

Spurtle



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No 227

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

GEORGE ST TRAFFIC TRIAL TO START THIS SUMMER

City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) will start a 12-month trial for partial pedestrianisation of George Street this summer. A 2-week, pre-trial consultation has already taken place.

The radical plans involve restricting eastbound motor traffic to the north side between Frederick St and St Andrew Square. One lane on the south side will be pedestrianised. The second, more central lane will form a dedicated, 2-way cycle lane. A mirror image of this arrangement will be put in place between Frederick St and Charlotte Square.

Parking will be arranged slantways in the centre, but otherwise remain largely unaffected except for 7 bays in each block devoted to commercial loading from 7.00–10am.

Items of street furniture – including barriers and rubber kerbs – will reflect the temporary nature of the trial. Others – for example marquees – will be of better quality to match the World Heritage status of the area. There are plans to remove as much redundant street clutter as possible.

The experiment will begin a month-and-a-half after trams have started running, with formal monitoring before and after. The trial will be subject to modification if and when problems occur, and assessment of the scheme's success or otherwise will follow.

If CEC decides to make the arrangement permanent, a very lengthy further process of consultation is likely, with hearings before Scottish Ministers.

Newly appointed City Centre Programme Manager Iain MacPhail outlined the proposals to the New Town & Broughton Community Council (NTBCC) on 3 February, and predicted there would be little if any displaced traffic through the eastern New Town as a result.

NTBCC gave the scheme a polite hearing. Some members have doubts about the consultation process.

St STEPHEN'S BOUGHT, BUT FUTURE PLANS UNCLEAR

St Stephen's Church has been bought by an individual with a charitable trust who intends to continue the building's current community use.

The news broke late on 25 February, five days after the St Stephen's Playfair Trust (SSPT) had launched its own community bid with an offer of £505,000, to be paid within a year (*Breaking news*, 6.2.14; 21.2.14).

As *Spurtle* went to press, the identity of the individual was unknown, and there were no guarantees about the building's future as a performance space.

'It is incredibly disappointing that our plans have been knocked back,' says an SSPT spokesperson, 'but, hopefully, all is not lost.' SSPT plans to discuss some form of partnership once missives have been exchanged.

Over 300 people attended the public meeting on 5 February to discuss a community buy-out. New Town & Broughton and Stockbridge & Inverleith Community Councils offered moral support, as did various amenity organisations and former users.



FROM BRIXTON TO THE BRITS VIA BROUGHTON



Pic: Creative Commons [<http://goo.gl/Jk40Pw>]

David Bowie's 4-word Brit Awards intervention in the Independence debate last month – 'Scotland, stay with us' – took many by surprise. What interest had the 67-year-old Brixton-born music icon in matters north of the border?

In fact, Bowie lived here briefly in his youth. In 1969 he stayed in a Scottish Buddhist monastery, and in 1970 he and new wife Angie Barnett lived with Bowie's former lover, dance/mime mentor, and inspiration for 'Jean Genie' Lindsay Kemp on Cumberland Street.

Bowie was involved in Kemp's Turquoise Pantomime, a theatrical group established to perform the works of Genet, Lorca and Shakespeare 'in a hothouse environment of nudity, emphatic makeup of white face and carmine lips, explicit mime, lush and loud recorded music, overt sensuality and audience-manipulating lighting effects' (Senelick, *The Changing Room*, 2013). In 1972 it staged *Flowers* at the Traverse, and Kemp later provided 'exotic backup' for the Ziggy Stardust shows.

Besides his lively career in Dance, Kemp is recalled as *The Wicker Man* landlord later lampooned by David Walliams in *Little Britain*. We are pursuing further Broughton–Bowie connections and will report back.

HELP EDINBURGH'S HUNGRY

Broughton St Mary's became an access point for the Edinburgh Central and NW Foodbank – a part of the Trussell Trust (TT) – late last month.

Rising costs of food and fuel, static and/or low income, high unemployment, changes and delays to benefits payments and family breakdown are some of the reasons a growing number of people approach foodbanks for help. Even in apparently prosperous Edinburgh.

Last year, the TT fed 346,992 people of whom 126,889 were children. Some 13 million people in the UK now live below the poverty line.

TT's nearly 400 foodbanks are run in partnership with churches and communities to supply those experiencing problems with support and at least three days' nutritionally balanced, non-perishable emergency food.

