

# Spurtle



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**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free**

## OBJECTIONS MOUNT TO CITY SUPERMARKETS

New Town and Broughton Community Council (NTBCC) has joined Leith Central Community Council (LCCC) in objecting to the Cooperative Group's proposed 'convenience store' at 8 McDonald Road (Issue 192).

Planning Convener John Knight said it would go against the city's Local Plan, which requires new developments not to adversely affect local town centres' viability and vitality.

LCCC Planning Convener Annette O'Carroll has alerted Cllr Alison Johnstone (Ward 10) to the case. Johnstone – at the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) meeting on 10 March – sought acknowledgement for the benefits of thriving local high streets; highlighted competition faced by independent shops from large chain-stores; questioned the openness/transparency of planning procedures; and called for a report on whether existing measures offer sufficient protection to small, independent shops.

The day before, CEC's Economic Development Committee had announced that it would appoint 3 'retail champions' for 9 of Edinburgh's ailing town centres, including Leith Walk. They are expected to investigate extending pop-up shops, seasonal campaigns, local branding, and Festival venues. The initiative has emerged (slowly) from the report 'Building Stronger Town Centres' of August 2009. Johnstone is not impressed: if CEC were truly interested in the wellbeing of local high streets, she told O'Carroll, 'it would firmly uphold policies limiting expansion of supermarket chains'.

LCCC's letter of objection, Cllr Johnstone's agenda item (9.7), the Economic Development report of 2009, and the 'Physical Development Support Progress Report (Annexe 1) of 8 March outlining CEC's retail champion plans are all in *Extras* (4.4.11).

## BROUGHTON-BASED BASSIST BITES BIG APPLE

*Edinburgh folk/DJ combo Whisky Kiss are wowing the US this month with prestigious gigs in New York: Dressed to Kilt, Whisky Live, and the Tartan Day Parade down the Big Apple's equivalent of Broughton Street – 5th Avenue.*

*Local bassist Iain MacPhail (in white) is also excited about playing the legendary Hammerstein Ballroom, where the band will wear jackets by designer Joey D. See Breaking news (7.3.11).*



## SPURTLE HOSTS HUSTINGS



Photo by Purple Kite Productions.

*Around 100 people gathered in Broughton St Mary's Parish Church on 23 March for Spurtle's Scottish Parliamentary election hustings (Edinburgh Northern and Leith constituency). See page 2 for further photos and links..*

## FLOOD-WORKS RAISE FEARS FOR RIVERSCAPE

They have been in the offing for ages, but now that work on Water of Leith flood prevention measures is about to begin, some locals are getting cold feet.

Nobody wants a repeat of the damage seen in 2003, but the effects on Edinburgh's 'silver thread in a green ribbon' are worrying. 'The impacts are huge and brutal,' writes Colin McShane, who contacted *Spurtle* on Facebook. 'Raised river walls, almost all trees being taken away, floodgates on Warriston Road and holes in the adjacent river wall so the road can be used as a flood plain, deep piling works etc. etc.: if you live locally or enjoy walking and the wildlife along the river, I recommend you check this out.'

An anonymous correspondent and Tweeting naturalist is also alarmed by the likely loss of trees, although more sanguine about the future of an otter he photographed for us last month. 'She will use over 10 miles of river as her territory and have several homes along that stretch. She'll relocate, I'm sure.' Like others we spoke to, he has found the plans now available in Stockbridge Library (see *Extras* 4.4.11) hard to visualise.

Water of Leith Conservation Trust staff we contacted understand local anxieties, but suggest that the time for hand-wringing is now well past. It seems we must steel ourselves for some ugly short-term changes, and wait patiently until their appearance softens over the years.

# Candidates gather to answer voters' questions



Eight candidates (including 3 late-arriving surprises) attended the early hustings on 23 March. They were: Willie Black (Solidarity), Malcolm Chisholm (Labour), Maggie Chapman (Scottish Greens), Scott Douglas (Conservative), Dan Farthing (Liberal-Democrat), David Jacobsen (Socialist Labour), Margo MacDonald (Independent), and Shirley-Anne Somerville (Scottish National). When nominations closed on 29 March, 92 candidates had put themselves forward across the Edinburgh Northern & Leith and Edinburgh Central constituencies (see *Breaking news* 30.3.11).



They fielded questions on 'privatisation' of the NHS; 'sell-off' of Inverleith Park; funding for the Arts; the future of tuition fees north and south of the border; disillusion with party politics; support for academic staff striking against pension cuts; Scotland's 'right' to North Sea oil revenues; and library closures.



See *Breaking news* (4.4.11) for Jaundiced of Claremont's impressions, and for a blow-by-blow report filed online at the time by the *Edinburgh Reporter* and *Guardian Edinburgh*: [<http://www.theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2011/03/broughton-spurtle-hustings-brought-to-you-live/>].



All photos by Purple Kite Productions.

## CEC's sporting bias

In today's hard times, there is even more concern than usual among local bowlers about the future of Edinburgh's underused public greens.

