

# Spurtle



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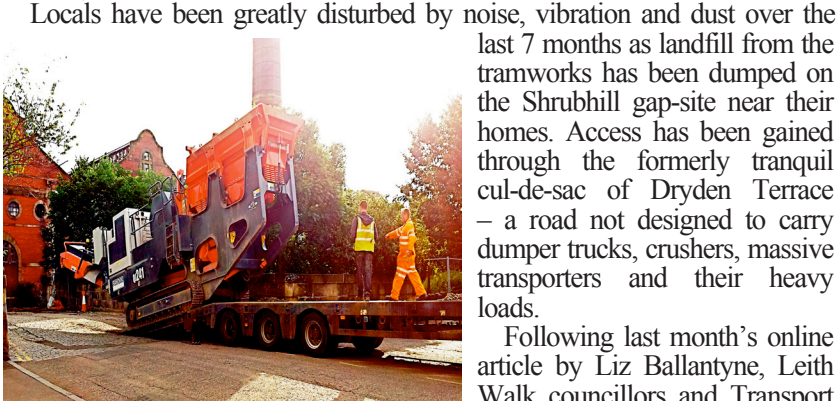
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## LOCALS DOWN IN THE DUMPS

With monsters like this coming and going on a regular basis, it's no surprise to find the setts on Dryden Bridge have begun to subside (*Breaking news*, 16.8.12).



Locals have been greatly disturbed by noise, vibration and dust over the last 7 months as landfill from the tramworks has been dumped on the Shrubhill gap-site near their homes. Access has been gained through the formerly tranquil cul-de-sac of Dryden Terrace – a road not designed to carry dumper trucks, crushers, massive transporters and their heavy loads.

Following last month's online article by Liz Ballantyne, Leith Walk councillors and Transport

Convener Lesley Hinds have sat up and taken notice. As *Spurtle* went to press, a detailed Council statement about the problem was described as imminent.

## HART STREET HOLE AND SHOCKS OF THE NEW

Work appears to have started at last on the controversial 'bookend' approved for Hart Street (Issues 162, 182; *Breaking news*, 26.1.11).

Architect Richard Murphy's house – in which he plans to live himself – will occupy a formerly undeveloped, tree-filled garden. The loss of greenery and the gain of such a radical departure from the Georgian surrounds have upset some neighbours, although other voices have been raised in defence of a bold, modern statement responding to the Steel House opposite.

*Spurtle* has been trying unsuccessfully for years to gain Murphy's consent to reproduce a mock-up of the building which is freely available here: [<http://bit.ly/R7v3Sy>].

Critics of the plan are encouraged by the depth of the hole being dug on-site. They hope the new house will be buried inside it.

In a separate controversy, *Spurtle* broke the news last month that a local business faces opposition from Council planners for its proposed extension on Union Street. Strictly speaking, the principal issue at stake is not the demolition of an eyesore or that the plans are good or bad Georgian pastiche, but that officials say they are too big and not modern enough.

We wondered online whether the employment and economic benefits of the scheme should weigh in its favour. Then all hell broke loose. See *Breaking news* (10.8.12).



## POLITICIANS INDIE NEWS

Following a CND vigil to commemorate the 67th anniversary of the Hiroshima bomb on 6 August, Edinburgh Central MSP Marco Biagi said: 'An independent Scotland ... will say no to these expensive monstrosities. We can take a world lead and remove the Trident nuclear fleet which currently resides on the Clyde.' He urged people to vote in favour of independence in 2014.

Meanwhile, Mark Lazarowicz, MP for Edinburgh North and Leith, has spoken in a Westminster debate about the economic consequences of Scottish independence. He said a democratic deficit would result from continued use of the pound sterling whilst an 'unaccountable' Bank of England set interest rates and regulated the financial sector.

## HOOTS! TOOTS! OATS!



Four senior students and three staff from Drummond CHS visited Kenyan partnership schools in Muthambi over 10 days this summer.

The Drummond pupils delivered lessons on: teenage life in Edinburgh; origami; the Scottish Government; and porridge (pictured). Staff forged curricular links with their peers, and introduced local pupils to fake snow (which was promptly thrown back at them). Kenyan partners will return to Drummond in June 2013.

For Drummond librarian Annie Scanlon's fuller report (and another photo showing Kenyans' unalloyed joy at the prospect of soggy, squished mush with salt), see *Breaking news* (1.9.12).