Donations from the following list are welcome: UHT or powdered milk; sugar (500g); fruit juice (carton); soup; pasta sauces; tinned sponge and rice puddings, tomatoes, meat, fish, fruit; cereals; tea bags, instant coffee; instant mashed potato, rice, pasta; jam; biscuits, snack bar. For details contact: [info@edinburghcentral.foodbank.org.uk].

Briefly

The next meeting of the **Broughton History Society** is on 10 Mar at 7pm in Drummond CHS. Guest speaker will raise his/her head above the parapet to talk on **'The Fortifications of Leith'**.

Broughton Primary School has a new head teacher following Alan Devine's retirement last summer. Former Fox Covert PS head **Gillian O'Rourke** arrived on 3 Mar.

The former newsagent at **76 Dublin St** seems unlikely to reopen as before. **Kingsford Estates Ltd** seeks consent to convert it into a **letting agent's office** (Ref. 13/05128/LBC). Try to contain your excitement.

Welcome to the **Bluebird Café** on Canonmills, filling the space left by Russian Passion with **pulled pork, nachos, and maple syrup** among other delights. Something about **TripAdvisor's** 11, similarly worded 5-star rave reviews (18 Jan–23 Feb) rings oddly, but **Bluebird, Agoo/2, The Other Place** and **Maria's Kitchen** have received favourable write-ups from the independent, Edinburgh-based site Lunchquest: [<http://lunchquest.co.uk/>].

CEC services came under fire last month after **Friends of Pilrig Park** found 28 used needles in a section of woodland supposedly checked 2 days earlier by **Environmental Wardens**. Some suggested the needles had been there over a year, in an area used by **primary schoolchildren** for Nature Studies. Officials have promised to respond. See *Breaking news* (19.2.13).

Farewell **Locanda de Gusti**, which has relocated from E London St to Dalry Rd. We reported chef **Rosario Sartore's** award-winning feats in Issue 225, and wish him and Maria good fortune in their new location.

The NTBCC will hold a closed 'business session' in April, with its next AGM and regular meeting on 12 May at 7.15pm in **Broughton St Mary's, Bellevue Crescent**. Subsequent meetings will be held on the second Monday of the month.

Spurtle learns that the plot in **Northumberland St NW Lane** where a 2-storey mews house was briefly proposed last year (*Breaking news*, 29.10.13) has now 'passed into the safe hands of 3 bounding neighbours, and will not be developed'. **If limes could smile ...**

A local resident and architect has reported **'heavy stone cleaning'** of a basement property at the corner of E Claremont St and Bellevue Terrace. It has left the ashlar stone, he says, **'a rusty orange'**. He wants CEC to 'rap the knuckles' of whoever is responsible ***pour encourager les autres***.

MP predicts woe as PO plans to go

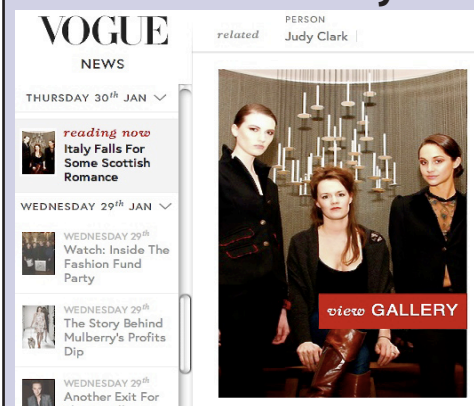


The Post Office (PO) plans to move its St James Centre branch to Princes Mall on Waverley Bridge in August.

It says the new Edinburgh Crown Office will work well, but the change has clearly been forced by Henderson Global Investors' creeping progress towards demolition and redevelopment of the present complex.

A consultation – mostly a cosmetic exercise, we suspect – runs until 26 March. Mark Lazarowicz MP has already called for the PO to stay where it is for as long as possible and to move back asap afterwards. He recommends 'extra capacity' be provided at Elm Row for inconvenienced Edinburgh North & Leith residents/businesses. For reaction and contacts, see *Breaking news* (14.2.14).

