

Spurtle

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

**August
2009**

No 173

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TRAFFIC PROBLEMS LOOM

Broughton faces a period of major disruption this autumn due to preparations for the trams. Essential reorganisation of underground infrastructure will affect junctions along Leith Walk and York Place, and rerouting of traffic along formerly quiet residential streets.

Traffic at the junction of Annandale Street and Leith Walk is already reduced to one lane moving east. Diverted vehicles are using McDonald Rd and Hopetoun Crescent. Nearby residents suggest break-up of the setts there, particularly around drains, is a direct consequence.

The junction of East London and Broughton Streets has been temporarily reconfigured to create 2 lanes for diverted traffic travelling west. Some end-on parking has been lost.

Traffic will also divert via Albany, Abercromby and Dundas Streets. Buses in particular will need extra turning-space to turn downhill from Albany Street towards Canonmills, hence the temporary removal of the pedestrian refuge near the top of Broughton Street.

Laing's sculpture of Sherlock Holmes has left Picardy Place, entering storage during construction of a new tram-stop. It will be returned in due course to an as yet unspecified location close by (hopefully not at the Foot of Leith Walk).

The timetable for diversions is 'flexible' at present, since start and finish dates have not been finalised. A CEC spokesman promised TIE will hold briefings for local community groups prior to any further work at these locations, as well as publicising diversions.

TUNNEL PLANS MOVE A STEP CLOSER

The youth shelter in Scotland St Tunnel (first described in Issue 161) could be in place by early next year, writes Judy Conn, Secretary of King George V and Scotland Yard Parks. In addition to the funds reported last month, a most generous local resident (who wishes to remain anonymous), Edinburgh World Heritage (£5,000) and Spurtle have made contributions.

The shelter (first of 3 phases) will give new life to a derelict piece of our industrial heritage and show young people they deserve better than wasteland as a meeting place.

Phase 2 could see the creation of a controlled space stretching some 30 feet into the tunnel with lighting and seating: a venue for young people's events. Phase 3 could involve upgrading the run-down eastern section of King George V Park: levelling uneven ground, possibly setting up a 5-a-side football pitch, and remodelling slopes to provide stepped sitting space and the potential for staged performances.

FANCY HATS TURN HEADS



Fenella Hodgson's head-dress won first prize when the Barony Community Garden opened on 12 July. It had taken 2–3 weeks to make and complemented a gown which her seamstress friend worked on for 3 months. Full story page 2.

RODNEY STREET DEATH CONCERNS

The death of a Rodney Street resident made local and national headlines in July because her body had lain undiscovered for five years.

Isabella Purves lived in the top-floor flat from 2001 onwards, and was remembered in her mid-80s as a cheerful and independent figure who passed at a distance. She was latterly thought to have moved away.

Her 'disappearance' was widely reported as proof of an uncaring society in which family obligations are ignored, neighbours no longer talk, and the frail must fend for themselves. It's still too early to explain this particular case, but the *Daily Mail*'s view of EH7 does not match the *Spurtle*'s.

One of Broughton's charms is its comparatively strong sense of identity and dense social ties. However, many choose to move here precisely because the area's populous variety also makes possible freedom from the (not always benign or welcome) attention of family and neighbours. Whilst we would deplore any lonely, anxious, painful or untimely death, it's worth recalling that the elderly, just as the young, are entitled to privacy.

Sections of the media ignorant about Broughton, with an appetite for trite sermonising, a simultaneous willingness (as in the case of the *Evening News*) to push a camera through the letterbox of the deceased in search of grisly images, lack moral authority.

Briefly

For those of you who haven't yet seen Persephone Belle's recommendations (page 4) or the Fringe Festival programme, here's a rundown of local venues hosting shows. Details of times, tickets, locations can also be found at [www.edfringe.com].

The Phoenix Bar is hosting comedy shows *Cnuty and Western*, *Get-Up Stand-Up*, *Oscar Wilde*, *The Men of the Hour*, and *Short Circuit Comedy Presents!* Round at **Holly's House** at 22a Albany Street, Holly Burn presents the surreal and hilarious *At Home With Holly*. More chuckles galore can be found at **The Stand Comedy Club**, which has various comedy acts and a drama production – *Gagarin's Way*. **The Club Class Comedy Bus** is also making its annual trip to the 'Burgh and can be boarded outside **Omni** – but you have to pay, your LRT bus pass is not accepted! For 'off the telly' acts, pay big spondoolicks to see **Dylan Moran**, **Jerry Sadowitz**, and **Ricky Gervais** at **The Edinburgh Playhouse**.

