

# Spurtle



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2015**

**No 239**

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**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free**

## COMMUNITY COUNCIL PANS BUSINESS PLAN FOR OLD RHS PROPOSAL

The New Town & Broughton Community Council will criticise pre-application plans for the former Royal High School (RHS) on Regent Rd when it responds to the developer's latest proposals and questionnaire.

At last month's meeting, members were opposed to altering the Category A-listed building's façade.

They thought the western hotel block in particular was far too high and wrecked views. Its inappropriate scale, they said, stemmed from the requirements of an inappropriate business plan.

In any case, the complex should prioritise intellectual, cultural or educational purposes not upmarket commercial hospitality.

In all future dealings, they would try to react in as proactive and positive a way as possible. They do not wish to be seen as negative and change-averse.

See our online coverage on 6.3.15 and 9.3.15. The non-appearance of RHS and seven other A-listed buildings on the Buildings at Risk Register was explained on our website on 25.3.15.



## CITY-CENTRE PARTNERSHIP SEEKS ADDED OOMPH

City of Edinburgh Council's Katie Swann wants to reinvigorate the 9-year-old City Centre Neighbourhood Partnership (CCNP).

She seeks more equal and active participation from local councillors, community councils, police, businesses, the NHS, the Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council, and residents.

She aims for a cleaner/greener city, and to improve active travel, local democracy, local arts for local people, and people's sense of personal safety.

Some sceptics claim the CCNP lacks teeth compared to the overweening Essential Edinburgh, but still hope it will champion public input on how St Andrew Square and Calton Hill are managed in future.

To find out more about its 2014-17 Local Community Plan, and forthcoming public meetings at the Melting Pot on Rose Street, visit: [<http://goo.gl/mvzjd0>].

## OVERSIZED EYESORE IRKS

As *Spurtle* prepared to go to press, we were alerted to this horrible great lump (see website 26.3.15).

A Brentford-based firm hopes to install the 9ft+ giant on the pavement outside 71 George Street, where it would beam adverts at passers-by in two directions.

We dislike it because it's a potential eyesore more suited to Brentford than a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We also think it would be a potentially dangerous distraction for pedestrians and road users alike close to a busy junction.

This is the latest in a series of speculative planning applications for visually intrusive advertising platforms in the city centre. The commercial pressure is mounting. We urge readers who oppose these intrusions to contact their councillors and tell them so.



## SCOUT LEADERS SALUTED



Long-serving scout leaders Evelyn Torrance and Ian Stewart were honoured with thanks, certificates and quantities of cake at a ceremony in Broughton PS gym on 17 March. They've amassed 60 and 40 years' voluntary service respectively, more than Pilrig 5th Leith Scout Group's other 10 volunteers combined. They're both legends in this part of Broughton.

## GREEN WASTE, RED FACES

Landfill and trial-recycling waste collection in Claremont and Bellevue have been marred by missed and mistaken collections in recent weeks.

The Council's biggest embarrassment came when the New Town Clean Streets Campaign witnessed landfill and recycling being tipped into the same lorry on 13 March. Workers said they were unaware of the local trial, and doubted whether enough vehicles existed to run it properly in any case (see our website 16.3.15).



A CEC spokesperson later dismissed the incident as a limited and unrepresentative mistake. Environment Convener Cllr Leslie Hinds, who in February rapped *Spurtle* correspondents' knuckles for voicing doubts about the scheme, was invited to comment but did not.

Bellevue residents are no angels. NTCSC's investigations show locals keep putting the wrong rubbish in recycling bins, and bagging the right kind of rubbish when it should go in loose.

## Briefly



**Astronomical doggerel:** For those who missed last month's partial eclipse, this photo shows the most exciting bits. The sun's behind, is hard to see. Thanks to the mooning in-between.

**Broughton History Society** meets next on Mon 27 Apr in Drummond CHS at 7pm. Patricia Wigston will talk on 'Gladstone's Land'.

April's **New Town & Broughton Community Council (NTBCC)** meeting is for members only. **Leith Central Community Council** will meet in public as usual, at 7pm in **McDonald Rd Library** at on Mon 20 Apr.

