

Spurttle



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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER

Free

NORTH BRIDGE REFURB – STEEL YOURSELF

A new 16-month phase began last month in the £22M project to refurbish North Bridge [bit.ly/387OURz]. Traffic has been reduced to one lane in each direction. Bus stops have moved.

Work at surface level includes: widening/relaying footways and kerbs; installing expansion joints; carriageway resurfacing; restoring statuary.

Below the surface, work includes: assessing and replacing steel; reconstructing 'secondary structures' (some of them only recently rediscovered); building new permanent access platforms; removing redundant infrastructure; and repairing the reinforced concrete deck. To make all this possible, over 186 miles of scaffolding has been installed, enough to encircle Spurtleshire roughly 50 times.

Barring mishaps and unpleasant surprises, work is expected to end in mid-2021. Until then, we predict congestion and delays, especially when tramworks on Leith Walk are added to the mix.

The Category A-listed structure was built from 1894–97, and repainted in the early 1990s. However, the last substantial refurb was in 1933. For an in-depth progress report (updated in December 2019), visit [adobe.ly/2H4IF6a].



EXCAVATION HALTED



Healey's 'First Law of Holes' was applied on Dryden Gait last month, after this digger engaged in recabing for the transition/grid substation at 95 McDonald Road ended up nose first in a trench. No-one was seriously hurt, but work was temporarily suspended pending an investigation and improved precautions.

MARKING BROUGHTON HISTORY WITH PRIDE

Activists want Broughton Street's part in the LGBTIQ+ community's struggle for recognition and acceptance to be marked in this, the 25th year of Pride Edinburgh.

It was here at 58A/60 Broughton Street that the Scottish Minorities Group Centre was launched in 1975, the first such resource outwith the USA [bit.ly/394jH1w]. Businesses run by and/or for the LGBTIQ+ community have flourished locally ever since.

Some are now calling for a rainbow zebra crossing in this thoroughfare of the capital's 'Pink Triangle'. Others suggest a plaque, decorated lamppost(s), or series of flags might be easier to achieve. Meanwhile, local traders have also been discussing ways they might support the initiative.

In fairness, we're also aware of a few sceptics concerned about 'political correctness going mad', and a few who see red at the thought of bringing any new colour into the douce greyness of the New Town Conservation Area.

BIG HAND FOR RETURN OF BIG FOOT



Sir Eduardo Paolozzi's three-part 'Manuscript of Monte Cassino' (1991) returned to Broughton Street on 4 February [bit.ly/2GWWGld].

The pieces' precise relocations, agreed by the original donor Sir Tom Farmer, were dictated by practical considerations about access to the cathedral. However, to *Spurttle's* eye, the result is an improvement.

Reflecting on the return, Italian-Scot Ian MacPhail later movingly recalled the work's themes of forgiveness and reconciliation in relation to the wartime sinking of the SS *Arandora Star*. You can hear him here: [bit.ly/31xFh5].

To less fanfare, the Leith Central Station stones, resembling a collection of enormous discarded teeth, will return nearby soon. The image above is an artist's perspective of how the finished 'forecourt' will eventually look on an almost deserted, sun-kissed, seagull-free autumn day facing away from the traffic.



REV. PETER MACDONALD (1958–2020)

Many across Broughton and beyond have been saddened by the Reverend Peter Macdonald's sudden death on 12 February.

Macdonald became Minister at Broughton St Mary's Parish Church in November 2018 (Issue 278), having already served here as locum for 10 months.

His presence in this area was characterised by approachability, humour, compassion, and conviction about the importance of reaching out to all quarters of the parish.

He was much admired and will be greatly missed. *Spurttle* posted a fuller obituary here [bit.ly/2vzs8Dt].



Briefly

The long-anticipated Nomadic Street Food has opened at **144 Dundas Street** next to Clark's Bar. It offers flatbreads and street food created using flavours and ingredients from around the world. 'Over time our menu will evolve with the seasons and our creativity.'



New Town & Broughton Community Council (NTBCC) objects to Underbelly's retrospective planning-consent application (expected soon) for the Christmas Market in **E Princes St Gardens**. The likely determination date is the end of Apr.

Refurbishment of **McDonald Rd Fire Station** – initially scheduled for completion by mid-2019 – has been delayed. Structural problems with **concrete roof panels** meant the entire roof structure required replacement. Work is now expected to finish in Dec 2020.

With Edinburgh Council now looking to find **£88M in savings** over 3 years, expect a range of unpalatable cuts.

