

Spurtle



Find us at: www.broughtonspurtle.org.uk

**April
2017**

No 261

Tel: 07455 770474

spurtle@hotmail.co.uk

BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

PUBLIC OPPOSES HOTEL SCHEME



The comments deadline on revised plans for the old Royal High School passed on 26 March. Some 284 supported the application online, 2,483 objected; 151 people supported the application for listed building consent online, 1,111 objected. Snail-mail comments had not been counted or collated by the time we went to press.

In terms of mobilising public opinion to engage the planning system, this was an overwhelming victory for those against the Duddingston House Properties/Urbanist Hotels scheme (our website 15.3.17). Support has fallen and opposition has grown since comments were last submitted in autumn 2015, when equivalent figures were 415 (S), 1,743 (O) and 187 (S), 522 (O).

However, this is not simply a numbers game: elected members rejected the previous scheme by only one vote when it last came before them (our website 17.12.15). It is also unclear at this stage who will sit on the Council's Development Management Subcommittee when it decides this case after May's local authority election (possibly in August). Individual councillors' levels of experience and expertise will vary.

Whatever their decision, Historic Environment Scotland's latest 55-page written criticism means the case *could* be called in for determination by Ministers after the Council have made a decision. Where this would leave the current sisted appeal is unclear.

It's all a monstrous guddle, the upshot of which is that lobbyists are now focusing on Council candidates, before turning their attention even more on ministers and MSPs. We hear rumours about the opinions of John Swinney, Fiona Hyslop, Michael Russell and Fergus Ewing – none of which have we been able to verify independently.

Private Eye's 'Piloti' (no. 1440) points gloomily to the existence of two property developers on the Government's Growth Commission, and to its Chair, 'the former SNP MSP Andrew Wilson, a professional corporate lobbyist who seems to have little time for the economic as well as the social benefits of the conservation and adaptation of historic buildings'.

MAY ELECTION CANDIDATES

The deadline for nominations of candidates in the Local Government elections on 4 May was 29 March (see our website 30.3.17).

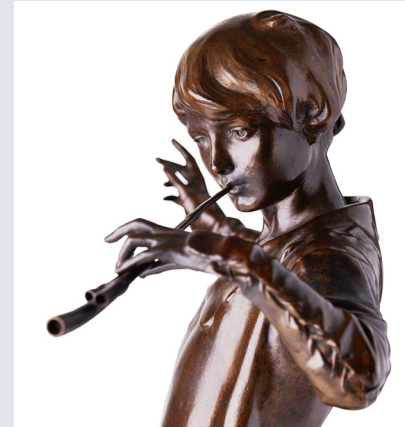
As we went to press, we knew of the following candidates in the City Centre, Inverleith and Leith Walk wards.

City Centre: Jo Mowat (Con), Claire Miller (Grn), Karen Doran (Lab), Hal Osler (LibDem), Alasdair Rankin (SNP).

Inverleith: Nigel Bagshaw (Grn), James Dalglish (Lab), David Stevens (LibDem) Gavin Barrie (SNP).

Leith Walk: Cristina Marga (Con), Susan Rae (Grn), Harald Tobermann (Ind), Marion Donaldson (Lab), Nick Gardner (Lab), Vita Zaporozhenko (LibDem), Dr Amy McNeese-Mechan (SNP), Lewis Ritchie (SNP).

BOTH HANDS NOT NECESSARY



Lyon & Turnbull's auction of 'Decorative Arts: Design since 1860' on 26 April will feature this charming bronze of 'the boy who never grew up'. It is not of George Osborne MP, although we note a certain fluting resemblance. *Peter Pan* is by Sir George James Frampton (1860–1928), and dates from 1915. *Spurtle* covered author J.M. Barrie's four-year student residence in Broughton in Issue 182 [goo.gl/t2sutj].

MORE LEITH STREET WORKS

A 16-week programme of gas and water mains renewal along Leith Street began on 20 March (our website 20.3.17).

This is in addition to the 44-week closure which will start in September 2017 (see our website 28.2.17; 14.3.17).