## HANDSOME AND ELUSIVE



Misbehaving red-heads on holiday have featured much in the Press lately. This fine Scarlet Ibis escaped Edinburgh Zoo last month and briefly stayed in Dundas Street (*Breaking news*, 22.8.12). Keepers and SSPCA tried to recapture him, but he flitted first to Seafield then Leith then Cramond. An Edinburgh tabloid named the previously anonymous bird Cherry 'because of its colour'. *Spurtle* resisted such low-brow, red-top silliness. We have standards, you know. We call him Pimpernel.



## Briefly



Trading standards officers are warning against home-made **'baby-bling' dummies, feeders, sunglasses and booties** on sale across the city. The fake gems come loose, and the glue is toxic. Report sellers to: Tel. 08454 04 05 06.

The **Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)** has approved the first round of the £1.2m **Botanic Cottage** project. As described in Issue 207, it will be rebuilt in the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh's **Demonstration Garden** site. See the RCAHMS's interesting pre-dismantlement survey at: [<http://bit.ly/Ns2Kys>].

**Drug injection** is an issue on **Pilrig St**, where residents and local businesses are regularly littered with needles and rubbish as local hostels struggle to manage difficult tenants. **Leith Central Community Council (LCCC)** discussed the problem on 20 Aug., and agreed Benefit changes may well increase the concentration of **'homeless accommodation'** in Leith in the near future. LCCC will address the subject at its next meeting on **Mon. 24 Sept.** In the meantime, it objects to **Cameron Guest House Group's** application for another HMO licence.

Could Council street cleaners be trained and authorised to help businesses obey **refuse regulations**? LCCC discussed the idea as an audit begins of **'orphan and lidless'** bins on Leith Walk.

Are the capital's Refuse staff **untidy eaters**? City of Edinburgh Council seek permission at the **Powderhall Disposal Works** on Broughton Rd to construct a **prefabricated modular building** for staff (Ref. 12/02684). Facilities planned include: male, female and disabled WCs; male and female showers and locker rooms; and a **canteen/mess area**.

This month, the Council is **'improving'** your waste collection service. 'We will now collect the **green household bin, brown garden bin and grey lidded food bin** on the same day ... We will collect the **grey lidded food bin** every week. **Green bins** will now be collected once a fortnight. We will collect the green bin one week and the brown bin the next **apart from in the winter**, when **brown bins** are collected monthly.' Clear? See: [<http://bit.ly/OqXsaK>].

## Gone with the wind

The closure of the Moviebank outlet at 52 London Street has left some locals upset and out of pocket.

Users of the service paid a £1 membership fee and then withdrew films against a prepaid deposit. Now the shop has gone, and telephone lines for similarly named franchises in Stockbridge and Tollcross are unresponsive.

Wyvern Entertainment, which operated in Edinburgh as Moviebank Limited, sought voluntary dissolution in October 2011 and its final dissolution notice appeared on 24 February this year.

For free advice on claiming back money, contact the Citizens' Advice Bureau consumer helpline at: Tel. 08454 04 05 06.

## Pot and bothered

Householders at 19 Bellevue Crescent have been dismayed at the disappearance of two heavy pots containing a fine conifer and flower arrangement which have adorned their doorway for more than 10 years. The theft took place some time between 11pm and 7am on the night of Sat./Sun. 4/5 August.

Bizarrely, the purloiner(s?) replaced them with a small pot plant and a traffic cone. The owner is concerned that the replacement pot may itself have been stolen.

*Spurtle* wonders if there have been similar incidents in the Broughton area, and whether there is some unpleasant pattern discernible here. Please let us know. (Pictured are the surviving conifer and its new companion.)



## Small shops' hard times

Itrat Mohammad moved into the cornershop on Croall Place 16 years ago, *writes John Dickie*. It was a going concern to which he made improvements. With hard work, the business developed well.

That was until 7 or 8 years ago, when a Tesco Express opened just across the road. Business suffered almost immediately. Cause and effect were obvious when Itrat's takings temporarily revived during Tesco's brief closure for alterations.

Tramwork disruption further reduced the number of customers, and then more recently the Co-op opened in Hopetoun Crescent – 'just 200 yards away'.

Itrat's message to customers and the local community is that some items in his shop are actually cheaper than at nearby supermarkets. And he provides extra services you can't get there at all – like a battery fitted in your watch there and then, or some small change when you need it. And there's the personal touch too!

There's a real danger that valuable Broughton assets like this will soon be lost without renewed public support. Use them or lose them!

## Petition to cut crumbling costs

An Edinburgh householder has launched an online petition seeking incentives to repair and maintain Scottish inner-city tenements (*Breaking news*, 15.8.12).