The Outhouse is hosting **Barbara Morrison** in her show *Up Close and Personal*, and for something spiritual, **St Mary's Cathedral** is putting on free lunchtime concerts, featuring *Latin Choral Vespers*, *Libera*, and its mighty organ. **Valvona and Crolla** are also cranking up the tempo with music shows *Aint That A Kick in the Head*, *David Vernon and Dick Lee*, *In the Footsteps of Clarinda*, *Toasting the Lassies*, and *Guitar Fiesta!*

Finally, there's theatre for the weans at **Valvona and Crolla**, with *Hamish's Homecoming*, and *It Was A Dark and Stormy Night*. **The Edinburgh Printmakers** is also hosting an exhibition by **Peter Blake**, handily combined with the **14th Edinburgh Festival Record Fair**, and **Mansfield Traquair Church** will be open to show our fabulous **Phoebe Anna Traquair** murals. Enjoy!

'Confident Leavers' seek opportunities

Drummond CHS offers senior students a brand-new course in Session 2009–10 to develop confident school-leavers. Each student will work with a professional coach to identify career goals based on their passions and strengths. They will then choose 3 different work placements (each of about 6 weeks for half a day per week). Drummond is building a network of businesses and organizations to offer these meaningful work-based placements. The school seeks strong partnerships with local firms, and expects media interest in the scheme to benefit participating enterprises. To discuss the initiative, contact Mandy Toogood or Rachel Hamilton at: Tel. 556 2651 [email: Mandy.toogood@drummond.edin.sch.uk].

Broughton welcomes new green heart

The dubious joy of British garden parties depends on the weather. In the event, the grand opening of the Barony Community Garden (12 July) was visited by only one passing cloud, and the scene was mostly bathed in sunshine as befitting this happy occasion. Around 150 people attended.

Lord Provost George Grubb declared the garden open, complimenting the individuals and groups whose vision, years of hard work and generosity brought the project to fruition.

Of the garden features, the raised bed of herbs with slate and drystone dyking from the Borders was especially admired. State-of-the-art play installations were enthusiastically baptised by children. Local organisations – including Broughton History Society, the NTBCC and Broughton Bookshop – offered their wares.

Inventive hats were the order of the day. It was not Ascot; it was better. This year's Beltane May Queen (see page 1) and a piper led to judgement a parade which included Malcolm Chisholm MSP, a bashful **Spurtle** representative and others. It was a day when the meanings of community and Jock Tampson's bairns were truly defined and celebrated.

Flowers raise eyebrows in Mansfield Place

Locals have been pondering a bright-red floral erection at the Mansfield Place roundabout. Raised in early July, some think it resembles a penguin, others a giant bell, a half-sucked pear-drop, Marj Simpson in a wedding dress, a pregnant anteater, or a rabbit pushing a wheelbarrow.

Spurtle can exclusively reveal that CEC Parks have been carefully preparing a route between Princes St Gardens and the Botanics in readiness for a 2-hour inspection by Britain in Bloom judges on 3 August. Following the Year of Homecoming theme, their Mansfield Place creation depicts a whisky still. Red non-stop Begonias are the flames; pink Busy Lizzies in the middle will apparently soon turn copper-coloured; brown blooms represent whisky; and barley-coloured flowers nearby suggest the all-important ingredient.

Other beauty-spots on the itinerary include the Water of Leith, Drummond Garden (Drummond Place), and Hopetoun Crescent Garden. Edinburgh won the Best City category of the Wright Sustainable City Award in 2008. It is now committed to the Britain in Bloom competition for the next 3 years.

Locals defend children's right to play

On 8 July, residents of Melgund Terrace and Bellevue and E. Claremont Sts received a CEC letter threatening police action if local children continued to play in each other's gardens. The letter followed complaints about damage and disruption.

At a later meeting, John Mainland, Community Safety Officer of North Edinburgh Neighbourhood Partnership – dubbed 'the Grinch who stole Summer' – sought to explain the situation and his response. He could not identify or number the complainants, specify the damage (its location, nature, cost-to-repair, date of occurrence, perpetrator), or quantify the disruption. A victim of his own system, he was 'obliged' to intervene after receiving 2 or more objections.

Over 30 locals voiced annoyance at CEC interference, Mainland's heavy-handed and ill-informed letter, the 'pathologising and criminalisation' of children's play. They defended the area as a very good model of community behaviour, and were happy to cooperate in any mediation. PC Daley, who also attended, recommended mutual consideration, and said that as things stood there was no chance whatsoever of prosecutions.