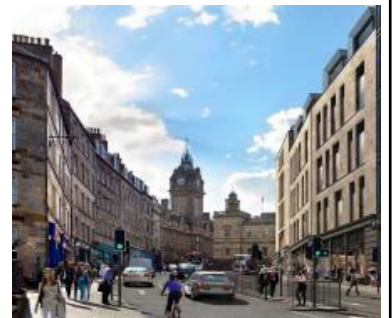
The current works require a contraflow in the northbound lanes.

Calton Road will be shut at the Leith Street end, and a footpath and pedestrian crossing will be closed for some of the time also. The works will continue until 2 August, but Greenside Row and the Omni car park will stay open.

The prospect of delays, disruption and knock-on effects on alternative routes has not provoked unconfined joy.

Some wail, gnash teeth and bite furniture. Some, like Leith Central Community Council's Vice Chair Harald Tobermann, demand compensation for any further delays to the Leith Walk improvement programme. Others, like Leith Walk's Councillor Lewis Ritchie, say we must be pragmatic about facilitating Scotland's greatest ever private investment, even if elements of it sometimes come at maddeningly short notice.

Spurtle's impression is that much of the contractors' St James Quarter planning is being made up as they go along. We expect more surprises. This is a bad time to be a sofa.



Briefly

Spurtle will hold a Council elections **hustings for the Leith Walk ward** in Broughton St Mary's Parish Church (Bellevue Cres) on **12 April from 7pm–9.15pm**. One candidate from each party has been invited to **answer questions**. Confirmed so far are: Nick Gardner (Lab), Cristina Marga (Con), Susan Rae (Grn), Alex Ritchie (SNP), Vita Zaporozcenko (LibDem). If you can't come along but want to ask a question, email it to us at spurtle@hotmail.co.uk Tollcross Community Council have organised a hustings for the **City Centre ward** on the same evening in Lauriston Hall.

Spurtle has banged on a lot about Edinburgh's **historic buildings and civic spaces** over the last 4–5 years. We think they're **increasingly under threat**. Edinburgh World Heritage and the Built Environment Forum Scotland will run a **2017 Heritage Hustings** from 6pm–8pm on 18 Apr in **St Stephen's Church**, St Stephen's St. Cllrs Jo Mowat (Con), Nigel Bagshaw (Grn), Ian Perry (Lab) and Alex Lunn (SNP) will answer questions.

Planning permission has been granted for the **dismantling, repair and reassembly** of the Ross Fountain and original hoop-topped railings in W. Princes St Gardens (Ref. 16/06377/LBC). See our website (10.1.17).

The long locked and empty noticeboard outside **McDonald Rd Library** is soon to be moved closer to Leith Walk and filled with wholesome **Leith Central Community Council** stuff.

An upwardly mobile householder at 12 Abercromby Pl has been granted planning consent for a **new roof terrace** (Ref. 16/05922/FUL). Such developments – so long as they're inconspicuous – are not impossible in the sun-soaked New Town. A different householder at 18 Royal Circus seeks planning permission for an **'orangery extension'** at the back (Ref. 17/01001/FUL). The term 'conservatory' would describe it equally well, but lacks appeal.



Given all the recent criticism of **Council signage** in the capital (Issue 260), it was a pleasure to stumble across this example of amateur clarity in **Charlotte Sq** last month. It tells you everything you need to know. Nothing more. Nothing less.

Friends of Hopetoun Cres Garden are pleading with passersby to step lightly. The emerging **snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils** here thrive much better without **dogs and galoshes** and **dogs in galoshes** llopping all over them.

Broughton Street's grotty top

The state of Broughton Street at its York Place end is causing concern among residents and passers-by.

They cite a 'huge increase in traffic and noise', and a spate of accidents caused by the speed and density of traffic. It all seems at odds with the area's World Heritage Site status, and is doubly disturbing to those who cannot install double-glazing because they live in a conservation area. Traffic displaced from Leith Street is adding to the problem.

Then there are the Council bin lorries which manoeuvre clumsily into Broughton Street Lane under the 19th-century archway. This recently proved too tight a squeeze, and listed railings and stonework were damaged here.