Young poet and former Albany St resident **Adam Bojelian** died on 24 March. Born with cerebral palsy, Bojelian communicated by blinking, and went on to build a **worldwide audience** for his creative work online. His **courage, tenacity and cheerfulness** inspired many. For tributes see @Adsthepoet on Twitter.

**Boundary Commission proposals** for Edinburgh wards were announced on 19 Mar. Consultation with the **City of Edinburgh Council** will run until mid-May, and CEC will produce detailed maps. A **12-week public consultation** will start in July.

In recent months we have mentioned a **spate of break-ins** at local businesses. Official figures now confirm that trend. At last month's NTBCC meeting, police reported **10 break-ins or attempted burglaries** during Feb in the area north of Princes St. Mostly, it was small independents which were targeted, **usually via the front door**. A further 2 had occurred by 9 Mar. Meanwhile, theft from cars is popular in Leith. Around **20 smash- and-grabs** have occurred per week lately, most at night.

Descendants/relations of those killed in the 1915 **Quintinshill Rail Disaster** are advised to contact organisers if they wish to ensure a place at the **centenary commemoration service** in Rosebank Cemetery on 23 May. Contact: gretna2015@gmail.com or John Edward, 9 Rosebank Rd, EH5 3QW.

Concerns have been raised that a wall between **Pilrig Park and the adjacent primary school** is unstable. CEC is aware. Meanwhile, Friends of the Park have defended a vigorous approach to **cutting back undergrowth**. They deny wildlife has been affected, and say locals appreciate a reduction in turds, condoms and nuisance elders.

## Spring selection from the galleries

New work from Dina Campbell will show at Bon Papillon on Howe Street from 17 April. Her use of vibrant colour, and fluid lines display her relish for a kind of artistic freedom and deliberate inexactitude. 'My paintings are not pieces of information but more an invitation to encounter and engage with something new'. Shown right is her (far from) 'Still Life with Green Bowl'.

Anjila Wilson's exhibition of Leith-based people's stories, photographs and music will go on display in the wide open spaces of the Leith Walk police box from 13-17 April. To add yours, contact [anjilawilson@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:anjilawilson@hotmail.co.uk)

For those seeking something a bit different, Slavs and Tatars' work *Lektor* will be at the Collective's City Dome on Calton Hill from 25 April-12 July. It is 'a multi-channel audio installation featuring a newly commissioned audio track in Scottish Gaelic, translated and read by poet Aonghas MacNeacail. This will be played alongside the original Uighur text, which offers advice on the power and pitfalls of the tongue, and translations into Turkish, German, Polish, and Arabic. Drawing on the "Gavrilov" voice-over technique, the work will create a disruptive experience, touching on issues of legibility and authenticity.' Sounds like a scream.



### It's clean, it's fresh, it's boring



The Howe Street branch of Margiotta's has shut after 20+ years, with managers blaming the wrong size of premises which didn't allow for sufficient chiller space. A plausible alternative reading is that any small supermarket hereabouts needs chiller space to match that over the road at Sainsbury's (see our website 5.3.15).

Few independents can withstand the multiples' drive to establish local retail monocultures. However, *Spurtle* hears encouraging rumours from elsewhere in the barony. Watch this space.

### Gretna Disaster recalled

*Persevere*, a new play marking the Gretna (Quintinshill) Train Disaster and its effect on Edinburgh communities will be performed at the Dalmeny Street Drill Hall on 22 May, exactly 100 years after the tragedy occurred.

It has been devised by a group of local actors from Strange Town Young Company and Active Inquiry. The performance will be a promenade experience, using the Drill Hall as the backdrop and original setting to the story. Many of the 226 dead were brought here for identification.

*Persevere* is part of Out of the Blue's Gretna 100 project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and is one of a series of events and projects marking the anniversary. For further information contact Megan Davies [meg@outoftheblue.org.uk](mailto:meg@outoftheblue.org.uk) (Tel. 555 7131).

### Drummond kids brighten up St Mary's

This brilliant mural is one of an Edinburgh-themed series painted early last month beside the stairs in Broughton St Mary's Parish Church.

They were created by 22 pupils from Drummond CHS and Leith Academy, who planned and budgeted the job, then worked against the clock to complete it in a 24-hour challenge as part of their SkillForce Prince's Award.

