

Spurtle



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**December
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No 247

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

AMBER LIGHT FOR TRAMS TO NEWHAVEN

Councillors last month voted in principle to run trams as far as Newhaven. But any decision to proceed must wait until at least mid-December, pending a further review of the business case (see website 19.11.15).

Under particular scrutiny will be the likely impact of withdrawing some £20 million from Lothian Buses as 'an extraordinary dividend'.

Opponents and supporters of the 3-mile extension, costing at least £147 million, will unite in dreading renewed disruption along Leith Walk. There is concern also at the combined effects of tramwork and St James Quarter demolition/construction.

With this in mind, November's motion – put forward by the Capital Coalition (Labour and SNP) noted that 'there are outputs within the proposed "Stage One" which may be prudent to undertake now, in order to avoid unnecessary disruption during a future tram extension. These would include the Leith enabling works, and therefore requests that options on taking forward these actions will now subsequently be reported to the next meeting of Council in December. Works already undertaken to "tram proof" the Leith Walk improvement programme should also be detailed, including specifying previously agreed Council expenditure, to avoid duplication of cost.'



COUNCIL RAPPED FOR POOR PLANNING PRACTICE

Planning officials were criticised last month for the way they mishandled an application in Broughton.

Many locals are dissatisfied with how City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) dealt with proposals for a garage in Scotland Street Lane East which began in April 2012 (see our website 28.5.13; 7.9.15).

One resident has subsequently raised issues with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), and learned in November that the SPSO has upheld each of his three complaints that CEC:

1. Unreasonably failed to provide the public with relevant information on a planning application;
2. Unreasonably failed to consider relevant objections to an application (the excessive height at the rear of the building);
3. Unreasonably failed to pursue enforcement to have the building removed.

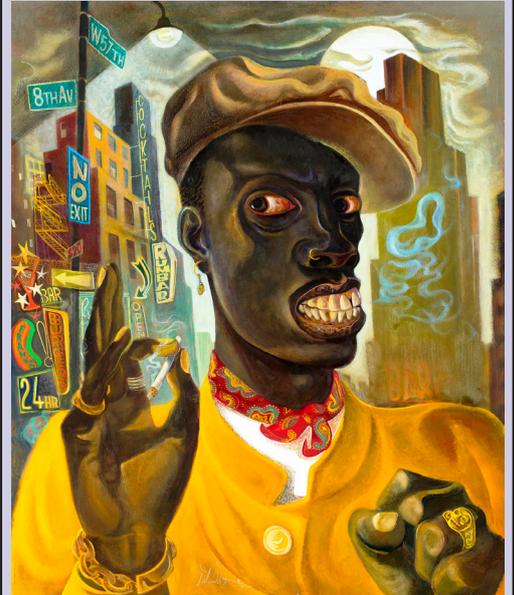
Regarding Complaint 1, the SPSO recommends CEC take greater care in conservation areas over the standard of submissions (even in 'backlands' like this) and be more systematic, using a structured site visit report.

Regarding Complaint 2, the SPSO advised CEC to consider whether it should pursue a section 71 discontinuance or alteration order.

Regarding Complaint 3, the SPSO recommended CEC consider her adviser's remarks about unreasonable delay in acting decisively on Enforcement in May 2014 and its effect on public confidence.

In each case, CEC is to report back to the SPSO on any action taken.

GOOD CAUSE TO SMILE



This brilliant New York-inspired portrait – 'West of Eighth Avenue' – has been donated by its painter, John Byrne, to raise money for The Teapot Trust. It will be sold at Lyon & Turnbull's Scottish Paintings & Sculpture auction on 10 December, and is estimated to fetch £6,000–£8,000. The charity provides professional art therapy in medical settings for children suffering long-term illness. See [<http://goo.gl/4mRYwP>].

BROUGHTON STREET READY TO RUMBLE?

Leith Central and New Town & Broughton Community Councillors suspect that some of the demolition and construction traffic for the new St James Quarter may end up passing along Broughton Street and Canonmills en route to Ferry Road and then Leith.



This impression follows an exhibition in late October at which TH Real Estate outlined the timetable and logistics of the development. *Spurtle* also attended the meeting but understood the traffic – allegedly no greater in volume than that which currently accesses the John Lewis and St James Centre car parks – was to be directed along Leith Walk and Dundas Street.

Subsequent enquires now reveal that no such decisions have been made and that meetings to discuss the subject have not even begun.

Demolition is due to begin in 2016, and construction in 2017. Development is scheduled for completion in 2020. For further details, see our website (30.10.15).

Briefly

This is the last paper *Spurtle* for 2015. Our **next printed issue** will appear in Feb 2016. Between now and then, follow all the *Breaking news* on our website at [<http://bit.ly/99jeuR>]. Until we print again, we wish all our readers a very merry Christmas and hilarious Hogmanay.