And if all that wasn't annoying enough, there is the revolting carpet of fag-butts and litter on the pavement outside Ladbroke's (whose exterior ashtray has been vandalised), Gregg's and The Empress. The CEC bin is usually filled to overflowing. Nobody hereabouts seems to have a dustpan or brush. Commercial bins on the other side of the street frequently block the pavement.

'I am disgusted by what is happening,' one local told us. 'So much potential and such utter insensitivity in one of the most beautiful cities in the world.'

City Centre councillor Karen Doran has alerted Environmental Officers and Licensing to the problem. The New Town & Broughton Community Council is aware, and Ladbroke's have been promising to fit a new ashtray since January. Who'd bet on an improvement any time soon?

Slim pavement pickings

It may not be the capital's most photogenic spot, but nimble-footed **Katie McMeekan** thinks this corner of Bellevue may be worth celebrating even so.

She reckons the kink in East Claremont Street Lane could be home to Edinburgh's narrowest pavement, beating even the strict confines of the Upper Bow in the Old Town. Can any reader suggest a finer footway somewhere in Broughton or beyond?



Sore point and bloody nerve

The Central Edinburgh Youth Hostel on Haddington Place has many great features, and its website even manages to put a positive spin on those it lacks: 'Car parking is not available at this youth hostel, free parking can be found 5 minutes away on Pilrig Street'.

Such helpfulness has not pleased car-swamped Pilrig Street residents, who already have trouble parking their own cars and crossing the road safely.

Leith Walk councillor Nick Gardner describes the hostel's advice as 'somewhere between cheeky and inflammatory', and has written asking them to point guests at Greenside Car Park instead, or better still to recommend using a park-and-ride facility to travel in by public transport.

'Are any other businesses recommending local streets for their customers?' Gardner wonders. Your answers, please.

Spurtle wonders how many Pilrig Street residents are aware of ECYH's free flat-screen TV, warm and comfortable seats, Internet access, and mini soft play area for children and babies – all only 5 minutes away.



Mystery of the missing meters

Drivers have been stumped by the disappearance of parking meters from many Edinburgh streets. CEC says 371 old or expensive-to-maintain Ticket Issuing Machines (TIMs) have been removed forever, but the rest will be adjusted to accept new £1 coins. The £204k cost of machine upgrades has been accommodated within the existing Transport budget.

Finding a black bin bag where there used to be a TIM is no excuse for not paying. Alternative meters are still to be found nearby, or there is the smartphone app RingGo: [goo.gl/9v1Ygl].



National recognition for local transplant

The Botanic Cottage has won the Scottish Civic Trust's My Place Award 2017.

On 23 March, SCT Director Jon Pelan described the project as 'fantastic', meeting all the Award's criteria and more.

'Passion, determination, quality, design, community engagement and civic pride are in abundance in this wonderful and surprising restoration project. Edinburgh has a new civic asset to be proud of.'

Pictured above, from left to right, are: Neil McDonald (Simpson & Brown Architects), Eileen Dickie (Chair of the Friends of Hopetoun Crescent Garden and the Botanic Cottage Trust), Gerry Gallagher (project manager, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh), Kevin Stewart MSP (Minister for Local Government & Housing).



Briefly

The next meeting of the **Broughton History Society** will be at 7pm on 24 Apr at NGR NT 2583 7482. **Chris Fleet** will talk on 'Mapping Broughton and its Environs'.

It is 60 years since **Major and Mrs McNaughtan** took over the property at 3a Haddington Place. On 1 April 1957 they began removing second-hand refrigerators from the former premises of **Refroster Ltd** and filling them instead with second-hand and antiquarian books. **Elizabeth Strong**, who joined the shop in 1972 and ran it from 1979–2015, recalled some historical highlights of **life in the basement** at a reception there on 22 Mar.



Millan has its **Viaduct**, San Francisco its **Golden Gate**, South Queensferry its graceful new Crossing. But none of them comes close to Dryden Street's magnificent new **Ramp**. Taking architectural aesthetics and engineering prowess to a new level, it takes **pedestrians and cyclists** to the same level as before via the scenic route.



