 April, and 8 of 9 candidates occupied the spotlight. See p.2.

## CRIME WAVE OR RIPPLE?

In the past, we have occasionally questioned exaggerated fears about crime in what is for the most part a very law-abiding area. Now, however, it appears there may be a growing trend.

Recent weeks have seen alleged card-skimmers traced to Broughton Road, break-ins in East Claremont Street, and more instances of cars being vandalised by persons unknown running over them. Three Broughton Street businesses – Threadbare, Broughton St Nursery, and Smoke Stack – were broken into from the rear (Barony St Community Garden and Hart St Lane) and had valuables stolen, while 3 homes elsewhere in the area were similarly burgled in broad daylight. On 9 April, a masked man with a knife threatened Pritam Bakshi, owner of Keen Kost on Dundas Street, demanding money. Mr Bakshi defended himself with a clipboard and the man fled. Meanwhile youths recently observed trying stair doors for access on Rodney St smirked at passers-by who expressed concern.

Is this a statistical blip? Or is this what we should expect as the Recession bites and opportunists seek easy pickings? *Spurtle* has approached Lothian and Borders police and awaits an answer.

## COLOURISTS SET RECORDS



Photo courtesy of Sotheby's London.

Two paintings by Scottish Colourists – previewed at the Mansfield Traquair Centre last month – realised record prices at Sotheby's London on 21 April.

*Peploe's Tulips* (c.1912, pictured above) sold for £623,650 while *Cadel's scintillating Florian's Café, Venice* (c.1910) fetched £553,250.

*Sotheby's expert Michael Grist said 'These record-breaking figures are a testament to the quality and appeal of these wonderful pictures'.*

## CHRISTIAN AID BOOK SALE

It is always a joy to herald the hugely popular Christian Aid Book Sale, held annually since 1974 at St Andrew's and St George's West Church, George Street.

Yet again, the Sale's indefatigable convenor, Mary Davidson, is its mover and shaker and tireless inspirer. Since its inception, the Sale has raised £1.8m for the often unsung work of Christian Aid in the world's poorest and most stricken countries. This year, there will be a special focus on the 'poorest of the poor' in Haiti, South Africa, the Philippines, Afghanistan, northeast Kenya and western Somalia, though Christian Aid's practical endeavours extend to the world's four quarters. Contributions to this year's sale already indicate a cornucopia of delights for antiquarians, collectors and general readers alike.

The Sale takes place on Sat. 8 May (10am-4pm), Mon. 10 May-Fri. 14 May, (10am-3.30pm). Late opening until 7pm on Thu. 13 May. For more information see: [[www.standrewsandstgeorges.org.uk](http://www.standrewsandstgeorges.org.uk)].

# Spurtle hustings: how the candidates fared

As Broughton's independent stirrer, *Spurtle* is an impartial reporter of news, professing no political affiliation. Instead we sought the views of perpetual grump 'Jaundiced of Claremont', whose personal notes appear below. See also 'Breaking news' and 'Extras' online.



## Willie Black (Scottish Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition)

Wore suit (suggesting professional competence) but no tie (not about to jump into bed with Bosses). Traditional outdoors-style oratory – homely observations, commonsensical views on equality, ear-splitting climaxes. Struggled to be concise. Only trained electrician on the platform but did not fuse well with microphone. Focused on disproportionate pay differentials and unfairness of Poor paying for Rich's misdeeds.

**Worst moment:** Saying 'That was a really quick 2 minutes' before making a point.

**Best moment:** Inveighing against 'cutting, slashing and burning of the public sector'. 'It's not the slice of the cake, it's whose hand is on the knife.'

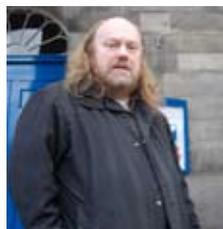


## Calum Cashley (Scottish National Party)

Suited and tied, like a bear at a wedding. Good stage presence, steady and personable. Established early that next parliament would involve 'managing the decline'. Economic recovery must come through rebuilding self-belief from the roots up – not through slick TV debates. Very critical of military intervention in Iraq/Afghanistan.

**Worst moment:** One of 3 wrong-footed by Green comments on Fisheries.

**Best moment:** Answering heckler who accused SNP of living in economic dream-world – 'Well, if you can't dream about your country, what can you dream about?'