City of Edinburgh Council's **financial plans for 2016/17** were delayed this year to take account of the **UK Spending Review** on 25 Nov. The draft budget is now expected in Jan (about 3 months later than usual), leaving less time for **public scrutiny and approval** before the new financial year on 1 Apr.

At long last! Thirteen years after its creation, Multrees Walk will host a *useful* shop. **Boots** is to open soon on the corner with Elder Street.

CEC took back management of recycling from private contractors on 27 Nov. It is **ardently hoped** that this, together with the roll-out of **new bin lorries**, will improve currently inadequate local waste collection.

Permission has been granted to convert **2 floors of offices** within 3 former terraced houses at **19 York Place** into 1 two-bedroom and 10 one-bedroom flats (Ref. 15/04271/FUL).

Aside from its glittering Christmas ball on 7 Dec, the next meeting of the **Broughton History Society** will be on 11 Jan in Drummond CHS when **Sutherland Forsyth** will discourse on 'The Botanic Cottage Reborn'.

The **Blue Bear** on Brandon Terrace has joined Broughton's swelling ranks of gallery-cafés. In a rolling exhibition, it will feature the work of **9 local artists** over the next 6 months.

In answer to a question from **Cllr Alasdair Shields (Lib-Dem)** at the full Council meeting on 19 Nov, **Council Leader Andrew Burns** promised to press police commanders to resume providing community councils with **written reports on local crime statistics**. Intermittent, inconsistent and/or irrelevant crime statistics have irritated community councils across the city since the advent of **Police Scotland** in 2013.

Reader **John Macpherson Keith** responded to last month's coverage of the RBS site (see above) as follows: 'Can I humbly suggest a campaign to emulate Giggs/Neville and turn this into a refugee sanctuary for the winter? Just think: kitchens / bathrooms in the basement, chill-out and interface with public and possible employers on the ground floor, relax on the second floor and bedrooms on the top floors (with toilet facilities). We could give refugees a proper start here so that they can quickly start to contribute to our society. What planet am I on? Quick answer: it's nice here.'

First lottery for local primary

Broughton Primary School's first weekly lottery will start in December, raising money for extra child resources, improving the school environment (especially the playground) and extra-curricular activities.

Anyone can join, and from £3 per week for 3 tickets they are entered into a school-specific draw (prize money dictated by the number of supporters), and also a weekly national draw to win £25,000.

'Forty per cent of all ticket sales goes directly to BPS,' says Nicola Clark-Tonberg (Chair of the BPS Parent-Staff Association), 'so if we can secure the minimum number of 50 supporters by the first draw on 12 December we can raise over £1,000 per year.'

If you're aged over 16 and want to take part, search for 'Broughton' here: [<http://goo.gl/wmZUU4>]. Good luck!

Balancing students and the wider community

Leith Central Community Council backs a CEC proposal to make new, larger student housing developments include at least 50 per cent (by floor area) general housing for the wider public.

The intention is to foster socially balanced communities away from university campuses, although it is not clear to *Spurtle* whether a compulsory element of affordable housing forms part of the plan.

In response to other elements of the consultation, that ran last month, LCCC felt the Council should not give preferential treatment to student developments, particularly when the lower level of facilities in them means they cannot be converted to general use at a later stage.

LCCC wants a more sophisticated and up-to-date way to calculate the number of students in an area (Council Tax exemptions), and feels universities (not the local authority) should take the lead role in providing affordable accommodation for them.



Farewell to an old friend

One of Broughton's last pre-19th-century buildings is to be knocked down for housing.

Despite 77 letters of objection, planners consented the development at 5 Warriston Road last month (Ref. 14/02315/FUL). Eleven new flats on 3 storeys will replace what was once a country cottage and more recently a pottery and photographic studio.

Planners recognised that the building was a rare example of its kind and of local historical interest, but noted that it was not listed by Historic Environment Scotland. The New Town & Broughton Community Council made no comment.

News of the decision provoked outrage among those who felt the planning system had obeyed the letter of the law but failed to take account of popular feeling (see our website 17.11.15).



City invests in safer HGVs

City of Edinburgh Council has begun to equip all its new vehicles weighing over 7.5 tons with 'Cyclecar' cycle safety technology.

The upgraded HGVs will warn approaching traffic with an illuminated sign, and alert cyclists with an audible message. Drivers will also receive warnings about undertaking cyclists, and benefit from 360° video coverage.

CEC's bin lorries will be the first to use the system, with around 20 new vehicles in place by spring 2016.

