

Spurtle

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

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RODNEY ST LEGION STEPS BACK FROM BRINK

A reconciliation committee will meet on 2 September to find ways of keeping open the Royal British Legion Club on Rodney Street.

Battle-lines were drawn last month when the Royal British Legion Scotland Edinburgh Central Branch (which owns the property) feared the quite separate Club (whose committee runs social events and the bar there) was financially insecure and would no longer be able to pay rent.

Central Branch demanded keys back from the Club. Facing closure, the Club Committee refused and threatened to lock themselves in.

Although the Club boasts 540 members, the number actually visiting has declined. The Club has faced increasing difficulty in meeting bills for staff, insurance, brewers, and running costs.

The Legion's National Executive, which oversees the organisation's charitable status, backed the Central Branch, citing strict legal codes which preclude charities from operating at a loss. National Chairman Dallas Roy will now host the reconciliation committee in New Haig House, Logie Green Road.

Neil Griffiths, spokesman for the National Executive, welcomed the move.

'It would be a tragedy if it were to close here,' he told *Spurtle*. 'This is the last Branch in Edinburgh, the city where the whole organisation was inaugurated by Lord Haig in 1921.'

REDBRAES MAST PLAN

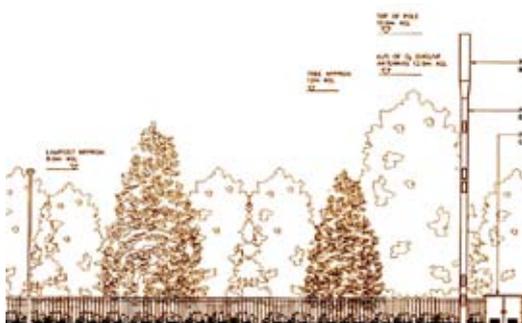
Telecom giants Vodafone and 02 have won planning permission for a tower on Broughton Road (Ref. 10/02155/FUL).

An equipment cabinet and electrical meter pillar (all grey) are also proposed for the pavement, close to the northbound bus stop opposite Rosebank Cemetery.

The tower (c.49ft), would outstrip adjacent Redbraes Park trees (average c.39ft) and lampposts (c.26ft). However, proposers say the 'simplistic and functional' structure would not damage local amenity since 'as many sensitive viewpoints as possible have been avoided and [it] will be viewed within a visual context and back drop of mature trees and existing street lighting structures'.

Online background papers stress the public cannot 'unknowingly enter areas close to the antennas where exposure may exceed the relevant guidelines ... When determining compliance the emissions from all mobile phone network operators on the site are taken into account'.

A logistics spokesman said this was one of 30+ Edinburgh joint-operator projects to provide extra capacity (in this case for 02). It would not replace antennae within Broughton St Mary's steeple, rent for which is vital to church income.



Outline consultation has been carried out with Malcolm Chisholm, MSP, Mark Lazarowicz, MP, councillors, and community council. See *Extras* (1.9.10) for links.

DANCE BASE LEAPS INTO LEITH



Photo courtesy of Dance Base

In a major addition to north Edinburgh's arts scene, Dance Base is to extend its operations from the Grassmarket and provide additional activities in Leith. It is currently refurbishing the Thomas Morton Hall, part of the Leith Theatre complex on Ferry Road, and will open for business on 26 September. See p.2 for more.

NEW JAZZ IN BELLEVUE

Broughton St Mary's Parish Church will host the first Broughton Community Jazz Festival later this month.

The Festival kicks off on Friday 10 September with a Club Night (6:00–10:00pm) split between the Mezz Bar (London St) and the Phoenix pub (Broughton St). Two fresh Edinburgh bands will perform live.

On Saturday 11 September, free jazz workshops will run in the Bellevue Crescent church from 11:00am–12:15pm. After a bring-and-share lunch, a work performance starts at 1:00pm. The Sound of 17 Big Band follows from 2:00–2:45pm, and the Drummond Community Big Band from 3:00–3:45pm. The day concludes with a set by the Edinburgh Schools Jazz Orchestra from 4:00–4:45pm. From 5:00–5:15pm there will be a final workshop performance. All events are free (but no-one will mind if you make a donation). Jazz will also feature in Broughton St Mary's Sunday service on 12 September.

Central to the event is a strong educational and community ethos promoting collaboration, inclusion, representation, participation and experience for people of all ages.

'Not only does this present us with the opportunity to act as a venue,' writes the Rev. Joanne Hood in the *Broughton Beacon*, 'it also allows us ... to become a vital part of the event itself and get involved in creating something new and exciting for the area and those who live in and around our parish'.

