

Spurtle



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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

THE CARNIVAL IS OVER

The festive crushes and crashes are over for another year, and it seems fewer and fewer locals will miss them.



The reduced St Andrew Square jollifications have still left expanses of dead grass in their wake. Cllr Joanne Mowat (Ward 11) says we should consider introducing silent fireworks. Heritage watchdogs were dismayed at the attachment of WiFi equipment to listed Princes Street lamps. A purported 1 million 'unique visitors' rendered large parts of the city centre intolerable.

Helen Martin, in an *Edinburgh Evening News* piece on 2 January wrote: 'Rejecting the city council's proposal for a tourist tax was an arrogant, ignorant and

cruel decision by the Government' [goo.gl/XP4yZv]. Meanwhile, residents of all political hues and shades of humbug were left wondering why these winter festivities need a £1.2m Council subsidy each year.

Bill Jamieson in *Scotbuzz* [goo.gl/Evw7EO] says the purported £241m economic benefit to the city is wildly exaggerated. Multipliers, erroneously based on 1991 figures and adjusted for inflation, are applied exclusively to the reported spend of visitors to the Christmas Market, and then further scaled up by an absurdly optimistic estimate of the number of tourists.

'No account is taken of the negative impact on locals who don't visit because of the crowds, or local businesses that lose out,' observes *Spurtle* reader Kevin Buckle. 'Hogmanay *does* attract more people specifically for the celebrations; but by far the main beneficiaries are hotels, with a claim there is 99% occupancy'.

What seems clear is that there's a growing appetite among Edinburgh residents to exert more control over private access to public spaces. We're encouraging readers to contact their candidates on the subject in advance of local-authority elections in May. See our website (22.1.17).

POWDERHALL POSSIBILITIES

Inactive since December due to safety concerns, Powderhall refuse depot is scheduled for permanent closure in 2018 when new facilities at Millerhill will open. The Council (CEC) is now considering whether to spend money on short-term repairs.

The Powderhall railway branch line from Piershill is only used by refuse trains, so permanent closure of the plant leaves the track bed available for conversion to a multi-use/cycle path, subject to negotiations between CEC and Network Rail (NR).



For cyclists and walkers this raises the exciting prospect of a traffic-free link south-eastwards from the extensive North Edinburgh path network. From Warriston allotments the new route, with intermediate access points, would go under Broughton Road, Leith Walk and Easter Road to Lochend Park. From there it's only a short distance to the semi-tropical delights of Holyrood Park and beyond.

The future of the Lochend-Piershill section of the line is unclear. A huge new development is planned for the eastern part of the Meadowbank site and, ideally, the new path would connect there. Although NR seems currently to favour retaining the option of a future Abbeyhill-Piershill loop line, this does not necessarily exclude a path link as well.—*Tim Smith*

SYRUP GOES GLOBAL



Spurtle posted an online article on the origins of 'Hail to the Chief' on 20 January, the day of the presidential inauguration in Washington DC. On the same day, our 10-second Facebook video of a windswept botanical arrangement on George Street went around the world. At the last count, it had reached 163k+ people and received some 66k views, a testament to the popularity of Scottish hairdressing or horticulture or both.

SIST IS HERE TO STAY ... FOR NOW

Edinburgh World Heritage and the Cockburn Association have suffered a minor setback in a legal skirmish over plans for the old Royal High School on Regent Road.



The appeal hearing about Duddingston House Properties and the Urbanist Hotels' original proposal has been sisted (delayed) while new, scaled-down proposals are brought forward.

EWB and CA wanted this delay lifted, saying that the scheme stood no chance of success. They also wanted additional expenses incurred because of the sist to be met by the developers.

Scottish Government reporters replied that they were 'firmly of the view that this would be a matter to be considered at inquiry, where that contention could be properly tested. Consequently they are content that the appeals ought to remain in sist for now ... However, they will continue to closely monitor progress on the amended proposals.

'The reporters note the application for expenses and confirm that they will consider this at the appropriate stage, having afforded the appellant the opportunity to respond'.

As *Spurtle* went to press, the developers' revised planning application had not yet been submitted. For more on this story, see our website (12.1.17).

Briefly

In Issue 258 we reported local misgivings over **supposedly bogus workers** moving telephone wires on **Sandy Hill**. **Openreach** subsequently got in touch to say that any alarm arose from a **misunderstanding**. Their staff were operating in back-greens **with permission and were carrying ID**. They withdrew after being verbally threatened. See our website (13.12.16).