Florence Kennedy recently faced swingeing repair bills of her own. 'There are no grants or subsidies available,' she says, 'even though the problem of our crumbling city has been recognised for more than a decade.'

She plans to publicise the petition nationwide, urging the Scottish Government to keep lobbying Westminster for a reduction in the VAT rate for repairs and maintenance in line with the rates levied on new-build projects and conversion to dwellings. She also wants Holyrood itself to provide incentives, through subsidy or matched funding.

The petition is open until the end of October at: [<http://bit.ly/MZhhhd>].

## Young artists' black-handed compliment

Drummond S6 students Abigail Lamb (pictured on the left) and Courtney Russell-Hall (right) joined a workshop in July with New York-based artist Tim Rollins and the K.O.S. (Kids of Survival) collective [<http://bit.ly/Npr2se>].

Their work formed part of the *Treasure Island*-inspired 'Black Spot' exhibition running until 22 Oct.: 'a summons to audiences to reinvigorate a belief in the power of art to change lives'.

Both women, who are aiming for Edinburgh College of Art, described the experience as 'amazing' and are proud to have been part of the project.





## New chapter for Gayfield House

Built by wrights Charles and William Butter in 1763–5, and soon after inhabited by Thomas, Lord Erskine and his wife Lady Charlotte Hope, Gayfield House on East London St is under new ownership after several months on the market.

The previous householder made good progress on the property with some internal restoration and securing of the roof. The new occupants (one of whom is a former London St Primary School pupil) now have plans of their own for the structure's original weatherproof harling.



Pic: Grant, Old & New Edinburgh

Gayfield House is one of few (originally semi-rural) aristocratic homes to survive. Around 30 once dotted the capital's outskirts. Its star waned after speculative expansion of the New Town along Hopetoun Crescent failed, and it has seen service since as – among other things – a veterinary school, an office and a garage. *Spurtle* welcomes the new owners and a new lease of life for this iconic Broughton landmark.

## Briefly



The Scotsman Publications and Barratt–East Scotland's plans to redevelop the former printing works site at 9 Newhaven Rd as 127 dwellings and 5 commercial units have been consented (Ref. 11/02671/FUL). Leith Central Community Council was generally in favour. See *Breaking news* (23.8.11) and *Extras* (14.8.12).

This month, Bellevue photographer Alicia Bruce follows up her Edinburgh Fringe success (*Breaking News*, 14.8.12) by showing a Menie Sands portrait, lecturing and speaking on an international panel at the Symposium of Contemporary Photography [1] in Regensberg, Germany.

L'Epicerie at 56a Broughton St will go up for sale soon as proprietor and chef Frederic Berk Miller concentrates on other business ventures. Parties interested in the shop or premises should contact [fredecosse@hotmail.com].

On 7 Aug., Splashback submitted a detailed business case to the Council for reopening Leith Waterworld. Campaigner Ida Maspero says 'best value – in the broadest sense, not simply financial – will be achieved by giving the community a chance to re-open this unique and much-loved leisure pool'. In Feb., councillors voted to postpone sale of the site for 6 months so that a community bid could be forwarded and a political hot potato passed sideways in advance of local elections.

Management of the Cumberland Bar has changed. It is now being run by the D.M. Stewart company under manager Alex Mackay. He was formerly in charge of Embo real-ale watering holes the Canon's Gait and Guildford Arms. 'It's in safe hands,' a deeply experienced regular tells us.

How inclusive is the home of the world's largest arts festival? Guests and performers discuss the arts' role in the LGBT community at the LGBT Centre for Health and Wellbeing on 5 Sept. (6.30–9.30pm). Also at the 9 Howe St HQ, a 'super-duper kitsch and quirky' Community Summer Fete kicks off on Sat. 22 Sept.

Change of use consent is sought for former Urban Angel premises at 47 Broughton St from retail to a tattoo and piercing parlour (Ref. 12/02586/FUL). New tenants have seemingly spotted the lack of a gap in the market.

## Broughton: al fresco dining

Anecdotal evidence suggests an upsurge in midge activity across north and central Edinburgh this summer, with attendees at various St Andrew Square events experiencing particularly intrusive attentions.

Advanced Pest Solution midge monitors have detected no such local trend, however, describing late-August levels in the capital as 'negligible' (but Glen Coe and Galashiels were not for the faint-hearted).

In the longer term, they say, climate change is allowing the 40 or so species of midge to extend their range southwards, including the 5 species of regular biters. Today, Scotland: tomorrow, the world.