Broughtonian's style romances Italy



Broughton-based fashion designer and former Alexander McQueen intern **Judy R. Clark** featured in **British Vogue** recently. The magazine noted the approval of Italian **Vogue's** culture editor **Federico Ciara**, who – having visited Clark's **Beaverhall studio** – described her recent work as **'romantic art'** and tipped her as one to follow. Clark's **Regency Collection** launched at the **Pitti Immagine Fashion Fair** in Milan Fashion Week on 22 February. See: [<http://goo.gl/oPbEKI>].

Picardy Place plans do not inspire

In *Breaking news* (9.12.13) we gave a dusty response to Henderson Global Investors' pre-application consultation plans for a hotel on **Picardy Place** (Ref. 13/03853/PAN).

New Town & Broughton Community Council has since reached similar conclusions, raising doubts in its formal response about:

- what benefit the scheme offers Edinburgh
- how a hotel here would link to the new St James Quarter
- the 'wrecking' effect of the proposal on traffic flow in and out of York Place.

Thought-provoking art



Angela Palmer's work **'Brain of an Artist'** arrived at the **Scottish National Portrait Gallery** last month. **Rhys Fullerton** reviewed it in *Breaking news* (25.2.14).



Always look up! This rather impressive but seldom noticed **bas-relief** is one of three above the premises of **Connor Malcolm** on **Summer Place**. **Gifford et al.** in *Edinburgh* (1984) describe Nos 6–8 as **'a big gawky tenement with shops, c.1870 in the style of Beattie, dressed up with pediments and busts and a corner oriel to cut a respectable figure with its neighbours'**.

Halcyon days in Boat Green

Last month, Dalmeny Street-based Public Art Consultations & Exhibitions (PACE) sought residents' views about artist Gordon Young's designs for wooden panels on Warriston Road floodgates.

Locals didn't mind poppies near the Lady Haig factory, but views on a kingfisher with Tessa Ransford poem near Boat Green stirred up a hornet's nest (*Breaking news*, 11.2.14).

Some liked the kingfisher poem, some liked the kingfisher but wanted a different poem, some thought the kingfisher completely irrelevant on this stretch of the river, and some wanted the work of a local poet/resident instead. Some simply objected to the perceived snippy tone of PACE's emails.

The last we heard, PACE and Young were wondering how to proceed as a redesign would require additional funding from CEC, which makes one wonder how serious they were about consultation in the first place.



Briefly



Congratulations to **Artisan Roast's Darryl Docherty** who qualified 4th in the national superheats to compete with 19 others in the **United Kingdom Barista Championship**. It will be held in London early next month.

Responding to a member of the public's request at last month's NTBCC meeting, **Stewart Homes – Waste Disposal Service Manager** – promised CEC staff would at least once a week collect rubbish blown out of the **Powderhall transfer facility** onto the footpath adjacent. So far, no improvement.

The Scottish Government Reporter considering plans by **Kingsford Development** for flats at **154 McDonald Rd** has revised the target date for a decision. **It is now 10 April**. Having visited the school at the end of Jan, Mr Lance Guilford has since had to wade through **around 166 items of information and/or correspondence**. See *Breaking news* (30.1.14).

Batley's Ltd have appealed to the Scottish Govt against CEC's decision not to extend permanently the opening hours of their cash and carry on **McDonald Place** (see *Breaking news*, 21.1.14). Nearby residents had complained about **on-site noise and delivery traffic disruption**. When details are registered (soon), they may be read here: [<http://goo.gl/EKcoiH>].

Spurtle wondered last month about the artistic aspirations of **Essential Edinburgh, Marketing Edinburgh, and CEC** in bringing Bruce Munro's 'Field of Light' to **St Andrew Sq**. Readers responded almost unanimously to a question we hadn't asked: **Is it any good?** You think it is – mostly, it seems, because it reminds you of **alien spider eggs**.

Plans to convert the 10-guestroom **Walton Hotel at 79 Dundas St** back into a spacious residential dwelling have been consented (Ref. 13/05323/LBC).

Broughton's **11th Scouts** enlisted **Cllr Karen Doran's help** last month after repeatedly finding themselves locked out of the gym at **St Mary's RC Primary School** on Friday evenings. CEC officials finally arranged '**agency**' janitorial cover. Unfortunately, this is the same solution applied in the past and it doesn't work for long in practice.

Council can't see wood for steam

Broughton's four saunas will no longer be licensed by City of Edinburgh Council as places of entertainment, following a change in policy by its Regulatory Committee on 3 February.

