

# Spurtle



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**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free**

## St JAMES QUARTER START IN 2015?

Henderson Global Investors (HGI) are working with the Council, investors and key tenants on a revised start date of 2015 for work on the new £850m St James Quarter.

On the basis of last year's schedule (*Breaking news*, 9.2.12), that could mean shops opening in 2018 and completion in 2020, 5 years later than originally planned.

HGI already owns the King James Hotel site on Leith Street, but has yet to buy the crucial leasehold. If necessary, a Council resolution is in place to compulsorily purchase it.

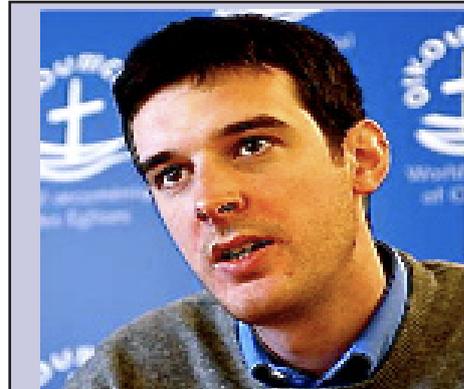
An HGI spokesperson told *Spurtle* they may eventually relocate the hotel in new-build premises on Picardy Place, but planning permission for this is not a precondition of starting the St James Quarter.

More crucial: '... the works to Picardy Place to accommodate future expansion of the tram system will be required by ... [HGI] to be completed in advance of the centre opening to avoid future significant loss-of-trade issues when the tram extension is committed.'

We asked City of Edinburgh Council to detail any such works and their timetable. They replied with masterly imprecision to a slightly different question: 'There are no specific proposals at present to further extend the tram route. However, we don't want to do anything to prevent the possibility of extension in the future so we want to be sure that any works carried out are as future proof as possible.'

'We are only at the stage of having very early discussions about works and there are no definite or detailed proposals in place.' The spokesperson did, however, make clear that any funds for Leith Walk improvements are already fully committed.

Simply put, the two sides' accounts of what's planned for Picardy Place do not match. *Spurtle* smells fudge. Watch this space.



On 8 May Graham McGeoch was inducted by the Presbytery of Edinburgh as Broughton St Mary's new minister, writes *Session Clerk Ian Buckingham*. The Moderator of Presbytery Rev. Ian Gilmore, minister of St Andrew's & St George's West Church and Rev. Rob MacKenzie of Leith St Andrew's took part in the service, after which the congregation welcomed Graham and wife Telma to Edinburgh.

## DIM VIEW OF CITY VISION

The New Town and Broughton Community Council has given a cool reception to the Council's 'Building a Vision for the City Centre Consultation'.

NTBCC's key findings concerning Broughton were that any move (as mooted) to reroute or displace traffic from Princes and George Streets would: (1) be premature until the effects of a fully working tram system are known; (2) risk pushing traffic north of congested York Place and Queen Street along Heriot Row, Abercromby Place and Albany Street; (3) probably diminish rather than improve George Street for pedestrians. For the full text and more, see *Breaking news* (14.5.13).



## BETTER PLANNING AROUND THE CORNER?

Leith Central Community Council members expressed widespread irritation at the shortcomings of the city's planning system during their AGM last month.

At present, seven objections to an application are required before it will be brought before the Planning Sub-committee for discussion. Community council objections count as only one, despite representing the carefully collated views of a wider group.

It's an imbalance which one councillor has described as 'illogical nonsense'.

All is not lost though. The Council's new draft Planning Concordat (<http://goo.gl/EsfYE>) offers genuine improvements, says New Town & Broughton Community Council's John Knight. It aims to set out the roles/responsibilities of the Council, applicant and community councils in Pre-application Consultations.

Although not yet finalised, the draft goes well beyond what is strictly required by statute in giving community councils a greater voice. 'Edinburgh,' he says, 'deserves credit.'

## SHRUBHILL EXTENSION

Edinburgh's Planning Sub-committee voted on 15 May to renew consent for Unite PLC to redevelop Shrubhill House.

The move came despite the arguments of Leith Central Community Council and local councillors Angela Blacklock and Deidre Brock (*Breaking news*, 14.5.13).

However, in a gesture of compromise, councillors chose to renew consent for only 18 months, not the full 3 years for which Unite had applied.

Objectors have voiced their disappointment. Nonetheless the decision marks a shift. Planners in the past have generally voted to agree consent extensions in order to maintain such sites' 'book value'. Now, it seems, patience with the land bankers (Issue 213) may be running out.