In a separate event, the Edinburgh Schools Orchestra will celebrate its 20th year with a local concert (*Breaking news* 28.8.10)

Briefly

Broughton St Lane's **The Sangha** seeks planning permission to change neighbouring No. 10a from a workshop/store to a **meditation centre**. CEC are thinking about it.

Lothian and Borders Police's online survey aims to discover what it's like to live, work, and be policed within **15 minutes of home**. Visit www.surveymonkey.com/s/YourPolice2010.

Well done **Concrete Wardrobe**, featured in the latest *craft&design* issue with 'Makers of the Month' Mairi Brown and Lauren Crawford.

Flood-flattened but undamaged Gormleys were re-erected in St Mark's Park and Bonnington on 13–14 Aug. (*Breaking news* 14.8.10). Restoration was free by **prior arrangement** with installers and engineers. **Pessimism pays**.

CEC's Education Committee will consider using part of Leith Walk Primary School for primary-level **Gaelic education** on 7 Sept. Tollcross PS is too small now yearly intake (c.17 when the unit opened in 1982) exceeds 43. Among many options, **Bonnington PS** could reopen as a dedicated Gaelic facility. Councillors will later consider Gaelic provision at **secondary level**.

In a **sales-centric world**, businesses take great pains to make premises as alluring as possible. Well done local solicitors **Sturrock, Armstrong & Thomson** for bucking this trend. Their window is graced by the corbie-toned observation: **DEATH IS NOT TIME BARRED**.

Plumbers take the plunge

In what should be a fillip for local businesses, two major plumbing organisations have recently moved into a new HQ at Bellevue House on Hopetoun Street.

The Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation (SNIPEF) is the national trade association with around 700 member companies. Plumbing Pensions (UK) Ltd is the trustee company of the UK-wide industry pension scheme for the plumbing and mechanical services industry. Between them they employ around 40 people.

The move, from Walker Street, had been planned for almost two years. Robert Burgon, Chief Executive of both organizations, said 'It's good to be in brand new offices in this great part of the city. 'Our staff are enjoying their surroundings and exploring the delights of Leith Walk and Broughton Street at lunchtimes.' SNIPEF and Plumbing Pensions now jointly own Bellevue House, and one floor is being advertised for lease.

Spurtle seeks 2010–11 subscribers

Spurtle is a not-for-profit organisation which keeps afloat mainly through advertisers and the efforts of unpaid volunteers. It has had a good year, with the website offering new funds, but remains vulnerable to rises in overheads or production costs, and any further downturn in the economy.

That is why the generous support of subscribers is so useful. Their £12 annual contributions (covering Oct–Oct) form an upfront lump-sum which allows staff to spend wisely in advance, and cushions temporary cashflow problems later in the year. In return, subscribers get copies delivered promptly to their door or electronically, and can bask in the glow of safeguarding Broughton's only free, independent, stirrer.

To renew your subscription, or take one out for the first time, please send cash/cheque for £12 (made out to Spurtle) to Spurtle, c/o Narcissus Flowers, 87 Broughton St, Edinburgh EH1 3RJ. Remember to include a note of your name and address. Thank you for your help.

Dance Base's leap of faith Faraway Mountain

It is a deal which suits all sides (*continued from p.1*). By expanding to the Thomas Morton Hall, Dance Base (DB) will satisfy current demand and even grow its market. City of Edinburgh Council, meanwhile, will see a depreciating and loss-making asset substantially improved, and can at last direct new monies towards innovative renewal for Leith Theatre. DB aspires to its phased reopening: stalls, first; then stage; then 3 floors of former dressing rooms converted into rentable offices.

When the new venture launches on 26 September, DB will have cleaned and redecorated the Hall, restored daylight through ceiling glass, put in new lighting, sanded and varnished a sprung floor, modernized cloakrooms, revamped the reception area, and equipped the property as an up-to-date, high-profile dance facility without compromising its historic features. Resilience Funding from the Scottish Arts Council, worth £68,000, has made this possible.

Operating initially under a 2-year licence, DB will share the Hall with new and existing community users and honour longstanding plans for socials and wedding receptions. It will also sublet as a performance area.

The idea is to start with 21 hours' evening and weekend activities per week in what is already a dance-friendly locale. (The Hall hosts the Edinburgh Ballroom Dancing Society, the Phelan School of Dance, and a Zumba dance/exercise group.) Expect an emphasis on fun, with a programme of jazz, Afro-World, ceilidh, contemporary, Cuban salsa, burlesque, ballet, belly and Bollywood styles, plus pilates. Drop-in classes cost £6.50 per hour (£5.50 concs); 11-week courses cost £61 (£49 concs). See *Breaking news* (1.9.10) for free taster sessions on 23–5 September.