Speaking on STV, Convener Councillor Barrie said recent police reports had identified serious and organised crime in and around some of the city's 11 remaining saunas, and that the Council could not be seen to license such illegal activities.

Health and social work resources will continue to be focused on sex workers, he said, despite critics' claims that the change will drive the sex trade out of sight and put more women in particular at greater risk.

Whilst denying that the new policy would 'close down' saunas, Cllr Barrie argued that their high-street presence is already in decline due to Internet booking.

It is not clear to *Spurtle* what serious and organised crimes Cllr Barrie thinks the public might assume it has been licensing. Surely, most of us have known for 30 years about the prostitution involved, and supported CEC's policy of pragmatic toleration? No-one has ever assumed CEC endorsed or in some way regulated other 'criminal' activity on the premises. It is also not clear to us why CEC felt moved to act before any such (as yet unspecified in public) allegations of serious and organised crime had been tested in the courts.

CEC's U-turn smacks of muddle, weakness and panic. It appears to have abandoned an imperfect but principled policy under pressure from a less locally accountable Police Scotland with its own policy agenda.

One day later, on 4 February, Steamworks in Broughton Market applied for planning consent to change its use from a sauna/health club to storage/light industrial/office (*Breaking news*, 18.2.14).

Partial victory on East London St ... at last

Congratulations to Robert Crombie, who for the last 15 months has been badgering CEC officials and ward councillors about necessary repairs on East London Street.

Finally, in February, a missing bollard and lighting column halfway across the road outside St Mary's RC Primary were replaced.

Additional 20mph roundels for the Leith Walk end of Annandale Street – originally ordered in August 2013 – have been re-ordered, and one will now be added to the junction with East London Street.

Redundant poles outside the mosque, a relic of tramwork diversions, have also been removed.

Crombie's patience and tenacity have been exemplary. A CEC Transport official has apologised for the delays. Adjacent sett subsidence in the road still



Moreover ...



Drummond Civic Association discussed the future of their nearest **police box** at the 31 Jan AGM. Police Scotland expect to announce a new blind auction of sites at some point in the next **6 months**. About 80 of the original 141 Edinburgh police boxes survive from 1933. **Spurtleshire's are at:** Broughton Rd, Canonmills Bridge, Dean Terrace, Drummond Place, Elm Row, Heriot Row, Little King St, Shrub Place and W Register St. See *Breaking news* (22.1.13; 24.11.13).

CEC is after all seeking to **enforce the removal** of an unauthorised structure on **East Scotland St Lane** (see Issue 226 and *Breaking news*, 4.2.13). The owner **has appealed to Scottish Ministers**, and following the Reporter's site visit last month, a **decision** is expected by 24 March. You can read the paperwork here: [<http://goo.gl/H1Z1Dm>].

Broughton St Mary's Parish Church on Bellevue Crescent in partnership with CEC launched a new **Mums & Toddlers Group** on 28 Feb. Despite the politically incorrect name, **it's also open to dads**. Refreshments and healthy snacks. £2 per session. Fridays, 10am-noon. Email: [joanne.drummond@edinburgh.gov.uk].

Organisers of Broughton St's '**St Mary's Market**' outside the Cathedral are responding to public demand by becoming more of a '**street food haven offering innovative but affordable hot food**'. Interested traders should contact: [<http://goo.gl/GoJKcN>].

The *Spurtle* celebrated **20 years of independent stirring** last month by publishing more of its archive online. **Additional copies** will appear in *Back issues* over the next few weeks. STV covered the occasion on 22 Feb here: [<http://goo.gl/P047aS>].

In advance of their **full roll-out in the spring**, Broughton's trams are now testing during daylight hours between **St Andrew Square and York Place**. *Spurtle's* Technology Correspondent reports that, contrary to Council safety advice, the new trams merrily go along not with a warning 'Ding!' but a pronounced '**Glong**'

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2nd Monday of the month:
11am-12noon St Bride's Centre
1pm-2pm Stockbridge Library
NB. No Surgeries on Public Holidays.

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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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Friday advice sessions:
4.00pm **Stockbridge Library**,
no appointment necessary;
5.00pm **5 Croall Place**;
other surgeries throughout the
constituency – phone for details

New Town/Broughton Community Council

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

Next Meeting:

Monday 12 May

AGM then regular meeting
at 7.15pm

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

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AMDECORATING

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