Lynda Miles – mother of the cyclist Craig Newton who was crushed to death by a bin lorry at Broughton Point in April 2011 – told *Spurtle* 'It's not before time these lorries are being fitted with life-saving equipment.'

'My beloved boy would still be alive today if this had been done sooner. ... Shame on Edinburgh Council for taking so long to get this done, but thank God many lives will be saved.'



Two Wojteks spotted in Broughton

Reader Krzysztof Jan Chuchra contacted us last month to voice his opinion that the spreadeagled animal image on Paolozzi's outstretched hand in Picardy Place may refer to Wojtek, the celebrated Polish army bear.

'It is very likely that Paolozzi was familiar with the Wojtek story and he would have appreciated the Monte Cassino and Edinburgh connection,' replies John Ross Maclean, author of two articles on the sculptures in Issues 245/246. 'It would also support the contention that the group represents, at least in part, a war memorial.

'What a happy chance that the capital is now endowed with two of the most remarkable sculpted memorials to a desperate conflict which finally secured Paolozzi's beloved Rome from enemy occupation in May 1944. We may be sure that Edouardo would have rejoiced in an equally child-friendly sculpture not far furth of Picardy Place.'

Broughton photographer Paul Henni captured Wojtek and human companion travelling up Dundas Street on 3 November. Alan Beattie Herriot's bronze was en route to West Princes Street Gardens, where it was officially unveiled four days later amid much hullabaloo.

Locals first saw a maquette of the statue back in November 2008, when it appeared as part of a service of remembrance held in Redbraes (Issue 165).



Look out for: The Robin

These resilient residents are highly aggressive to each other and will battle ferociously over territory – anything small and orange is likely to cause a fight! Highly effective predators on invertebrates and even small fish, Robins long ago learned that large clumsy mammals (particularly pigs) would do all the hard work exposing food, and took to following them. Hence, the modern gardener often finds a confident and charming companion showing a keen interest in what turns up under the spade.

How to see them: Robins are one of our commonest birds, the name 'Robin Redbreast' apparently predating a distinct term for orange as a colour! Numbers are also increased in winter by northern migrants, so Robins are easy to see. They regularly visit gardens and will eat fruit and seeds, although they are particularly keen on meal worms and other protein-based foods (try a little pet food). Robins are also one of our few species to sing through the winter, and their thin haunting songs can be heard on the coldest of days.

Also look out for: A Hooded Crow. This grey waistcoated version of the Carrion (Common) Crow is normally restricted to the northern Highlands, but one has been seen strutting about on the grass at Claremont Crescent. This may be a rare visitor from up north or perhaps more likely a hybrid as it lacks the clearly defined grey plumage.

— Miles Forde



'Furious' bad driver jailed

From the Caledonian Mercury, June 1776: Last night, was committed to the tolbooth, by warrant of the sherriff, Robert Robertson ostler, and servant to a stabler in St Mary wynd, accused of riding on a stone-horse in a furious manner, backwards and forwards, through the village of Canonmills, where a considerable number of children were diverting themselves on the side of the highway opposite to their parents doors. When Robertson was challenged for so doing by one of the inhabitants, he had the insolence to strike him several blows over the head with the butt-end of his whip, by which he was much cut and bruised.

Going ... going ... gong?

Botanic Cottage – dismantled and removed from Leith Walk, then rebuilt and restored in the Royal Botanic Garden – has been nominated for a UK-wide heritage award.

It will now be judged in the 'Best Restoration of a Georgian Landscape or Garden' category of the Architectural Awards, run by the influential Georgian Group. The decision will be announced in London on 16 December.

'The shortlisting is a real testament to both the inspirational nature of the project and the wonderful way that it has been rebuilt,' says RBGE's Sutherland Forsyth. 'Whilst of course we might not win, it is genuinely just lovely to be nominated.'

Botanic Cottage is expected to open to the public later this year, with a more ceremonial launch in spring 2016.

Briefly

The **Cameron Guesthouse Group** seeks planning consent to convert Class 4 office space at A-listed **4B Gayfield Place** into **5 residential units** (Refs 15/05009/FUL 15/05010/LBC). For **Historic Scotland's account** of this distinctive building and its special interest, visit [<http://goo.gl/X5f0N4>].

Spurtle will report CEC's **Development Management Subcommittee meeting** on 17 Dec – concerning hotel plans for the **old Royal High School** – live online and via social media. Until then, see our website (10.11.15) for the **musical alternative**.

GVA Grimley hosted a PAN public drop-in consultation at St Mary's Parish Church on 26 Nov to discuss development options for **RBS land and buildings on Dundas St, Fettes Row, Royal Cres and Eyre Ter** (see Issue 246). A further PAN consultation will be held at a **date to be confirmed**. At this stage, RBS envisages residential and mixed use development, including: class 1 (shops), class 2 (financial professional and other services), class 3 (food and drink) class 4 (business), Hotel class 7 and/or Care Home class 8 and ancillary works.