## John Hein (Liberal Party in Scotland)

Resembled dressed-down Bill Bailey; said election mustn't descend into beauty contest. Rather than introduce himself at length, preferred to leave more time for questions. Softly spoken, admirably pithy, precise phrasing. Astonishing candour from original thinker.

**Worst moment:** Either, claiming MPs playing expenses system was understandable; or, resigned acceptance of Poor's suffering in recessions.

**Best moment:** On Iraq and Afghanistan: 'As a pacifist, I would never have had an army to send there in the first place. Now, though, I'd like to redeploy them to do something useful like complete the tram system.'



## David Jacobsen (Socialist Labour Party)

Perhaps nervous, but nothing like grinning figure on own flier. Bejumpered, strangely solemn, no obvious sense of fun. Began with soon-familiar demand for withdrawal from 'corrupt' European Union, and boast that – unlike Labour – SLP retained Clause 4. Proud socialist did not explain why standing against socialist STUSC.

**Worst moment:** Repeated interruption of other candidates across Chair finally drew boos from audience.

**Best moment:** Assertion that any High-pay Commission risked being 'one-off gimmick'. Main problem is Capitalist system, requiring more fundamental change.



## Kate Joestler (Scottish Green Party)

Smart and informal, began anxiously, read from notes. Claimed real change necessary and possible, but only by voting Green. Later grew in confidence, argued clearly. Well versed in policies beyond obvious environmental issues. Angry at sleaze but sees opportunity: vote for transparency, don't sink into cynicism. Needs more oomph if good points to be memorable, but has potential.

**Worst moment:** Lamely agreeing High-pay Commission 'seems a sensible idea'.

**Best moment:** Arguing in favour of Fisheries policy being decided at EU level not repatriated to UK. 'Fish know no nationality. They swim about.'



## Kevin Lang (Scottish Liberal Democrats)

Obligatory dark suit. Cameron–Clegg School of Squeaky Cleanliness. Local roots. Engaging, enthusiastic introduction focused on Rich/Poor divide, disgust at banks' behaviour, climate change fears. Politics matter: use your vote.

**Worst moment:** All-things-to-all-people response on Afghanistan – wishing troops back, praising performance, wanting to improve pay and equipment. Heckler shouted 'Fudge! Fudge! Fudge!' Or, derisive laughter from audience for 'We should definitely *look at*' introducing a High-pay Commission.

**Best moment:** Linking Westminster sleaze to complacent MPs in safe seats. Passionate about electoral reform and personal opportunity to be involved.



## Mark Lazarowicz (Scottish Labour Party)

Another dark suit, but worn with slouch suggesting 9 years' backbench experience. ML's speech slower, clearer, more authoritative than in previous years. Body language indicated uncomfortable proximity of Liberal Democrat. Summarised Labour's successes, promised Labour would manage fair and effective exit from Recession. Solid if unsurprising performance.

**Worst moment:** Cynical laughter from audience when claimed he agreed with much of KL's introduction.

**Best moment:** Straying from party line over intervention in Iraq and replacement of Trident. Right to go to Afghanistan, but withdraw troops within 2 years.



## Iain McGill (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)

Fourth suit. Considerable charm and integrity. Always facing uphill struggle against overwhelming numbers. Good start stressed Drummond CHS origins and long involvement with local politics/*Spurtle* hustings. Agreed with KL that this election crucial: but real change means voting Conservative. Main choice is between Gordon Brown and David Cameron for PM.

**Worst moment:** Failure to persuade audience that pay-caps OK for public-sector employees, and *not* OK for private-sector entrepreneurs.

**Best moment:** Defending military intervention abroad, cited personal experience as aid worker in Bosnia. 'Those people were grateful for a blanket but they kept saying "Where are your troops?"'

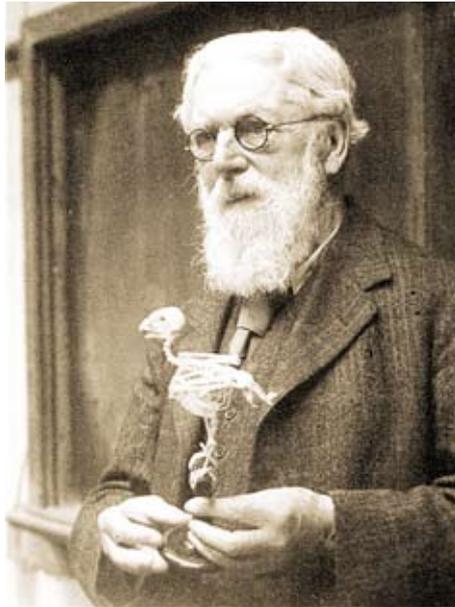
## Profile: D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson (1860–1948)

On 2 May 1860, D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson – polymath, inspirational teacher, and mild eccentric – was born at 3 Brandon Street. On his mother's death a week later and his father's going to Galway as Professor of Greek in 1864 (Issue 169), his mother's family brought him up, latterly at 27 Alva Street.