The first UK exhibition by Japanese sculptor Atsuo Okomoto is on display in the Corn Exchange Gallery, Constitution Street, and in Gayfield Square Garden until 30 September.

Faraway Mountain comprises two isolated stone figures, one erect, one recumbent. Their stone is drilled with holes for light to irradiate the human forms or to be refracted by them. They seem more enigmatic and vulnerable than Gormley's river men. Are they questing arrivals rather than fixtures on the faraway mountain, or are they exiles from it pierced by memory, regret and longing?

Okomoto's contemplation of the effects of time and the elements on his works in stone and granite provokes diverse reactions. Readers' reviews are welcome.



The **Rachel Scott** bridal couture emporium at **3 Dundas St** may now paint its B-listed stonework '**stone grey**'(!?) Planning officials rejected **Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland's** claim that a railings-mounted, double-sided, **steel and glass sign** (Ref. 10/01234/LBC) would 'detract from the harmony of the streetscape ... and create the kind of **visual clutter** in which businesses become less, rather than more, visible'.

Welcome **Tailor Design** to 21 Rodney St. **Master tailor Krystian Wisniewski** offers ladies and gents bespoke tailoring of the highest standard, professional alterations, plus a 1-hr service.

Broughton St's **Villeneuve Wines** are again running monthly **tasting tutorials**. Expect excellent, unusual, uplifting, floor-dissolving **schlurps** (*Breaking news* 16.8.10).

Welcome **Piece Box**, a bright new café on the corner of **Logie Green Road** which picks up where **Caffelatte** left off.

The debatable local **crime tsunami** has taken a **new turn**. A Bellevue St garden bench was replaced at dead of night by planters (*Breaking news* 15.8.10). Victims suspect **furniture traffickers, pranksters**, or people infected by **Art**.

Broughton profile: a passion to paint

In 2001, Dick Sneddon faced retirement and some stark choices. A former drummer with heavy-metal band Bodkin, he was unlikely to settle down quietly, but what could match the thrills of his youth?

The answer came via a discarded advertising board in a skip. It was a luminous, DayGlo pink, and he was drawn irresistibly towards it. 'I had to do something with it. I had to make use somehow of that colour.'

The result was his first excursion into painting since school. It was hard going at first, but he found himself absolutely passionate about the creative process and refining his technique. 'It suited me to be ignorant. I wanted to be completely original. All this has come from inside me, nowhere else.'

By 'All this', Dick means his Dunedin Street flat, where canvases lie stacked on wardrobes, chairs, radiators and in corners. His subjects are varied, international, timeless, but usually involve people. His style is engagingly colourful, energetic, with a naivety which belies the subversive subtlety of his statements.

He works from his kitchen, each painting emerging in a controlled explosion lasting 4 to 6 weeks. A recent brush with cancer has added even more urgency to his endeavours, and a corresponding intensity of concentration. 'I don't know where the days go,' he laughs. 'Time's just flashing along.'

Dick relies on the commercial acumen of his sister Margaret, who has marketed his work on the internet [www.artdunedin.com], arranged for its sale and exhibition at the Nottingham Workshop this year and at the Glasgow Art Fair next. She is also travelling to Greenwich Connecticut specifically to publicise his portfolio there.

Dick realises breaking into the Art world won't be easy, but he's optimistic. 'You've got to start somewhere, and with Margaret on my side they don't stand a chance.' *AM*



Broughton's first parish school

When in 1825 St Mary's parishioners grew worried about local children's non-observance of the Sabbath, and inaccessible education for the poor (Issue 172), they first ran bible lessons in local houses and then began raising private subscriptions for a new purpose-built parochial school.

Fundraising began in 1827, and was incomplete when the institution opened at 33 Rodney Street in 1830 at a cost of c.£850. It was designed for free by George Smith, whose drawing of the front elevation with plan and the Reverend Henry Grey's prospectus are available for inspection in the National Archives (RHP 35291).

For 3-5/- per quarter, up to 200 local boys and girls of all classes were offered affordable education on an equal footing in Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography and Christianity. Girls could specialise in Sewing. 'Cleanliness in their persons, order in their habits, and moral propriety in their conversation and intercourse one with another shall be especially inculcated and sedulously promoted.'

The Master was encouraged to use corporal punishment only 'with reluctance', instead keeping discipline through 'encouragement and kindness, with affectionate and pointed reproof when necessary'. Since the individual concerned was sickly and inexperienced, he was employed 'on Trial' and received no pay for his first 3 months. Early Directors' minutes (CH2/139/33) make familiar reading for today's School Board members. Themes included: catchment areas, problems with WCs and heating, paying for staff and equipment, and road safety hazards.