One is a lighthouse, one is a shining beacon of gastronomy ... you decide. Meet **Jérôme Henry** whose new bijou, relaxed, fine-dining, neighbourhood restaurant **Le Roi Fou** is opening on Forth St. Expect fresh Scottish produce, modern European cuisine with a bar and arty Salon room. **Creative director Isolde Nash** says the restaurant embodies a love of **food, word and image**. "Le Roi Fou" is our gastronomic version of the character "**Ubu Roi**", invented by French pataphysical writer **Alfred Jarry**. The character is always identified by the spiral on his belly, and thinks with his stomach.'

Some 17 neighbours and Cllr Karen Doran are opposing an application to change the use of **50 Broughton St** (currently Shamoons the grocer/newsagent) to an **unlicensed hot-food carry-out** (Ref. 17/00629/FUL). Reasons include potential disturbance, litter, access to back green, smells, erection of a flue, and overprovision of other carry-outs nearby. A similar application in 2015 was later withdrawn.

West Register St between St Andrew Sq and Register Pl was **scheduled to reopen on 31 March** after a closure of 11+ months to facilitate demolition and building works.

Look out for: Treecreepers

Last April I described the Dunnock as the ultimate 'wee brown bird', but the elusive and charming Treecreeper is another contender, weighing in at around 10g.

They are with us all year but are difficult to spot. Their high-pitched *tsii, tsii, tsii* call can bring your attention to them, and they also have a soft, descending call in spring that can alert the attuned listener.

Treecreepers live up to their name by foraging in a very specific way, using their long claws and stiff tail feathers to spiral up tree trunks in a series of jerky jumps. Once they reach a certain height they fly to the base of the next tree and begin the process again. If approached, they will 'hide' behind the tree, keeping themselves out of sight.

These birds have a relatively long and curved beak, ideal for reaching into cracks in the bark to feed on spiders and other invertebrates. This, their white belly and white eye stripe at close quarters make them quite distinctive.

Treecreepers roost and nest in cracks in the bark of older trees. Their speedy fledging is probably a response to these precarious sites, as (unlike similarly sized Tits) they do not then go on to have a second brood. They do however share the Tits' relatively localised foraging area, so if you see one once you may well see it again later. — *Miles Forde*



Image: NatureGate, 2012.

Big Foot improvement

A Police Scotland community 'beat' officer addressing the New Town & Broughton Community Council last month gave four reasons behind a reduction in anti-social behaviour in 'Big Foot Territory'.

(1) Advice from the Police in finding city-centre accommodation. (2) Cutting back foliage opposite St Mary's RC Cathedral. (3) Help from the Border Force in returning four volunteers – who had had no jobs or housing for three months – to their home countries. (5) A transfer (probably temporary) of the problem to the Surgeons' Hall area. Only one related incident has



Behind the red door

Approaching the Mansfield Traquair Centre (formerly Mansfield Apostolic Church) from London Street, one glimpses a striking red door high up on the south-east corner turret.

In fact, there are identical red doors on all four corner turrets. Each has a narrow, inner, winding staircase leading up to the doors – perhaps not recommended for those suffering from vertigo or claustrophobia! The doors give access to the precipitous roof, where workers assigned to repairs or cleaning the gutters are securely roped during such procedures.

These soaring structures are fine examples of the architect Sir Robert Rowand Anderson's concept of the practical and devotional in this magnificent A-listed neo-Roman building of 1872. It has been admired by many, including the great Irish poet William Butler Yeats during his visit to Edinburgh with the Abbey Theatre in June 1906 (see goo.gl/lvcAIR). — *JRM*




Moreover ...

PRESENTING

LOGAN'S CLOSE

"Listen To Your Mother"
Single Launch.