After excelling at Edinburgh Academy, and at Edinburgh and Cambridge Universities, he was appointed Professor of Biology (later Natural History) at University College, Dundee, in 1884. From 1917 until his death, he held the corresponding Chair at St Andrews, where he was wont to walk around with a parrot on his shoulder.

To remind students of the infinite variety of living things, he got Dundee's whaling captains, and others, to bring home specimens for a teaching museum. The collection, to which D'Arcy added thousands of items, also proved invaluable for research, including D'Arcy's research for *On Growth and Form*. Noted for its beautiful prose, and for his vision of how mathematics and physics can help us understand how things grow, and the shapes they take, this 1917 volume has inspired both scientists and artists. Also, that he had 'intellectual endowments ... not likely ever again to be combined within one man' shines through. Indeed, he was an outstanding classical scholar, an ability fostered during times spent with his father in Galway. He also contributed to the work of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (Issue 180) on behalf of the Fishery Board, and is remembered for bringing 'life' to dull fishery statistics.

For celebratory exhibitions and events, and D'Arcy's museum, see *D'Arcy 150* at [<http://www.darcythompson.org/>], and [<http://www.dundee.ac.uk/museum/zoology/>].  
*Jim Adams*



*Courtesy of the University of St Andrews Library.*

## Peter Pan – the Great King Street connection

2010 is the 150th anniversary of the dramatist J.M. Barrie's birth. After an unhappy and often grief-stricken childhood in Kirriemuir, the shy, sensitive Barrie matriculated at Edinburgh University, studying for a general MA degree. He described himself at this time as 'thin as a pencil but not so long'. Initially he lodged in Cumberland Street in accommodation provided by the wife of Rev. Alexander Whyte, minister of St George's West Church. The Minister, also from Kirriemuir, kept a protective eye on the fragile young student. He shared the lodging with another student, named Harrison, who died a year later, probably of an illness exacerbated by malnutrition. It was not then unusual for students to die as a result of near destitution. Undoubtedly this clouded Barrie's years in Edinburgh, although he retained an abiding love for the city itself.

From 1879–82 he lodged with a Mrs Edwards in a top flat at 3 Great King St, climbing the hill to the Old Quad with a heavy heart. He referred to his MA studies as 'Grind, grind, grind'. Of obligatory mathematics he observed, 'I had never a passion for knowing that when circles and triangles attempt impossibilities, it is absurd'.

He got some relief from his academic treadmill as a freelance drama critic for the *Edinburgh Courant*. His report on the pantomime *Ali Baba* is predictably joyous, though his reviews of other productions in Edinburgh and Glasgow are severe – 'twaddle is twaddle'. However, this early exposure to professional theatre certainly set the stage for what was to come. Despite being plagued by migraines and 'black dog' worries, he finally graduated, and so ended the haarish Edinburgh interlude and his escape into a kinder light. He could hardly have predicted the letter from Robert Louis Stevenson (another local) several years later: 'I am a capable artist, but it looks to me as if you are a man of genius'. *JRM (with special thanks to Lady Mary Davidson)*



## Briefly

**Tom Fleming (1927–2010).** We lament the passing on 18 April of a great actor and peerless TV commentator on royal and state occasions. Fleming was cofounder of the **Gateway Theatre** of blessed memory, as well as director of the **Royal Lyceum Theatre Company** and of the **Scottish Theatre Company**. He was a lifelong member of the **Dublin St Baptist Congregation** which transferred to the former primary school in Canonmills in 1988. Here he led an **ecumenical and 'corporate ministry'**, playing the organ on most Sundays. He retired in 2008, having ensured the succession included younger visionaries of **equal passion and commitment**.

The General Election is on **6 May**. **Broughton Primary School** will close on the day for polling-station duties.