Meanwhile, on the adjacent Shrub Place gap-site, contractors Crummock Scotland Ltd have belatedly applied for permission to temporarily store construction materials there (Ref. 13/01416/FUL). 'Store' doesn't begin to describe what they get up to. Neighbours have objected (*Breaking news*, 14.5.13).

## TRAMWORKS NEWS

The latest schedule for tramworks has the following local keypoints in 2013:

- Track, concreting, drainage, and road make-up are due to end in July.
- Overhead cantilevers and track-on wire starts 10 June (and will involve 1 overnight closure of York Place).
- Underground transmission cabling/fibre optics/signals via manholes in July & Aug.
- 'Potential for' trams test-running and traffic returning to York Place in September.

## Briefly



**Have you seen Tom** – serial absconder and master of disguise? He has been missing from Eyre Cres since last summer but is believed to be **living in Broughton still**, possibly under an assumed name (*Breaking news*, 6.5.13). Please report sightings to: Tel. 556 2082.

The next meeting of the **Broughton History Society** will be its AGM and members' soir e on 10 June at 7pm in **Drummond CHS**.

**Parasols, panamas, pumps and plumes**, heavenly hampers (and rainwear against horizontal tempests) are being checked for the **Drummond Midsummer Garden Party** in Drummond Place on 22 June. The children's party is from 3–5pm, and the main event from 7 to around 9pm.

In Issue 218 we reported on the **Great Cloth Nappy Change** organised here by Changeworks. Some **31 Edinburgh babies** who participated have now been confirmed as among 8,301 new **Guinness World Record** holders who took part. The event was held in 15 countries (including **Australia, Brazil, Canada, Iceland Malaysia and Spain**) across 182 locations, most between waist and knee.

**Leith Central Community Council** meets next on 24 June. There will be **no July meeting** of the New Town & Broughton Community Council. The next meeting will be on **5 Aug**.

**PC Simon Daley**, a well-kent presence in Broughton, has flitted to Fettes, where he is now involved in policy and strategy for the **National Safer Communities Dept**. His remit mostly concerns lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender matters, but includes the whole **Diversity spectrum**. Daley retains a reputation locally for his affable nature, **work with young people**, pivotal role in the **Redbraes Polish Memorial**, and the invention of an elasticated toggle for **securing supermarket trolleys to handbags**.

The **LGBT Centre** on Howe St will host a **Pride Breakfast** on 15 June – 'a fantastic opportunity to bring your family and friends to the Centre for music, poetry, arts and crafts and a hearty breakfast before heading off together for the **'Scotia Pride march'**. Book early. The march assembles at 11.30am outside the **Scottish Parliament** and moves off at noon.

## Gralloched but not forgot

Major works are under way in the Stag's Head at 2–4 Broughton Road.

In mid-May much of the popular local bar – renowned for its devoted regulars, amber glow and disinfectant top notes – was removed to a skip. Signs outside proclaim new management.

*Spurtle* understands that refurbishment will take between 6 and 10 weeks, after which a bar – featuring a substantial kitchen where the pool table used to be, and serving 80 (yes, 80) fine beers – will emerge.

A planning application to alter the bar's frontage, and introduce 'traditional blinds' on the Rodney Street side was made last month by Caledonian Heritable Ltd as the site's sole owner (Ref. 13/01832/FUL). CH operates around 295 pubs, including the Dome and the Theatre Royal.

The change is further evidence of what some see as Rodney Street's intrusive gentrification. We welcome the trend, although we'll miss the old Stag's Head's sometimes murky authenticity.

Meanwhile, following changes in national legislation, bars across Edinburgh are applying to open 1 hour earlier on Sundays at 11am. Broughton examples include: The Cask and Barrel, Cumberland Bar, Edinburgh Central Youth Hostel, Mather's, and The Phoenix.



## Fears over potentially noisy 'super-restaurant'

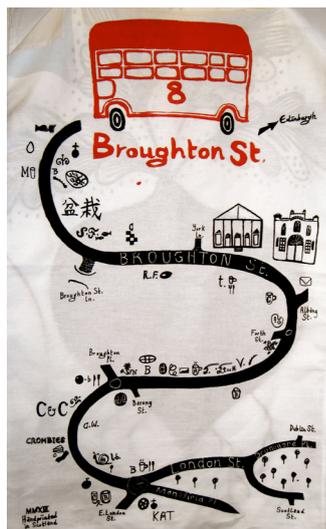
Neighbours of the popular and highly acclaimed Khushi's on Antigua Street have objected to the restaurant's plans to expand.

As reported in *Breaking news* (15.1.13), Khushi's is exploring a basement conversion and extension to the rear. If consent is granted, they will create a 225-seat 'super-restaurant' (Ref. 12/04541/FUL).