Photo: ©Ian Marsman, flickr.

## Goings-on continue in the Archives

Not since Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* have obscure manoeuvrings around labyrinthine old bookshelves stirred so much interest.

The future of the Scottish Catholic Archives in Drummond Place has been the subject of much heated debate recently (Issue 207). Distinguished academics have publicly contested the case for the Archives' transfer or break-up with a kind of meticulous viciousness.

Meanwhile – allegedly reflecting turf wars behind the scenes – senior clerics have occasionally emerged from the shadows to pour napalm on troubled waters.

Latest reports are that the collection, based here since 1958, may after all remain in place following the settlement of certain 'staffing issues'. Don't bank on it, though. For an excoriating summary of recent developments in this slow-motion 'public relations disaster', see [http://bit.ly/PnKSrZ].



## Radiance at the corner

Passers-by may suppose that the striking flowerbed on Bellevue Place opposite the school playground is a City Council fixture. Whilst the ground may be CEC's, the outstanding composition of seasonal plants and flowers is entirely the creation of Christina Thomson who lives nearby and has nurtured them for the past six years.

The site was originally established by the Council, but following damage which they could not afford to repair, Mrs Thomson volunteered her services.

Since then, this oasis has flourished. Even on summer days of horizontal rain, whose spirits aren't uplifted by the lavender and roses?

Her radiant contribution to Edinburgh in Bloom deserves a gold medal all to itself. JRM



## Four-legged fun for good cause

A charity show in Queen St Gardens will raise money for Canine Partners which trains brilliant dogs as assistants for people with disabilities [www.caninepartners.co.uk]. Contests (£2 per dog) will include prettiest-pooch, best-junior-handler, best-trick, catch-the-biscuit, waggiest-tail and obedience-to-music. Entry by donation at Abercromby Place gate, 2–4pm, 16 Sept.



## Moreover ...



What did you do during your **summer holiday**? Local Dominie McIntosh visited Edinburgh Zoo and snapped this rarely seen **Yang Guang** panda handstand. Send us your weird and wonderful photos.

Some **120 venues** will open on 22–3 Sept. as part of Edinburgh's **Doors Open Day**. Free lunchtime and evening lectures will be offered in the week before. Join **like-minded burglars** by planning your itinerary in advance using a handy brochure downloadable from the **Cockburn Association website** at: [<http://goo.gl/amiSn>].

Bellevue's talented young cricketer **Haris Aslam** last month played in the Channel Islands as **Scotland U17 beat Guernsey U17** in the final match of the **ICC European Challenge Series** by 8 wickets. During his 4-over bowling spell, Aslam – who plays club cricket for Carlton – **dismissed 3 opposition batsmen** in the 20-over match.

Anne Casson resigned as Vice Chair of the New Town & Broughton Community Council in late July. As a representative of the **Regent, Royal and Carlton Terraces Association**, she felt unable to endorse NTBCC's support for **temporary reopening** of Princes St to general traffic during closure of York Pl. later this year. She fears it may lead to an **unacceptable increase** in east–west traffic along Regent Rd.

## From Bollywood Dancing to Zumba

### Try something new

Adult Education Classes  
From 24 September 2012

Drummond Community  
High School

41 Bellevue Place, EH7 4BS

0131 556 2651

[activecommunitylearning@drummond.edin.sch.uk](mailto:activecommunitylearning@drummond.edin.sch.uk)

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Fax: 0131 557 6781

Saturday surgeries:  
Leith Library, Ferry Road: 10am.  
Royston Wardieburn Community  
Centre, Pilton Drive North: 12 noon.

Email: [Malcolm.Chisholm.msp@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:Malcolm.Chisholm.msp@scottish.parliament.uk)

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Surgeries:  
Every Monday 5pm: Constituency Office

2nd Monday of the month:  
11am–12noon St Bride's Centre  
1pm–2pm Stockbridge Library

NB. No Surgeries on Public Holidays.

Email: [marco.biagi.msp@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:marco.biagi.msp@scottish.parliament.uk)



### Alison Johnstone MSP for Lothian Region



On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

Contact me on 0131 348 6421  
[Alison.Johnstone.msp@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:Alison.Johnstone.msp@scottish.parliament.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

## New Town/Broughton Community Council

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

Next Meetings:

**Monday 3 Sep.**  
**Monday 1 Oct.**

at 7.30pm

Broughton St Mary's Parish Church, Bellevue Crescent (Drummond Room)

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

## AM DECORATING

Your local painter & decorator **Alastair McAlpine**  
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