There is no Edinburgh Yarn Festival this year. Darning the hole, **Broughton St's Kathy's Knits** is running a number of events in Mar, including guest appearances by well-known pattern designer **Lucy Hague**. For details see [bit.ly/39xkfgN].

No-one would describe the **City Plan 2030** as an easy read, but it's an important one for the future **development of Edinburgh**. You can find a range of Choices here [bit.ly/2w7Wrla] and have until 27 Mar to submit comments.

The vacant plot of land behind **13 Claremont Cres** is up for sale at £150k. Grant Property was refused permission for 6 apartments here in 2019 (Issue 286).

In **Issue 292** we noted how Lothian Buses not in service use **E London St** to avoid traffic hold-ups elsewhere. Last month, word reached us of similar problems on **Hopetoun Cres** – another settled street now beset by **noise, vibration, and fumes** from buses returning to the depot during afternoons and evenings. Residents say these regularly exceed the 20mph speed limit. **New Town & Broughton Community Council** has been informed.

According to the Scottish Govt's **Planning & Environment Appeals Division** in Jan, the report and recommendations on the **old Royal High School** were expected to be submitted to Scottish Ministers by the end of February. Check our website for updates.

Picardy Place update

Further discussion with the public on the future use and design of the Picardy Place central island will start soon. Trials of suggested uses may be run between October 2020 and March 2021. Completion of public works here is expected by October 2022. Short term, the space will be used as a temporary compound for tram-related stuff. Current footpaths and cycleways hereabouts are also temporary. The tram stop should be operational by spring 2023.

Scottish Ministers are expected to decide on the controversially revised layout of Leith Street soon. The cycleway outside the Playhouse and Omni Centre will remain closed until that determination is made.

For chapter and verse on all this, see [bit.ly/38kWYi0].

And so it begins

Work starts on Trams to Newhaven between London Road and Crown Place on 28 March [bit.ly/2P9HN3h]. It is expected to continue until summer next year.

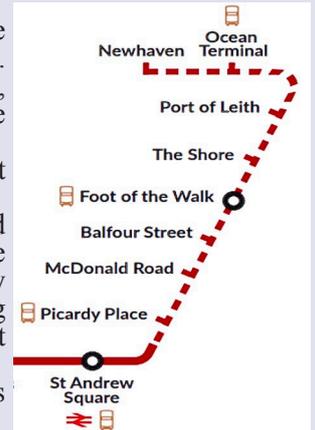
Motor traffic on Leith Walk will still run towards Broughton. There will be no stopping at any time on this lane. *Spartle* confidently predicts increased rat-running through Bellevue and the New Town.

Leith-bound Lothian Buses will divert via Annandale Street, Bonnington Road, Pilrig Street, and Easter Road. The main daytime services affected are the 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 22, 25, and 49 [bit.ly/2vPQqtc]. A two-way cycle lane will run along the west side of Leith Walk.

McDonald Road may close once work is complete at the southern end of Annandale Street.

Logistics hubs for businesses disposing of rubbish and making/receiving deliveries will be established at the Foot of the Walk, and Montgomery, Albert, and Dalmeny Streets. Householders can also use these if receiving large deliveries of furniture/appliances etc. They are not intended for shoppers wanting somewhere to park.

All you could possibly wish to know, and more, is available here [bit.ly/2PsXbs3].



Up-close and carbon neutral

People who like using local retailers but need the convenience of a supermarket click-and-collect service now have a solution.

Bellevue-based Schop started in late 2019, and currently offers online-ordered deliveries of food and drink from 16 independents within 12 miles of the capital. Most are a lot closer, and purchases from those – like Broughton Street's Something Fishy and Frederick Street's Eteaket – under five miles from the customer's address are delivered free.

Schop founders Totty Horn and Tim Roads boast that all products come in reusable, compostable, or recyclable packaging, and that their delivery service is carbon-neutral. For customers, it offers a practical way to increase shopping choices without the fumes and frustration of city traffic. For details, visit [https://schop.co].

Scarab-nosed readers will note that Schop currently advertises with us. However, this article was not paid for.

Many a slip twixt quaich and lip

In late January, councillors on the Culture & Communities Cmte declined to approve the Council's own Outline Business Case for the Quaich Project (QP) in West Princes Street Gardens [bit.ly/39kY4u6].

They recognised the public's lack of confidence in it, and the objections of four affected community councils and the Cockburn Association (Issue 292). A revised version is anticipated late this month.

Other difficulties also dog the project. The QP is assiduously addressing concerns about the design, size, and effects of its proposed Welcome Centre. But what it cannot address in its forthcoming planning application are the as yet unspecified design, size, and effects of any additional temporary structures the Council may later erect for major events.