Smith's structure lasted until 1883, when the front was replaced and enlarged. The boundary wall, gender-specific courts, and rear schoolroom (greatly altered) remain. The church sold the building in 1992 and it is now owned by the Royal British Legion (see p. 1). *AM*



Briefly

Community councils were **recently a buzz** over proposed developments along Leith Walk. Not now. **Leith Central's Planning Convenor Annette O'Carroll** says 'anything being built in Leith Walk is looking **increasingly unlikely**. Nothing is happening regarding the proposed development in Haddington Place and the empty Shrubhill House is now likely to remain in its present state for the foreseeable future'.

Cameron Guest House Group has withdrawn plans to convert offices at **34-8 York Place** into a cheap hotel (*Breaking news* 1.5.10). We expect them to reapply later.

Welcome – at long last – **Saorsa**, the new gallery on Rodney St. Artist **Tommy Fitchet's** friends told him to stop obsessing over decoration and just open before the Festival ended. He took their advice and sold **4 works on the first day** (10 Aug.). Fitchet will exhibit his own abstracts at the front of the premises and – in more ways than one – paint new ones at the back (see *Breaking news* 12.08.10).

In an unusual move, the **Osbourne Hotel** at 51-9 York Place has applied for permission to **demolish its existing extension to the rear**. (Ref. 10/02385/LBC). Can readers suggest other local projections, rear-facing or not, worthy of removal?

Edinburgh's **Open Doors Days** this year are on Sat.–Sun. 25/26 Sept.

Broughton St Mary's seek craftspeople for a craft/charity sale on 23 Oct. **Tables cost £5.00 (small) or £10 (less small)**. To book one to sell your crafts from, Tel. 557 5051.

CEC seeks views on its draft '**Management Plan for the Old and New Towns of the Edinburgh World Heritage Site**' by **31 Oct.** (see *Breaking news* 19.8.10).

Free taster sessions for adult education courses at Drummond CHS will run from 6 Sept. Guided tours for **current and prospective parents** are on 6 and 9 Sept., 2:00–3:00pm. Info. at Tel. 556 2651 or www.drummond.edin.sch.uk.

The **Edinburgh autumn holiday** for state schools is on Mon. 20 Sept.

A new exhibition at the **Union Gallery on Broughton Street** opens on Fri. 10 Sept. 'Ella Novo Loco' will be a collection of new 'moody' paintings by **Derek McGuire**. See *Breaking news* 1.9.10.

Drummond CHS pupils who help out in Leith care homes for older people have noticed a **dire shortage of coat hangers**. Please bring unwanted spares to the school office.

Parents and primary school pupils are invited to Leith Links for the **Active Schools Family Day** on Fri. 4 Sept., 1–4pm. **Try cricket, cycling, rugby, golf, BMXing** and much more, for free.

Moreover ...



In Aug., **Hollywood actress Anne Hathaway** shot Edinburgh scenes for her latest film *One Day*. In David Nicholls's 2009 bestselling **rom/com cum weepie** of the same name, lead-male Dexter Mayhew's flat is at **35 Fettes Row** (p. 430) and so in **Greater Spurtleshire**. Annoyingly, filmmakers set it in **Moray Place**. Worse, there is no 35 Fettes Row, unless one counts Centrum House. One way or another, **we wuz robbed**.

Some 28 locals **hauled dozens of cones and barriers** from the river around Canonmills on 11 Aug. They were helping **Water of Leith Conservation Trust** volunteers **cut back path edges** along Rocheid Path and Brandon Terrace, **tackle** vegetation in Stockbridge, and **pull out the invasive policeman's helmet**.

Rodney St-based **Ravenstone Development** has been granted planning permission to convert offices at A-listed **20 York Place** into **4 flats** (Ref. 09/03349/FUL). They will pay £7K towards the City Car Club. **Historic Scotland** was **'very concerned'** at theft of some **historic chimney-pieces**. It demanded better security and an investigation.

The mysterious **'Mester Grønn'** plan a parade on **12 Sept. (7:30–8:00pm)** from the Royal Mile's Raddison SAS Hotel to Mansfield Place via North Bridge, Leith and Broughton Sts. *Spurtle* is **reliably** informed it will involve either **Norwegian florists** or **Norwegian marching bands** or **both** or **neither**.

Influential campaign group **Greener Leith** will hold its AGM at 7:30–9:00pm on Tues. 14 Sept. in the Community Centre, Kirkgate.

You wait months for a plumber ...



then 40 of them come at once

SHIRLEY-ANNE SOMERVILLE
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SURGERY TIMES:

- Every Monday 10.00–12.00pm at the Scottish Parliament
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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

Next meetings:

6 Sep. & 4 Oct.
at 7.30pm

Drummond Community
High School (Library).

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