At the next meeting of the **Broughton History Society**, on 6 Feb at 7pm in **Drummond Community High School**, Archie Foley will go **'From Steam to Diesel in Photographs'**. Please mind the gap.

Costa Coffee is bound for ground-floor premises in the new development at **39 Haddington Place** beside McDonald Rd Library. News broke when the café giant applied for signage permission (Ref. 16/05896/ADV).

When **LCCC** asked **CEC** Planning officials about the legality of student flats at **Shrub Place** and **Murano Place** being used for **holiday lets** without a change-of-use permit, they were told there was **'no case to answer'**.

The Wedding Shop is to replace **BottleDog** at 25a Dundas St.



Congratulations to Life Story, the Nordic-lifestyle-inspired shop on Broughton St, which was named 3rd-top in Edinburgh for coffee by the **online gastronomists at Lunchquest**. Roasting Shed coffee and gluten-free chocolate and pistachio cake were admired, as was **owner Susan Doherty**, described by the reviewer as one of 'Edinburgh's smartest business brains'. Newcomer **Rollo Broughton** was also singled out for praise.

Le Roi Fou will replace **Burger Meets Bun**, bringing **French cuisine to Forth St**. Chef patron **Jérôme Henry** set up **JPH Restaurants Ltd** in May 2016, but was previously head chef for 6 years at **Mosimann's** and for 4+ years at **Les Trois Garçons** in London.

Waxwings were present in large numbers in **Pilrig Park** over the festive period. A flock – **several hundred strong** – occupied a solitary tree beside **Pilrig Park School**. Small groups broke off to feed, mainly on **rowan berries**.

Cruden Homes/Buccleuch Property are planning **56 residential units at 70–74 Newhaven Rd**. A full planning application is expected to be submitted next month.

Kingsford change of plan?

According to its Planning Statement of June 2013, **Kingsford Development's 'Urban Key Concept'** for the £4.7m redevelopment of 154 **McDonald Road** was to provide 'affordable first time buyer and key worker homes in the city centre [allowing] ... a first rung on the property ownership ladder' for those who would otherwise be obliged to rent.

Sure enough, in addition to contributions of £18k to the **City Car Club**, and £70.79k to **Edinburgh Trams**, **KD's Section 75 contract** with the Council specifies provision of 18 affordable residential units by sale as either **Shared Equity Housing** or **Golden Share Housing** (see our website, Extras 1.2.17).

KD's original Planning Statement explicitly acknowledged 'significant limitations placed on **Edinburgh residents and workers** to buy their own properties resulting in them being reliant on the rental market' and spoke of innovative cost-saving alternatives which would allow purchase.

However, its new marketing website for the property boasts of 'Reinventing renting': [<http://www.kingsfordresidence.com>] and makes no mention of buying these 'fully serviced and concierge-supported' 'luxury apartments'.

So, the question is: Will those who end up in the remaining 57 studio apartments, roof terrace, state of the art gym, members' clubroom/bar, and **Indian marble foyer**, indeed be the key workers achieving a foothold on the property ladder we had come to expect?

We understand **CEC** would not object to the change, so long as rents were permanently as affordable as purchase prices would have been. We've approached **Kingsford** for clarification and will publish their reply when we have it.

Drummond Place memories

Drummond Civic Association's AGM was held at the **Polish Club, Drummond Place** on 19 January.

The speaker was **Magnus Linklater**, erstwhile **Scotsman** editor and **Times** correspondent, inter alia. He regaled attendees with delightful anecdotes on his family and **Edinburgh worthies**, and juicy insights in the sometimes fraught life of a newspaper editor.

There were also hilarious reminiscences of **Sir Compton Mackenzie** (his godfather), and the great poet/artist/agitator **Iain Hamilton Finlay**. An exhilarating evening!—*JRM*



Time to slow down

The new 20mph speed limits will apply in **Edinburgh's North, South Central and East areas** from 28 February.

Large 20mph signs will mark the entrance and exit of a 20mph area where the speed limit changes, followed by smaller repeater signs or road markings.

As shown in **David Young's photograph** (taken on **Hamilton Place** last month), nothing could be clearer.