Fortunately, CEC's Edinburgh Leisure recognise the value of the sport and its benefits for fitness and social engagement. They will hold Open Days to encourage new members in advance of the season which starts on Sat. 16 April.

Victoria Park's event will run from 2-4pm on Fri. 6 May; Powderhall's from 2-4pm on Sat. 7 May. Normal opening times are: *Victoria Park* - Mon., Wed., Thurs., 2-9pm; *Powderhall* - Tues., Wed., Fri., 1-9pm; Sat. 11am-5pm.

Two private clubs also operate in Broughton: Pilrig Bowling Club (21a Pilrig Gardens; Tel. 554 5873); and the Northern Bowling Club (Warriston Crescent, Tel. 467 0119; see Issue 158).



## Community concern for Baxter's Place

The state of 1-5 Baxter's Place troubles heritage buffs, architects, planners and others who fear for its preservation.

The Grade A-listed properties were bought by Dublin-based Fitzpatrick Design Collection who in 2008 planned to open a 167-bedroom hotel and restaurant here (Issue 168). However, the financial climate in general and the collapse of the Irish economy in particular have stalled the project.

Now the buildings appear increasingly dilapidated and are at risk of damage from vandalism and illegal occupation.

The New Town and Broughton Community Council has recently conveyed its concern to the owners, which view *Spurtle* endorses. We will report on developments.

## Bulging blister at Broughton Point

The ceaseless drip-drip of parental pressure on CEC has paid off after nearly a decade. A major redesign of the junction contour at Broughton Point, outside the primary school, was completed after two weeks' work last month. It means vehicles can no longer turn at speed from Broughton Rd into E. Claremont St, rendering life for pedestrians - particularly local schoolchildren - significantly safer.

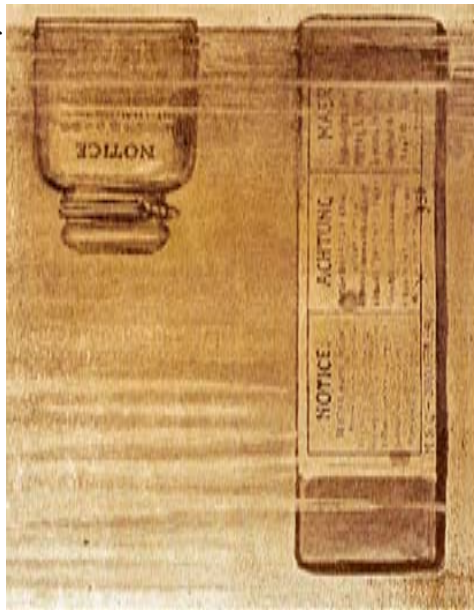


## Profile: Thomas Wemyss Fulton (1855–1929)

In this, the last of his series on our area's association with the history of marine science, Jim Adams profiles Thomas Wemyss Fulton, the first Scientific Superintendent of the Fishery Board for Scotland.

Fulton was born in 1855, probably in one of the red-brick cottages that snake eastwards from Granton Harbour where his father was Deputy Pier Master. By 1866 he lived at 2 Paterson's Court, Old Broughton (*Breaking News* 1.11.10), his home for at least 18 years before moving to 20 Royal Crescent where he still resided at the time of his marriage in 1894. To help pay his way as a medical student at Edinburgh University, Fulton worked as a telegraphist by night, showing 'indomitable strength, courage, and self-denial' which paid off when, in 1884, he graduated with first-class honours, and published a paper – still referred to in accounts of repetitive strain injury – on telegraphists' cramp. However, we have no record of his subsequent work as a doctor.

In 1888 – after two years in the Challenger Office (Issue 176) – he joined the Fishery Board at 101 George Street, but, with the Board's transferral of its fish hatchery and laboratory from Dunbar to Aberdeen in 1898, Fulton moved north to take charge. There, hatchery operations ceased in the 1920s, but the laboratory is now of world renown and employs over 200 staff. Fulton's own pioneering work was impressive and wide-ranging; for example, from the maturation of fish eggs in the ovary (which gained him an MD with a gold medal in 1897) to the impact of trawling. Also, in 1894, he began using drifters to chart the currents of the North Sea. This method was still in use in the 1960s, and, at one stage, the drift bottle enclosures (with instructions to the finder once likened to the shipwrecked sailor's message) were printed by Morrison & Gibb at Tanfield. (With thanks to Allard Dembe, Sally Pagan, and George Slessor; and Tim Bremner who prepared the illustrations for the series.)



This Fulton's surface drifter was 152mm long.

## Prize-winning return to Pilton



Congratulations to local Sarah Drummond, who won a 'BAFTA in Scotland New Talent Award' on 28 March in the Producer category (fiction/factual).

She had taken an 18-month sabbatical from regular work at Leith-based Plum Films to work in a new capacity on, among other projects, Pilton Video's *Mum's Birthday*. This 'hard-hitting and poignant' film has previously won three prizes at the Hollywood Reel Film Festival and LA Movie Awards.

'Returning to Pilton was a satisfying way to give back to a project which had helped me early in my career,' Drummond told *Spurtle*. 'To get a BAFTA prize was just the icing on the cake.'