London-based **Rockspring UK Value 2 Tanfield (Luxembourg) Sarl** has been given the go-ahead to replace globe lights with ridiculous tutti-frutti '**decorative capitals**' on 2 stone gateposts outside Tanfield House (Ref. 15/04365/FUL). Officials said they would preserve or enhance the character of the **Inverleith Conservation Area**, whereas *Spurtle* thought they were frivolous excrescences (see our website 13.10.15). **No community council expressed an opinion.**

Välkommen och Hälsningar Seasons! Offerings from the new **Broughton St restaurant** at No. 36 (formerly the Blue Moon Café and Bangkok Bar) will include authentic Swedish cuisine.

In other food-related news, a **New Chapter** has refurbished the premises and overhauled the menu at 18 Eyre Pl. To paraphrase, emphasis is on **Scottish/modern European foods with a twist**, using the freshest of local ingredients, served in an **easy-going atmosphere at sensible prices**. The restaurant also boasts 2 private dining rooms for parties of up to 13 and 18.

Not everyone was convinced by every aspect of the new plans for **St Mary's Music School**. A reader contacted us saying, 'I think several of us wondered if the doocot pods for supervised individual rehearsal space were in fact a charming nod by the architect to Robert Adam's nearby but now-demolished Bridewell prison and its Panopticon cell block'.

A **Lidl** is scheduled to open in Dec at the Tesco end of Logie Green Rd, adding Broughton to its growing portfolio of over **10k discount supermarkets** across Europe.

Moreover ...

Campaigners at Spokes have given a qualified welcome to outline plans for an **east-west bicycle route** across the city centre (see our website 23.10.15). Among other findings, they like the segregated link from **Waterloo Place to St Andrew Square**, but also want a high-quality Bridges connection. Spokes further recommends a Leith Street–St Andrew Square link via James Craig Walk through the new **St James Quarter**. ‘This would partially redeem the Council’s adamant refusal of cycle facilities at the top of Leith St (due to the junction).’ Feedback from the **George Street consultation** earlier this year apparently showed strong support for segregated one-way cycle lanes on either side of that road. Spokes also aspires to a segregated east–west cycle route along **Princes Street**, but does not expect to see it ‘until the Council has sufficient courage to make at least one side traffic free’. More at [<http://goo.gl/szxtpD>].

Survey activity in the car park on **Broughton St Lane** suggests building of 11 residential units may begin here in the new year (see our website 3.11.15).

A concert to raise money for **Syrian refugees** will be held in Stockbridge Parish Church (Saxe Coburg St) from 5pm on 12 Dec. **Entry by donation**. Steven Osborne and Ryan Quigley will perform.

Edinburgh state schools **break up** on 22 Dec and **resume** on 7 Jan.

Spurtle’s online piece about Underbelly’s **removal of railings** at E. Princes St Gardens (**effected before seeking planning permission**) received the critical response we have come to expect. In short, some dismissed the piece as **esoteric miserabilism** from a snooty, inflexible and backward-looking minority. We were **out of touch**, they said, with ordinary people’s sense of festive fun, and overlooked the **huge economic benefit** of ‘Edinburgh’s Christmas’ to the capital. However, there was lively support for *Spurtle*’s coverage, too. We suspect concerns about CEC’s willingness and ability to **protect the city’s built heritage** are more widespread than some would have us believe. So far, 69,000+ people have followed the story on Facebook alone. See our website on 18.11.15.

STOP PRESS! Opening of the new **Lidl** on **Logie Green Rd** has been pushed back from Dec 2015 to the end of Feb 2016, ‘but that may change’.

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Every Monday 6.30pm

I also offer appointments
at community venues
around the constituency
if that is more
convenient. Please call
to arrange.



Alison Johnstone MSP for Lothian Region



On the 1st and 3rd 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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Deidre Brock MP Edinburgh North and Leith



Regular Surgeries

Leith: 4 Dec, 22 Jan

1–2pm, 166 Great Junction Street

Leith Walk: 11 Dec, 8 Jan

3.30–4.30pm, McDonald Rd Library

Pilton: 18 Dec, 29 Jan, 4–5pm,
Royston/Wardieburn Comm. Centre

Stockbridge: 15 Jan, 3.45–4.45pm

Stockbridge Library

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New Town/Broughton Community Council

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

Next Meeting:

14 December

at 7.30pm

**Broughton St Mary’s Parish
Church, Bellevue Crescent**

www.ntbcc.org.uk/contact/

AM DECORATING

Your local painter & decorator **Alastair McAlpine**
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