This summer storm in a teacup should have been resolved by a request to kids, or a word to parents. There's no need for bureaucrats in back-greens.

Snores for a cause at Drummond CHS

On the night of 25 June, Drummond CHS's floors were littered with sleeping students snoring harmoniously. *Annie Scanlon explains*. It was the Drummond/Muthambi Sleepover: a fundraising event to help our partner school in Kenya raise funds for a new dormitory.

Although Kenyan education is free, most secondary schools are boarding, with residence costs paid by parents. In April 2009 one of Muthambi's dormitories burned down. Nobody was injured, but building, furnishings and possessions were lost. For now the boys are sleeping in the dining hall.

Rebuilding will cost £40K. To raise funds, Head Teacher Mr Murungi held a *harambee* on 11 July. *Harambees* are traditional fundraisers in Kenya, involving parents and local businesses pledging money. To help, 20 Drummond S6 students and 5 staff were sponsored to spend one (as opposed to every) night sleeping on the floor in Edinburgh before heading off for Sports Day next morning. A meal, games, scary films and ghost stories were shared throughout the evening and an enjoyable night was spent listening to the creaking building (or was that the bloodcurdling scream of a student bricked up for forgetting his homework?). £600 has been raised so far.

To help or learn more about Drummond's Kenyan links, Tel. 556 2651.

Profile: William Smith, bookseller

Aged 15, while employed there as a Saturday boy, William Anthony Smith discovered the treasure-cave of Thin's second-hand book basement. So started a lifelong passion. Nowadays he runs Second Edition, which specialises in 'all sorts of books, so long as they're good of their kind'. His descriptions of them in the window – expert, topical, sometimes cantankerous, always entertaining – are popular well beyond Canonmills.

Smith was born in Edinburgh in 1929 and, after Heriot's and National Service (as a 'not naturally gifted' RAF radar wireless mechanic), joined the Ministry of National Insurance, then the Treasury and the United Nations. He worked in London, Central America and Iran, teaching about management organisation and methods, writing and editing books on the subject in Spanish. But he considered the UN corrupt and self-serving, and gladly rejoined the Treasury. He retired as Scottish Office Director of Training in 1986.

In 1961 he had married Maureen ('more a fusion of 2 book collections') who, having managed Oxfam's first outlet in Stockbridge, later established Second Edition on Howard St. 'I don't know how, but I gently moved her out of the way.' While the shop now houses around 17,000 volumes (with at least 20,000 'self-dusting' books at home), Smith admires their quality not quantity. For pleasure he reads American fiction of the 1930s–50s, and shares with customers the jazz, swing and big band music of the 1940s–60s.

Business is slow at present – a mixture of recession and changing purchase habits – and Smith misses the regular custom of Botanics-bound tourists. However, he remains philosophical, proud that one of his 4 children is now the biggest online seller of second-hand books in Scotland. *AM*

Nooks and crannies: a petrified forest in London Street

A surreptitious pleasure of ambles in the New Town is glancing at basement areas and discovering their inventive gardens and artworks, which range from the lush and exotic to the minimalist and arcane. In London St we are cheered in one by the sight of the most exuberant sunflowers, in another by a delightful bat's house on a wall.

Outside No. 18, many are intrigued by what appear to be rusty poles. In fact they form a serious and remarkable artwork by Andrea Geile which was commissioned by the owners. Geile, of German origin but now married to a Scot and living locally, is a specialist in art for gardens. She uses complex stone or metal materials to create organic forms.

This piece relates to a petrified forest with aerial roots, or truncated lianas. The components were iron poles, welded together on site and painted

with salt water to hasten corrosion. The poles/trees, frozen in time, are indented with bullet-hole pinpoints of multicoloured gloss paint – suggestive of potential buds or some memory of survival.

Existing beside flourishing plants, here in seeming plenty is a stark and poignant symbol of what is being lost in the increasing effacement of the planet's rainforests. Think of this, dear reader, as you pass No. 18's 'rusty poles' in the rain. *JRM*



Briefly

2,000+ homes and businesses lost gas when a burst water main in Thistle St flooded gas pipes downhill in the New Town, Stockbridge and Canonmills. By 23 July, Scottish Gas had pumped out 115,000 litres of water, but 1,400 homes still awaited reconnection. **Helpline: 0845 070 1432.**

Turley Associates' **Haddington Place hotel** proposal will be on the agenda at New Town & Broughton Community Council's meeting: 7.30pm, 3 Aug., **Cathedral House, 63 York Place**. All welcome.