PLUS

SOLDIER ON

VOODOO ROOMS

SAT. 7:30 P.M. APR 15

Tickets available from Tickets Scotland and on the door at £5.00
THE VOODOO ROOMS, 19a W Register St, Edinburgh EH2 2AA

Edinburgh musicians **Logan's Close** will launch their new single 'Listen to Your Mother' in the Voodoo Rooms on 15 Apr. Things are really picking up for the 4-piece **Barony St-based band**, who have been active now for about 3 years. Blending '60s rock 'n' roll with contemporary ideas and melodies, 'harmony and groove', they recently had a sell-out show at **Liverpool's Cavern Club**, and received overwhelming interest after performing live on STV Glasgow: [goo.gl/F3ux19].



Under normal circumstances, it's perfectly possible to live in Broughton **without worrying about pheasants**. But, once in a blue moon, two arrive at the same time and you find yourself wondering **whether they know each other**. Rachel Bell reported a noisy male behind Rodney St early last month (our Facebook 13.3.17). Then Nina Vivanco spotted this **beautiful plump hen** behind Bellevue Cres and London St. Is there a pheasant-friendly app to introduce them?

'A celebration of all things Leith' is promised for 10am-5pm on 29 April in **Dock Place, Custom House and Custom Lane**. Fortunately, it will not entail all things Leith, just some of the best bits. **Expect:** local arts organisations, charities, community councils, groups and projects, bike shops, **dance/fitness studios**, Leith Theatre, Leith Festival, space hopper races and 'kiddies' raves'. All this and the **usual offerings** from the recently established market here.

Spartle Team: E. Dickie, J. Dickie, M. Forde, R. Fullerton, J. Hart, M. Hart, D. Hill, A. McIntosh, J. R. Maclean, S. Michael, M. Orr, L. Rogers, C. Roussot, T. Smith, D. Sterratt, E. Taylor-Smith, D. Young.
Post: Spartle, c/o Narcissus Flowers, 87 Broughton St, Edinburgh EH1 3RJ.
Printed by Minuteman Press, 63 Elm Row.



LONDON1 HOT SHAVE BARBER

Appointments not necessary,
18 Rodney Street, Tel. 557 2393



Deidre Brock MP

Edinburgh North and Leith



Regular Surgeries

Leith: 1st Friday of the month
1-2pm, 166 Great Junction Street
Leith Walk: 2nd Friday of the month
3.30-4.30pm, McDonald Rd Library
Stockbridge: 3rd Friday of the month
1-2pm Stockbridge Library
Royston/Wardieburn Community Centre: Last Friday, 4-5pm
dbrockmp.scot
Tel: 0131-555 7009
deidre.brock.mp@parliament.uk

LEITH CENTRAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

A forum for local people who want to engage with and work for their local community.

Participate in local democracy.

Make representations to **City of Edinburgh Council, other public bodies and private agencies on everything that matters locally.**

Next meetings on 17 Apr/22 May, 7.00pm
McDonald Rd Library.
ALL WELCOME.

leithcentralcc.co.uk/meeting-dates



[f/BenMacSNP](https://www.facebook.com/BenMacSNP) [@BenMacpherson](https://twitter.com/BenMacpherson)

Ben Macpherson MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Edinburgh Northern and Leith Constituency



Constituency Surgeries

(no appointment necessary)

Every Monday:
5-6pm at
Leith Library
28-30 Ferry Road
Edinburgh
EH6 4AE

Every Friday:
4-5pm at
Royston/Wardieburn Community Centre
Pilton Drive North
Edinburgh
EH5 1NF

Contact Ben

Office Address: 34 Constitution Street, Leith, Edinburgh, EH6 6RS
E-mail: ben.macpherson.msp@parliament.scot
Telephone: 0131 600 0134 or 0131 348 5786
Website: www.benmacpherson.scot

Tailor Design

21 Rodney Street

Ladies & gents
bespoke tailoring,
Bridal services,
Alterations &
Repairs

Tel: 0131-557 0188

Broughton

Property Management

Thinking of
Letting your
Property?

See your local agent
We always need
property to let

info@broughtonproperty.co.uk
0131- 478 7222

61-63 Broughton Street
Edinburgh EH1 3RJ.



New Town & Broughton Community Council

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

Come along and make a
difference on **10 April at 7.30pm** Broughton St Mary's
Parish Church, Bellevue
Crescent

www.ntbcc.org.uk