Edinburgh's City Centre and wild West turned slow and sensible last July. The city's **North West and urban West** will follow this summer, and the **deep South** in January 2018.

For those wishing to add excitement to an otherwise dull taxi ride, we once again recommend enthusing to the driver about what an improvement the new speed limits represent.



Burnt fingers on shady lane

A pair of young entrepreneurs are rueing the day they got involved with **East Scotland Street Lane**.

They recently signed 12-month leases for two properties in the troubled backwater, hoping to run an office and residential let there.

Only after the ink had dried did they learn of the lane's recent planning history, and discover that consented uses for the properties do not match their proposals. The intended residence, for instance, may look like a studio home, but may only be used as a garage.

Whilst accepting that they should have made more thorough enquiries first, the pair are now hoping that locals and/or officials will be persuaded to let them continue as planned. We have some sympathy for their predicament, but don't hold out a lot of hope.

Holyrood backs World Heritage Site

Politicians of all hues expressed support for the Edinburgh World Heritage Site and its key economic importance in a debate at Holyrood in December.

Lothian MSP Gordon Lindhurst called for the World Heritage Site Management Plan to be 'better integrated with the city plan'.

Ben Macpherson (SNP, Edinburgh Northern & Leith) called for a new system to address repair and maintenance issues, particularly in tenements with multiple owners and tenants.

Alison Johnstone (Grn, Lothian) warned against damaging the city's unique selling points. Whilst welcoming visitors, she said, we should not forget that Edinburgh is primarily for residents. Andy Wightman (Grn, Lothian) said the forthcoming Planning Bill would be an opportunity to address the over-use of city-centre properties for short-term and student lets. He questioned the use of public spaces during festivals, citing St Andrew Square as an example.

Planners and developers should not regard the city's WH status as 'an impediment or obstacle,' said Miles Briggs (Con, Lothian) '[but] a creative challenge'.

EWH's Director, Adam Wilkinson, welcomed the cross-party support, and called for locals to read and comment upon the draft new Management Plan when it is published this month.



Look out for: Great Tits

It may seem a bit early to be talking about spring, but Great Tits like to plan ahead. Having identified good breeding spots in December, they begin advertising for a mate just after Christmas, when we hear again their cheerful 'see-saw' song.

Their plan is to coincide hatching with the first emerging leaves and the subsequent explosion in caterpillar numbers. These they feed by the thousand to their large brood, both parents contributing and thereby doing our trees a great service.

Great Tits are one of the most studied birds in Britain and also the biggest of the Tit family. Like all Tits they are acrobatic, sociable and confident. They feed predominantly on invertebrates but will broaden their diet in winter and feed at bird tables.

Two other species of Tit are also common locally: the Blue Tit – distinguished unsurprisingly by its blue plumage – and the more soberly clad Coal Tit. Coal Tits share the dark cap of the Great Tit, but smaller size, light colour and a distinct white patch behind the head help to identify these elusive and charming relations.—
Miles Forde



Image: Ian Kirk, Creative Commons [goo.gl/s1y2lg]

BAFTA beckons for local filmmaker

Stockbridge-based writer/director Samir Mehanović, and producer Michael Wilson, have been nominated for a BAFTA Award in the British Short Film category.

Their film – *Mouth of Hell* – is set in the appalling open-cast coalmine at Jaharia, India's largest and one of the most dangerous places on earth. The story recounts what happens when an impoverished, eight-year-old coalpicker stumbles across a wallet containing 5,000 rupees.

'This BAFTA nomination is a huge honour,' says Mehanović, 'and I am grateful to Creative Scotland for supporting the project, as well as to the amazing crew who worked on the film.'

'I hope the attention the film garners will put focus on the plight of those living above a burning oven, and on the ecological disaster that humanity is facing with open-cast mines.'

The BAFTA ceremony will take place on 12 February and be broadcast on BBC One. You can discover more about the making of the film and watch a trailer for it here [goo.gl/7kBIDD].



Photo: Creative Commons, Wikipedia [goo.gl/C7m81V].

Briefly



A construction worker on foot at the **Shrubhill building site** was killed on 5 Dec after being hit by a dumper truck. He was pronounced dead at the scene, and the **Health & Safety Executive** is now investigating. Concerns about safe and efficient access to the site via Dryden St have prompted the **erection of mirrors there**. But apparently the building works make it impossible to restore lighting over the ramped foot and cycleway nearby.