And relax ... **schools resume** for the Autumn term on 19 Aug.

Welcome home Pani Solińska, the much-loved Broughton St sign. She disappeared from outside the restaurant of the same name on 29 Nov. 2008 in mysterious circumstances alleged to have involved **male undergraduates and alcohol**. Despite extensive press coverage (Issue 166), CCTV footage of the thieves, threats of police involvement, offers of amnesty, and appeals to the culprits' better nature, she was not seen again until 30 June when she reappeared in a nearby skip. She has now been reunited with friends and railings.

Detail of the revised (26 July) **No. 8 bus timetable** are at [<http://lothianbuses.com/news/?changes-to-your-buses-from-sunday-26-july-2009-66.html>].

Netting over a Cockburn St tenement features a to-scale photograph of the building beneath and, in a 2nd-storey window, a **ghostly figure, smiling**. The haunter is Bellevue Area Residents Association Chairman Robin Lippett, who runs the company responsible for the netting.

For an in-depth account of Scotland St Tunnel's past and present, go to [www.subbrit.org.uk]. This is the website of Subterranea Britannica, a **goldmine** of information on all spaces underground, from dene holes to dug-outs, souterrains to subways.

On 8 July CEC granted the **Fitzpatrick Design Collection** permission to renew planning consent first granted in 2003 for a proposal at 1–5 Baxter's Place (Issues 168, 171). Revival of the old, more modest plan reflects business pessimism and scarce credit.

When the garden in west **Barony Street** was relandscaped in February (Issue 168), a plaque commemorating the '**soldier's tree**' (Issue 124) was removed. Enquiries by residents and Broughton History Society have brought various reassurances, but no action. Recent **Spurtle** researches got no further than unstaffed CEC switchboards and absent holidaymaking staff. Watch this space.

Belle's View

Hi fans

Gaaaah! It's The Festival! What's for free Fringe-y-fun in the cultural epicentre of swinging Broughton?

Step back in time! Drama production **Radio Star** is a glamorous 1940s-style radio one-woman detective spoof by New York comedienne **Tanya O'Debara**, with stirring Big-Apple music by **Andrew Mauriello**. 1940s dressing-up optional. **Café Renroc, Montgomery Street 23–30 Aug, 17.00 and 20.55 (1 hr)**. [www.tanyaodebra.com]

Are We There Yet? by **Opera Larks and David Barnard** is a Musical Comedy starring singers **Donna Wannabe** (Diana Sharp) and **Katherine Withakay** (Dawn Foxall), who take a titanic trip to twinkly Las Vegas for their big break. But an Atlantic storm diverts them just about everywhere as they cross the globe, with music from *Carmen* and the British Airways telly advert (Delibes's famous 'Flower Duet') to **James Bond** – (surely shome mistake there!) **Edinburgh City Football Club, 7 Baxter's Place, 23–30 Aug, 21:50 (50 mins)**.

Scary! The Mildly Terrible Revenge of the Slightly Evil Brainwashing Puppets by **PlopLump Productions** is a puppet show with a twist – the toys take control! The puppets are fed up of being made to do stupid dances, and so they've worked out a way of controlling their human. Things are going to get messy – with games, prizes and some very cheeky puppets. **The Newsroom, 5–11 Leith Street, 8–16, 22–23, 29–30 Aug, 11:15 (1 hr, suitable for ages 5–9)**. [www.poplump.co.uk]

All shows above are part of the **Edinburgh Free Festival**. For full details and more shows see [www.laughinghorsecomedy.co.uk/freefestival/edinburgh.htm].

Till next time!

Persephone Belle

Broughton tramworks chaos ...



All over by Christmas?

Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Lothians



Surgery Times:

Fridays 9.30–11.30am

at the Scottish Parliament

Other times by arrangement

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Saturday surgeries:

9am Leith Library

10.30am Royston/Wardieburn

Community Centre

12pm Stockbridge Library

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Friday advice sessions:

4.00pm Stockbridge Library,

42 Hamilton Place

5.00pm Ainslie Park Leisure Centre

6.00pm Constituency Office

New Town/Broughton Community Council

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

Next meetings on:

3 Aug. at 7.30pm

Cathedral House, 63 York Place
&

7 Sep. at 7.00pm

Drummond Community High School

mowats@blueyonder.co.uk

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Printed by DupliQuick, 22A Great King Street, Edinburgh EH3 6QH