Instructor Hannah Smith said afterwards, 'It's important that young people feel they are part of the community and are given the opportunity to make their own contribution. I'm extremely proud of all they've done throughout the year, and for the hard work, time and effort they put into this project'.

Successful participants will receive records of achievement in a ceremony at Tynecastle High School later this year.



## From Glenorchy to Glasshouse: Part 2

This John Ruskin pencil drawing of 1838 (now in Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery), was long held to depict Lady Glenorchy's Church (see Issue 238). It is in fact of Trinity College Kirk in the valley between the Old Town and Calton Hill on the west side of Leith Wynd.

Contemporary pictures suggest a building of robust splendour which would have appealed to Ruskin. Although only 19 when he drew this image during a tour of Scotland with his parents, he was already a highly accomplished draughtsman.

The building had been established by Queen Mary of Gueldres in memory of her husband King James II in 1460, and functioned as a grand parish church from c.1580–1848. It was then dismantled to make way for Waverley Station, with masonry being carefully numbered to aid reconstruction later.

One transept and the choir were rebuilt in the 1870s between Chalmer's Close and Trunk's Close off the Royal Mile. Here it has more recently functioned as a brass-rubbing centre and Fringe venue.— *JRM* [For more on this intriguing structure, see the website (2.4.15).]



## Banksy coming to Broughton

Banksy will come to Broughton this month when a new 'Street Art' Gallery opens on Picardy Place.

It's the brainchild of The Street Bar part-owner 'Trendy Wendy', whose interest in the genre began during her years as a self-confessed fly-poster.

The opening exhibition will include hand-pulled screenprints and stencil work, and framed limited edition and signed works. Everything is for sale.

Obviously, the pieces have come indoors and gone upmarket, but all the works on show will have had their origins on the street. It includes work by Banksy, Eddie Colla, Death NYC, Shepherd Fairey, Keith Haring, Hutch, Mr Brainwash, Static and Stik. For more, see: [www.thestreetartgallery.co.uk](http://www.thestreetartgallery.co.uk)

Meanwhile, for those who can't wait, the Rodney Street Tunnel has an intriguing new resident (see above). *Spurtle's* Rhys Fullerton spotted him in early March, and reader Matthew Roy recognised the mark in the middle of the forehead as a Buddhist om symbol. Several readers have suggested he may be inspired by characters in the Hayao Miyazaki animation *Spirited Away*.



## Bird-brained April: long-tailed tits

These small, sociable, piebald birds are at their busiest now. As early nesters they will already have eggs and maybe chicks. How do they manage it? Insulation and teamwork. Long-tailed tits build a beautiful moss and spider's web sphere lined with wool and feathers. Both parents parent, and are reportedly supported by other adults who have failed to mate and have time to spare.

*How to see them:* They're rarely seen alone and stick together using a high-pitched *syrup* or *tsi, tsi, tsi*. They can be seen anywhere, foraging through bushes and hedges. They are distinctive, with contrasting plumage and a tail that looks about twice as long as the bird itself.

*See also:* the pink hue to their feathers. Keep an eye open as well for the look-alike, confident and very horizontal pied wagtail, strutting around in open areas, parks and by the river. These birds are of a similar size and colouring, and have a long tail, but are seen in more open areas. At this time of year they are usually alone. — *Miles Forde*



Image: Wikimedia commons

## Briefly

A study conducted by the **Centre for Economic and Business Research** has named EH7 (**Edinburgh Central/Bellevue**) as one of Scotland's top ten most desirable postcodes in which to live. The frankly ridiculous project generated column inches for Royal Mail by supposedly factoring **schools quality, affordable housing, green spaces, crime levels and commuting times**. But not bin collections, cyclists on pavements, potholes, or dog poos suspended from trees. For details see: [<http://goo.gl/gQentO>]

On Tues 14 Apr, the **Central Edinburgh Book Group** will discuss Mario Vargas Llosa's *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter* at 6.30pm in McDonald Road Library. You can hear the author on this subject here: [<http://goo.gl/MLIQUs>].