These would only have to pass safety regulations, circumventing the more democratically accountable and transparent planning process. Sceptics fear the Council will over-exploit and ruin the Gardens for financial gain. They therefore want far more detailed explanations, visualisations, and assurances about this, and further public consultation.

Without this greater clarity, they threaten to withhold support for QP's planning application which, with its provision of firm ground and stronger bridge access, they see as a potential Trojan Horse.

Trust in QP also suffered when the *Edinburgh Evening News* last month reported an alleged tacky and exclusive 'secret "debenture scheme"' to woo wealthy financial backers for the project [bit.ly/3bQIEzZ]. QP rebutted these claims and said all promotional material had been produced with CEC approval and according to pre-agreed processes.

Edinburgh on high: profile of a lady

What is the purpose of the blank shield on the gable-end of No. 4 East London Street? It must have been well-known to one of the householders there – a charming lady who was often seen perambulating Broughton Street, joyously accoutred in multi-coloured attire, some of it of her own making (she was a superb knitter).

She was quite bronzed, for she liked the sun and sought it at every opportunity. She was a fount of knowledge about her adopted city of Edinburgh.

She was also a lover of the Scots language and would recite the great Lallan ballads with relish. Then, throw her a line of song and she would take it up with gusto.

She loved museums, especially those which featured maritime history. She also prized cats, who were wont to wander, but always came home to their cushions.

She enjoyed gardens, particularly if they were nicely overgrown but secreted good rhubarb here and mint there for a pleasing tea infusion. She spoke with a beguiling Miss Jean Brodie accent, but with a fine echo of the fair city of Perth. She was Jude, 'our Jude' who left us far too soon on 8 June 2019.

So, how to emblazon the blank shield? How to make it sing of Doris Day's 'Que Sera, Sera', to recite Sir Patrick Spens, to assemble Scotland's mighty company of knitters, to rejoice in sun and sea, and her blessed Isle of Eigg, to salute fine cats, and gardens of wonder?

Let its space resonate with beauties such as these, much like a star which will never fade.

[In special memory of Judith Devereaux, 11 February 1949–8 June 2019.]—JRM



Opinion split on wooden art

Two new 'chainsaw sculptures' have appeared in Broughton. The latest examples – one featuring another squash-faced owl; the other, two squirrels humping a marrow – arrived out of the blue last month in St Mark's Park. Earlier unheralded examples appeared in Bellevue Crescent Gardens, Barony Street Community Garden, and London Road Gardens during 2019 (Issues 283, 288).

Views differ on them. Some say they're cute, approachable, and popular with children. Others find them crudely executed, meaningless, and out of context. Critics say they're a box-tick response to bureaucratic requirements for 'place making'. Fans argue they're a harmless bit of fun, and suggest detractors get over themselves and stop being so pompous. We expect further examples to land in King George V Park soon.



Gormleys gone walkabout

When four of Antony Gormley's human figures returned to the Water of Leith last year, two of them swapped places.

This startling news came to light last month when writer and performer J. A. Sutherland contacted the *Spurtle* saying a poetry sequence he'd written about *Six Times* had been rendered 'obsolete'.

Spurtle contacted the National Galleries, where senior curator Simon Groom confirmed that Gormley had requested the switch for aesthetic reasons. The figure that formerly stood looking up in Stockbridge has replaced the figure that formerly stood looking down at Cauldron Weir. And vice versa.

We reported the story in depth here [bit.ly/2vTKUpq]. Sutherland's *Walking on the Water* remains a worthwhile contemplation of Gormley's original intentions.



Tit for tat in window spat

From the *Edinburgh Evening News*, 19 March 1884.

At the City Police Court, Helen Robb or Sweeney and Mary Redman or Gribbin, both middle-aged women, were charged with malicious mischief.

It appeared that on Monday night the accused and their husbands, who all live in Simpson's Court, Greenside Row, had been drinking together, when a quarrel took place, and Mrs Gribbin broke five panes of glass in Sweeney's window.

On Wednesday Mrs Sweeney went and asked whether accused was not going to put in the glass, but she declined to do so, on which Mrs Sweeney went to her own house for a poker, and smashed eight panes of glass in Gribbin's window.

Both pleaded guilty. The one said, "I'm quite willin' to pit in my panes if she had only gi'en me time." The other said, "I hivna been able to pit in my panes; hir man cut my man's han', an' he hisna been able to work since."

Mr Linton: You ought both to be ashamed of yourselves.

The Sheriff: You will each have to find 10s caution, or go three days to jail.