However, some who live nearby say Khushi's already generates too much noise. Voluble staff, uplifts and deliveries late at night and early in the morning are currently restricted to the front of the building. Would this spread to the peaceful rear if plans were approved?

Some neighbours also say Khushi's BYOB policy results in excessive drinking by customers, leading to noise and pavement 'mess'. And there are concerns about any basement changes given the building's already problematic foundations.

Residents and Khushi's agents have met twice to discuss the problems. Both sides seek a compromise.



This Broughton Street themed tea towel caused a stir last month when we featured it online (*Breaking news*, 16.5.13). Artist Keith Thompson and stockist Curiouser and Curiouser have been struggling to keep up with demand since.

## A case of possession

'Pleasing the stickler's' in Issue 218 drew a lively response from readers variously exercised by the use of apostrophes. It's a difficult one, emailed local Kim Harrison, but not for us primary school teachers!

The correct way to phrase this is *Gentlemen's Barbers* as they will be providing a service to more than one man. The same would apply to a salon, for example, which could display *Women's Salon* not *Woman's Salon*. This is a 'plural belonging to' situation, but at the end of the day, it's up to Colin and Fiona to name their business as they please.

To be absolutely clear (as mud), either version is right as the words *gentleman* or *gentlemen* are actually adjectives describing what type of barber this is. In this case, they are not nouns; the word barber is the noun.

*Feeling dizzy, under-educated, outraged?* Spurtle welcomes further contributions on apostrophes or any other grammatical irritations readers may have.

An exhibition of paintings and sculpture by New Zealand-born and award-winning artist Emily Little will show at MacNaughtan's Bookshop and Gallery on Haddington Place this month (4–29 June).



## Driving the pompous loco

Local resident John Hein's humorous collection *Railtrack and Other Letters* was published last month in ebook and paperback formats.

The LCCC Chair, *ScotsGay Magazine* editor and Liberal Party candidate is also a railway enthusiast who, when Railtrack PLC re-registered itself in 2003, took a nostalgic shine to the old name and registered his own company as Railtrack Ltd.

Since then, he has been inundated by letters from those (he often brands legal incompetents and ambulance chasers) mistaking him for the former railway infrastructure provider. Irritated, aghast, provoked, Hein began replying in a deadpan cod legalese of his own, teasing out and exposing the pomposity of distant correspondents.

One 5-star review on Amazon's website describes how 'Each letter shows the idiocy of officialdom being bitch slapped back into place with many a cant and curious turn of phrase. Delightful to read ... I look forward to the septic sequel ...' To find out more or to place an order, visit: [<http://amzn.to/10pzSLE>].



## Briefly



The deplorable and dangerous state of the pavement on **Bellevue Crescent** is to be rectified (Issues 180, 191). An inspection by CEC's Roads Services was carried out in May and work to restore the footway will **start in June**.

The framework of the new **Richard Murphy-designed house in Hart St**, which has attracted criticism from some for its '**brazen**' placement in a former walled garden, is now positioned. We hear work on the building will continue for **about another year**.

**Friends of Pilrig Park** will meet on 10 June at 6.30pm in McDonald Rd Library. **All welcome**.

The owner of a strangely designed **replacement garage** (with 1 bedroom, toilet/sink/shower and kitchen/lounge) on **East Scotland Street Lane** has now applied for it to be used as **studio accommodation** (Ref. 13/01863/FUL). See *Breaking news* (28.5.13).

Anyone interested in the mysteries of permitted turns, loading bays, **shared and exclusive bus and tram lanes** on York Place when it reopens (TRO/12/05B) should visit: [<http://bit.ly/13AZk6n>]. **Good luck**.

CEC seeks your views on a number of citywide and local issues: **(1) Proposed Edinburgh Local Development Plan** by 14 June, see <http://goo.gl/v3HtE> **(2) Proposed Pilrig Conservation Area** by 21 June, see *Breaking news* (9.5.13); **(3) Feeling safer priorities in Leith Walk/Leith Wards** by 22 June, see *Breaking news* (21.5.13); **(4) Parking** by 21 June, see *Breaking news* (20.5.13).

Most people favour greener travel, but **Broughton St lacks bike racks**. Some cyclists lock their machines to railings, which can easily cause accidental but **dangerous damage above basements**, as here on Forth St. **One local cycling commuter** is now contacting local traders, Council and lobbyists for advice on how to improve facilities.



## Free cycle speedway taster at Redbraes ring of fire

An event this month offers young people aged 10–16 free expert tuition on the safe way to ride cycle speedway bikes (no gears, no brakes, free wheel). It's in Redbraes Park on Sat. 15 June from 10am–4pm. Just turn up.