## Embo prepares for Posh Splice

As excitement mounts over the Royal Wedding on 29 April, City of Edinburgh Council has taken steps to facilitate planned, spontaneous outpourings of joy.

The day itself has been declared a public holiday, and schools will be closed. Licence Board members will view favourably applications by pubs to stay open from 1–2am, and by clubs from 3–4am.

In a related development, *Spurtle* hears that Moray Feuars were among the first to discuss holding a traditional, celebratory, East Enders-style knees-up on a local thoroughfare. However, republican irony or lingering Jacobite sympathies may explain their favoured venue: Great Stuart Street.



## Briefly

The next meeting of the **Broughton History Society** will be at 7pm on Mon. 11 Apr. in Drummond CHS. **Bashabi Fraser** will talk about 'Journeys between Scotland and India'.

The new Bellevue **Puffin** was wired and working by mid-March. A **CEC Roads** spokesman says the project – involving replacement of lampposts, widening of the pavement, anti-skid surfaces, white-lining, lights and connection – **cost around £80,000**.

Planning permission was granted for a **5-storey block of flats at 50 Pilrig St** (Ref. 09/03284/FUL) on 9 Mar. Leith Central Community Council favoured a smaller development. The Cockburn Assoc. criticised banal design.

CEC has launched an online survey concerning the winter's **snowfall** and how it affected Edinburgh. Residents are asked for their experiences and recommendations, and whether they will **volunteer** to help out in future when exceptional circumstances are repeated. Visit: [[http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/674/consultations/1327/winter\\_weather-working\\_together](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/674/consultations/1327/winter_weather-working_together)].

A reader informs us that the **Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010** came into force in Feb., putting responsibility for control on owners and adult supervisors in both public and private places. **Beware!** Threatening dogs need not bite for sanctions to apply.

The Pilrig author **Marianne Wheelaghan** (*Breaking News*, 18.11.10) will appear at Central Library on 7 April, 6.30pm to talk about the inspiration for her debut novel *The Blue Suitcase* and writing in general. Entry is free, but advance booking essential: Tel. 242 8100 or email [[readerdevelopment@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:readerdevelopment@edinburgh.gov.uk)].

An **Easter activity club** will run for children at St Mary's PS after-school club from 11–21 Apr. Tel. 556 1634 or 07536 017980.

Following CEC's review in Sep./Oct. 2010, the new polling station for some **Calton residents** in the Scottish Parliamentary election (district N111D) will be at **St Mary's RC Primary School (E. London St)**. Check voting cards for details.

Laura Stobbs – a **community support worker** – comes to **McDonald Rd Library** on Wednesdays, 2–4pm, to help people learn about housing options, fill in benefit forms, deal with official letters, etc. **Please pass the word.**

The BBC recorded *Question Time* in the Mansfield Traquair Centre on 10 Mar. Panellists were: **Scottish Conservative Leader Annabel Goldie, MSP; Secretary of State for Scotland Michael Moore, MP; Douglas Alexander, MP; Patrick Harvie, MSP; Nicola Sturgeon, MSP; and Nick Ferrari (unknown to Spurtle but apparently a regular guest on ITV's Alan Titchmarsh Show)**. For previous Dimpleby landings, see Issues 165, 185.

## Moreover ...



Issue 192's photo competition featured the window of Smoke Stack on Broughton Street. Can any reader identify this month's fishy local location? Prize: £15 book token.

Changes have been made to CEC's **Green Recycling Scheme**. New routes came into action on 28 Mar., and brown bins will now be uplifted 5 days a week. For details **type in your postcode** at: [<http://www.greenboxday.co.uk>].

NTBCC made 5 material objections to the proposed **Leith biomass plant**: (1) styming of Local Development Plan; (2) bad effect on cultural tourism; (3) up to 20K per year lorry trips, some through Broughton; (4) pollution; (5) short-termism (25- year life).

**Drains** on the south side of **Heriot Row** are choked, but don't expect action soon. **Unblocking by hand** has been a casualty of Council cuts, and there's only one **mechanical skoosher** to go round.

State schools break for the **Easter holiday** on 8 April and resume on 18 April.



The superb painting above is currently on show at the Gallery on the Corner's exhibition (34 Northumberland Street). It is called **Swanning Around** (oil and acrylic on canvas) and is one of Claire Brown's six works in an exhilarating and thought-provoking Spring exhibition.

Clare writes: 'From an early age I have been a keen artist. I would say my initial love of drawing cartoon characters on paper progressed to my colourful creations on canvas.'

'Over the past four years, my work has flourished thanks to being given the opportunity to attend art classes at Delta Studios in Larbert. Although I have been diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, I feel the medium of art allows me to convey my thoughts and feelings. See *Breaking news* (4.4.11) for large colour image.'

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## New Town/Broughton Community Council

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

Next meeting:

Monday 4 April  
at 7.30pm

Drummond Community  
High School (Library).

[secretary@ntbcc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@ntbcc.org.uk)

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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

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