**Royal Bank of Scotland** is close to securing planning permission in principle for the site at **7, 11, 13 Eyre Terrace** (Ref. 14/01177/PPP). It envisages an unspecified mix of **residential, retail, hotel, food & drink, office and car parking**. As reported on our website on 8.4.14, locals worry that buildings would loom over King George V Park like some **unscrupulous giant hogging all the sunshine**. CEC also has concerns, so will reserve judgement on the exact amount and mix of uses, detailed site layout, **height above 4 storeys**, access, parking and design.

Finger-lickin' bad. Police are tackling **repeated youth-related anti-social behaviour** in the Princes Mall Kentucky Fried Chicken.



Leith's first **International Women's Day** took place on 9 March, uniting people from varied multicultural backgrounds through **dance and music**. Performances included the Mary Phelan Line and Highland Dancers (pictured), the Jennifer Roxburgh Irish Dancers, and the Sikh Sanjog Punjabi Folksingers. Contributions at the event went to **Maggie's Meals** and raised sufficient for 4,000 meals for impoverished children.

From 30 Mar, **more No. 8 buses** will run at peak times, and an improved **15-minute frequency** on Suns. For changes to other services, visit: [<http://goo.gl/5e79gN>].

## Moreover ...

Locals have been baffled and exasperated by yet another planning application to convert the **E. Scotland St Lane 'garage'** into an 'office' (Ref. 15/00700/FUL). CEC Planners declined to determine the last effort as it was **no different to the one before**, which they had previously rejected. Despite this latest version being materially no different to either of the other two, **it is being considered**. Confused? So are Council Planning staff who responded to locals' enquiries with puzzled expressions and clouds of octopus ink. **New Town & Broughton Community Council** has promised to object by the 3 Apr deadline.

A 24-year-old French tourist was robbed at knifepoint on Sat 8 March. Two white men in their 30s stole his laptop, mobile and wallet on the corner of Dublin St and Broughton Market at about 8pm.



Photo by Chris Gray.

**Leith Central Community Council** is unimpressed by pedestrians being forced into the **gutter at Shrub Place** whilst contractors occupy the pavement with materials, equipment and crates. Ward 12's Cllr Angela Blacklock is on the case.

**Bruce Whitehead**, representing Left Unity, and **Jonathan Hartley**, an Independent, have announced they will stand for **Edinburgh North & Leith** in the General Election. Also standing are: Sarah Beattie-Smith (Grn), Deidre Brock (SNP), Mark Lazarowicz (Lab), Iain McGill (Con), Alan Melville (UKIP), Martin Veart (Lib-Dem). **Spurtle's hustings** will be on 16 April in Broughton St Mary's Parish Church, Bellevue Cres.

Congratulations to **Friends of Montgomery St Park** who have won a **£40k Biffa Award** to resurface their sports area and provide new seats, goalposts and hoops. This is a great example of local people grabbing the bull by the horns and making a difference.

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## Alison Johnstone

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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.

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Property Management

## New Town/Broughton Community Council

THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
REPRESENTS THE VIEWS  
OF LOCAL RESIDENTS TO  
EDINBURGH CITY COUNCIL

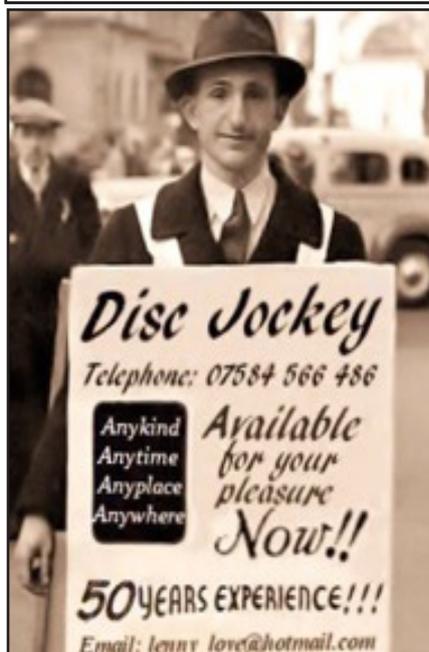
AGM &  
GENERAL MEETING

Monday 11 May

at 7.15pm

Broughton St Mary's Parish  
Church, Bellevue Crescent

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



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