There will also be practice races, with four riders at a time hurtling safely four times around the tightly curving outdoor blaze track.

Bikes and helmets will be provided free, but wear not-too-baggy trousers, a long-sleeved top and gloves for crash-landing safely with the least possible agony. You must also bring along a responsible adult to scoop you up and carry you away to a place of even more safety afterwards. They may wish to bring a blindfold.

The day is run by British Cycling coaches, and there will also be demonstrations by top riders from the Edinburgh Falcons Cycle Speedway Team and Youth Teams.

The event is part of the first Edinburgh Festival of Cycling (15–23 June; <http://bit.ly/14klhp6>). 'This comprises around 40 events,' writes Tracey Griffen, 'from inspirational talks (including Mark Beaumont and Mikael Colville-Andersen) to guided bike rides, to the Inaugural "Heels on Wheels" ladies day on the Meadows. Many events are free, and there's also plenty for the whole family. So, get on your bikes and let it roll!'



## New chapters beckon Broughton educator

After 37 years in the profession, Alan Devine – the popular headteacher at Broughton Primary School – will retire on 28 June.

He will first holiday in France, read, and eBay the contents of his garage before perhaps starting some genealogy, creative writing, and another degree. Education has – one way or another – been Devine's life since the age of 5. After studying French and German at Edinburgh University, he 'drifted' into an MA in Education at Moray House. He has taught in and around the city ever since.

'It's been a rewarding career and one whose unpredictability has kept it interesting both as a class teacher and head. You never know what you're going to find when you walk through the door in the morning.'

Children are the same today as when he started in 1976, even though they now have 'a veneer of adulthood' at an earlier age. School technology, though, has changed enormously. Whereas his first pupils marvelled at one new video recorder, the new S1s at Drummond CHS will each be issued with their own Ipad in August. 'It's all great,' he says, '... while it works.'

After 13 years as head here, he's sure Broughton PS is in good shape. The roll is rising (its catchment area has the highest birth rate in the city), it has a healthy social diversity, and a strong sense of community.

Devine will be a hard act to follow. His affectionate firmness, pedagogic know-how, humour and surprising candour about the shortcomings of bureaucracy have endeared him to many. We wish him and wife Jill – still teaching in Midlothian – the very best. *AM*



# Moreover ...

Photo: Euan Leitch.



**3-D Reid Architects** have announced that the magnificent finial globe formerly atop the old Forsyth building in Princes St (now Topshop) will after all be restored rather than remodelled in glass-reinforced plastic (Issues 206, 209, 213-14). Before then, the steeple which bears the globe's weight will require renewal, and this is being priced.

This year's **Leith Festival** runs from Fri 7-Sun 16 June and includes a 12-noon pageant/parade down Leith Walk on the 8th. Venues in or near Broughton include: **Elbow Bar, Joseph Pearce Bar, The Newsroom, Out of the Blue and Whitespace Gallery.** For details see [<http://bit.ly/JWa1ab>] or pick up a programme from public libraries.

**Refurbishment** of the recently combined Edinburgh and Scottish Rooms at **Central Library** is scheduled to finish by the end of this month.

**The Edinburgh Bike Co-operative** has opened a new branch on **Rodney St**, replacing the **Bike Chain**. Meanwhile, across the road at the junction with Eyre Place, the former **William Hill** premises are up for sale or rent.

**Water of Leith Conservation Trust** recommend the following uses for plentiful **wild garlic**: (1) Add a handful to **steamed cabbage or spinach** for extra kick; (2) Add a large sieveful to **leek and potato soup** before blitzing; (3) Make **pesto** by blending leaves (as with basil), pine kernels, garlic, olive oil and parmesan cheese. **Do NOT uproot the plants, please.**

More cycle news! Phase 2 of the **Cyclone Bike Track** began last month, creating a technical mountain-bike course at **Gypsy Brae** (tucked behind Craigroyston House and accessed from **West Shore Road**). The track will be free to use (at own risk). For more on the admirable social enterprise **MY Adventure** and this new north Edinburgh outdoor resource, see [<http://bit.ly/10mYwfy>].

Guest speaker at Drummond CHS's annual **Celebration of Achievement** on 11 June is **Grant Stott**, aka 'The Face that Launch'd a Thousand LRT Buses'.

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Royston Wardieburn Community Centre, Pilton Drive North: 12 noon.

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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 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  
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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 June**  
**Monday 5 August**

at 7.30pm

Broughton St Mary's Parish Church, Bellevue Crescent

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

## AM DECORATING

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