Two men **robbed Earthy at knife point** on 5 Jan. The Canonmills shop/café/restaurant remained closed after the 9.40pm attack but reopened on 7 Jan. A **3-figure cash sum was stolen**.

A recently established group of **Appalachian Cloggers** seeks new members/beginners. Describing themselves as 'small and friendly', they're called **Kick the Cat** and meet on Tuesdays at 7.30pm in the Dean Bowling Club. This form of **percussive dance** combines Scottish and Irish step with Afro-American style. It neither involves nor particularly interests cats. For more information Tel. 552 1622.

For years now, community councils have been struggling to get regular, consistent **crime statistics**. Community police officers at meetings generally blame **systemic problems**, or claim they didn't know until half an hour before that they were due to attend. Such excuses do little to dispel suspicions that **Police Scotland** is simply reluctant to disclose the facts in a **prompt, open and intelligible fashion**. Leith Central CC has now lost patience, and will instead acquire the data via monthly **Freedom of Information requests**.

Councillor Nick Gardner (Lab, Ward 12) has been appointed a director of the **Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust** [goo.gl/3AaVXM].

In Issue 258 we reported the imminent **departure of Laing's Foundry**. Now, Tourist Services (Edinburgh) Ltd has applied to build three **3-bedroom terraced townhouses** with parking and garden on the site at 28 Beaverbank Place (Ref. 16/06140/FUL). TS(E) is headquartered, like a **Caramel Swirl in a Tardis**, at the former police box on Quality St, EH4.

Daylight Robbery seeks retrospective planning permission for a **wooden box-seat and artificial grass** in the external basement area of its Category B-listed premises at 26B Dublin St. Applicants say the matting would help minimise the **danger from dropped glasses** whilst having little impact on the building's appearance.

Moreover ...

Artisan Canonmills Ltd submitted its planning application for the former B&Q site at 13 Warriston Rd shortly before Christmas (Ref. 16/06264/FUL). The proposal – **smaller and better** than that mooted at the first public consultation event in August but still not to everybody's taste – is for **184 residential units**, achieved by reducing the maximum height of the five blocks by one storey. See our website (11.12.16). A CEC determination is expected by 19 April.

Further work on the **settled streets** review has been submitted to CEC's **Transport & Environment Committee** in the form of a report [goo.gl/dHjW62]. It's **oddly interesting**, and includes a list of all the settled streets in Edinburgh (**whether or not the setts are visible**). LCCC's thoughts on the matter are available here: [goo.gl/M1k1vc].

Planning consent has been granted for former tennis courts on **Warriston Recreation Ground** to be reconfigured as a **baseball field** with a clay mound and short wall/fence for the protective backdrop (Ref. 15/01954/FUL). Planners did not agree with **Stockbridge & Inverleith Community Council** that other more commonly played sports would lose out as a result. Nor were they convinced by local objections to **possible bad language**, traffic congestion, the effect on a chestnut tree, and **danger to birds**.



The Clydesdale Bank at **1 Croall Place** will shut on 21 April, one of 40 high-street closures across Scotland which will result in the **loss of around 300 jobs**. Customers' accounts will transfer automatically to the branch at **83 George Street**. The move is part of a **£350m initiative** to reshape services towards electronic banking. As a matter of interest, does any reader recall **when the Royal Bank of Scotland** at 53 Dundas Street **was last open?**

Plans progress for a **new residents association** to cover Picardy Place, Broughton St Lane, Forth St, Union St, Hart St, Broughton Place and the east side of Broughton St. A meeting to discuss issues will take place at **6pm in the Outhouse on 2 March**.

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.
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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



Flowers

Canonmills Police Box
 Junction of Brandon Terrace and
 Inverleith Row (opp. Earthy)
Open Friday to Sunday
 Plus Mon 13/Tues 14 for Valentine's
 bouquets
enquiries@edinburghcornercopia.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 meeting on 20 Feb/20 Mar, 7.00pm, McDonald Rd Library. ALL WELCOME.

leithcentralcc.co.uk/meeting-dates

Broughton

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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
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 EH5 1NF

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New Town & Broughton Community Council represents the views of local residents to City of Edinburgh Council.

You're welcome to attend on **13 February and 13 March at 7.30pm**
 Broughton St Mary's Parish Church, Bellevue Crescent

www.ntbcc.org.uk