Briefly

Broughton St traders will hold a spring event on **Sat 21 Mar**. Look out for balloons and expect discounts, unique offers, snacks and refreshments.

Two-wheeled campaigners **Spokes** last month compiled a dossier for the Council on **Edinburgh's abandoned bikes**. They seek more effective **reporting and removal** of such blots.

Following successful opposition to plans for **Stead's PI** last year [bit.ly/2Hw05HV], campaigners have now set up **Our Leith Walk**. A non-profit-making company, it's pressing for a community buy-out of the red sandstone building and its preservation as **vibrant community shops/services** meeting local needs at affordable rents. **Leith Central Community Council** backs it.

St Mark's Park amateur football club Craigroyston FC (founded 1976) will likely blow its final whistle at the end of this season. Its committee blames **falling sponsorship and increased costs** of training and pitch maintenance.

The **Roxburghe Hotel** has gained planning consent for a living wall of foliage above its **Rose St** door (19/05819/LBC). We advise anyone called Charlotte to stay clear of the main entrance.

Hackland + Dore Directors Pension seeks planning permission to knock down the single-storey office building of Hackland + Dore Architects at **16 Annandale St** and replace it with a 7-floor, 11-flat residential building (20/00364/FUL). See [bit.ly/2SeRsYC].

The **New Town** has a new theatrical venue. For 3 nights in early Feb, **Dublin St** gastropub Little White Pig hosted *Ludicrous MacKenzie* by writer/director Mark McDonnell. The **downstairs room** boasts a tiny stage and basic bench seating.

It's now 3 years since Edinburgh Council began experimenting with '**floating bus stops**', behind which pedestrians and cyclists theoretically mingle in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation. **Leith Central CC** and everyday-walking lobbyists **Living Streets** are now pushing for the promised evaluation.

The compact but cool Fortitude Coffee on **York PI** has opened a second branch. The new premises on **Hamilton PI** are large and airy, with such a high ceiling that even Stockbridge's **caffeine-saturated citizens** will have difficulty bumping their heads.

Lyon & Turnbull auctioned an interesting mid-19th-century lithograph last month. **Emil Schenck's** 'Edinburgh and the Surrounding Country as Seen from the Calton Hill' (229 x 27cm) features elegant Victorians, footballing boys, washerwomen, pollution belching from chimneys, and a largely undeveloped landscape north and east of **Bellevue Cres**. View the view here: [bit.ly/2SmxSBI].

Moreover ...

Spotted in the Edinburgh Bicycle Co-op's window on **Rodney St.** Never a truer word spoken.



Calton Hill, like most other eminent protrusions, is **gradually falling to bits**. 'Rockface repairs' will continue on Calton Rd between **Waverley Station and New St** until 31 July.

Local architectural purists were appalled to note the recent **aggressive stone-cleaning** carried out – with sandblasters and angle-grinders – on the facade of a townhouse on **Northumberland St (NW)**. Listed buildings consent is required for any stone cleaning of a listed building, but **wasn't sought in this case**. While stone cleaning to return to the original honeyed hues may be encouraged in **hedonistic Georgian spa towns** such as Bath, this is not the case in Edinburgh. Here, a **moody patina of soot** is preferred by heritage custodians. It will be interesting to see what action (if any) CEC takes *pour encourager les autres*.

Retrospective permission for use of **25A Rodney St** as a yoga/Pilates centre has been refused (19/05724/CLE). Despite temporary permission for 3 years having been granted in 2003. On this occasion, the Council decided the usage was not lawful within the meaning of **Section 150(1) of the Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended)** as not enough evidence had been provided. This appears to be a bureaucratic contortion which we hope can be resolved soon.

London-based developer **Kerwick Ltd** seeks planning consent for **26** new flats at **5-6 Marshall's Court** (tucked away between the Courtyard by Marriot Hotel and Greenside Row). The proposed five-storey, car-free, brick-built structure (20/00486/FUL) would reoccupy the site of a former tenement, currently a gap site used for parking [bit.ly/3824L44]. Neighbours from Blenheim Place and Greenside End fear potential noise, disturbance, displaced parking, and loss of light, privacy and views. They say the planned building is out of character and **two floors too high**. They argue that it lacks sufficient affordable housing and overdevelops an already confined space. The **deadline** for comments is **6 March**.

Those **generous new subscribers** who expected to receive paper or electronic copies of the *Spurtle* in February but didn't are politely requested to **furnish us with an address**.

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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 meeting: 7pm on Mon. 16 March, McDonald Road Library.

<https://leithcentralcc.co.uk>



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Constituency Surgeries

(no appointment necessary)

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Come along and make a difference. Next meeting:

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