**Nerds' Corner.** Edinburgh North and Leith's **turnout for the 2005 General Election** was 62.5%, below Edinburgh South's 70% and above Edinburgh East's 61.3%. The average turnout across the UK was 61.4%, across Scotland 60.8%. The highest turnout of any constituency was in Dorset West: 76.3%. The highest postwar turnout in the UK occurred in 1950 (83.9%) when Atlee won for Labour with a majority of 5 seats. For further facts and figures see '**Extras**' online.

The next meeting of the **Broughton History Society** will be at 7.30pm on 10 May in Drummond CHS. **Jessie Denholm** will talk on '**An 18th-century Census: St Cuthbert's Parish in 1790**'.

In straitened times, CEC's **Parks Dept** must do more for less, or sometimes just less but better spinned. Insiders tell us to expect **vast acres of uncut grass** this summer masquerading as **Wilderness Havens or Wildlife Corridors**. *Spurtle* approves.

The late **Bill Smith** – Canonmills bookseller and 'menace to machinery' – was once named **Man of the Match** after a game against **Glasgow Rangers**. It was a pre-season friendly during which Smith was Stornoway Rovers' custodian of the net. Rangers **scraped victory** by 17 goals to nil.

**Broughton History Society** will enjoy its own separate page on the *Spurtle* website within weeks. This new, independent **fiefdom within a cyber-barony** will initially carry details of each year's lecture series, news, a who's who of committee members, and the online archive of past *Newsletters*

**New Town and Broughton Community Council's AGM** will be on 3 May at 7.15pm in Broughton St Mary's Parish Church. A normal NTBCC meeting will follow.

Schools close for **Victoria Day** on 17 May. State schools resume on 19 May.

**Drummond CHS Parent Council's Annual General Meeting** will be in the school on 25 May at 6.30pm.

## Briefly

**Wine and spirits emporia** have long wooed **drouthy customers** in Broughton St. In recent times, Peter Dominic and Thresher assuaged thirsts at No. 30. Thresher closed down last December. But one vine leads to another and a new enterprise – **Vino** – will open for **bibulous business** in May.

In a coup against **unhygienic roosting**, listed building consent has been sought to install **'anti-pigeon spikes'** at the rear of 7 adjacent properties on the corner of Barony and Broughton Sts (Ref. 10/00765/LBC). Potentially another blow to the proud **Edinburgh guano industry**.

**'Self Catering'** – an exhibition examining **artists' tools and tools of the kitchen** – will feature work by established talents and Edinburgh College of Art students at the **Broughton Deli on Barony St** until 24 May. See [<http://broughtondeliart.blogspot.com>].

A 3-storey, 3-bedroom private house with integral garage and 4 loos is proposed at **6 Gayfield Place Lane** (Ref. 10/00647/FUL). Would suit flush buyer seeking all the conveniences of a much bigger property in the country.

**Powderhall Bowling Green** (opposite Broughton Primary School) is mowed, insecticided, flattened, and crying out for people to play on it. A **mixed club** meets on Tuesdays at 6.15pm, and a **Ladies Club** on Wednesdays at 2pm. New members welcome. Children, non-bowlers, golfers, obsessives should remember cheap-as-chips **putting green**.

Well done **Edele Murphy** and **Eileen Dickie**, pine-marten-eyed locals who spotted the latest **late-presented Christmas tree** on 11 April in Annandale St 'beside the bins between the youth hostel and the car rental'. Any more offers?

An exhibition of **botanical prints and water colours** will run at **Art Amatoria** (Bellevue Crescent), 13–27 May. Catch works by Ann Fraser, Anna Knights, Dugald Graham Campbell, Gael Sellwood and Fiona Strickland. See also 'Extras' online.

Broughton Primary School's **Summer Fair** is from 1–3pm on Sat. 29 May: **ice cream and raffle, BBQ, bric a brac, bargains and much bouncing**.

Green says 'Fish know no nationality' ...



Disturbing new counter-evidence

**Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP**  
Member of the Scottish Parliament for  
Lothians



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Friday advice sessions:  
4.00pm Stockbridge Library,  
42 Hamilton Place  
5.00pm Ainslie Park Leisure Centre  
6.00pm Constituency Office

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## New Town/Broughton Community Council

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

AGM  
followed by normal meeting  
on  
3 May at 7.15pm  
in Broughton St Mary's Parish  
Church, Bellevue Crescent

Then 7 June  
in Drummond Community  
High School.

[mowats@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:mowats@blueyonder.co.uk)

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