

# Spurtle



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**August  
2013**

**No 221**

**Tel: 556 4848**

**[spurtle@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:spurtle@hotmail.co.uk)**

**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free**

## UNDER SIEGE FROM SEAGULLS



Noisy and intimidating neighbours made many Broughton residents' lives a misery last month.

The problem stemmed from seagull chicks – on roofs, basement steps and in back greens – fouling wherever possible and screeching to

their circling and aggressively defensive parents.

Janice Donaldson of Forth Street had three chicks at ground level near her flat, and despite the hot weather was soon reluctant to go out. Her tom cat was similarly anxious. She suspects many of the troublemakers originate from Forth House. Anecdotal evidence suggests a worsening of the problem, although a Council Pest Control source says the situation is no different to last year. (Not much comfort there, then.)

Although CEC officers can remove seagull nests from complainants' own roofs in May (it may take 5 or 6 removals before the message sinks in), they are powerless to intervene at other times. The birds do not count as vermin and enjoy protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981). In the seagull world, there is no such thing as an ASBO.

Meanwhile, gull-proof bags and wheelie bins across the New Town – last promised in April to be implemented by the end of July – have still not materialised. A CEC spokesperson told *Spurtle* that, following a further extension of consultation, plans are progressing well, maps are being prepared, and the new scheme should be in place 'some time in August'.

## CLASSROOMS IN CAR PARK FOR BROUGHTON PRIMARY SCHOOL?

Director of Children and Families Gillian Tee says the Council's favoured option for Broughton Primary School expansion is to build new classrooms. They may be sited in the current car park to avoid impinging on precious playground space.

Reconfiguration of the nursery/gym and reoccupation of the After School Club will not take place.

The news came in Tee's response to a letter by local parent David Sterratt (*Breaking news*, 18.7.13). In it she reiterated CEC's wish to sell rather than re-use the former school adjacent at 154 McDonald Road. Sterratt's reply is at *Breaking news* (26.7.13).

On a related topic, we wondered last month why the proposed development at 154 McDonald Road began as a Major Development but was later reclassified as a Local Development (*Breaking news*, 2.7.13).

Under the first designation, Kingsford Estates Ltd would have been obliged to involve the public and local community council in a thorough pre-application consultation process. Under the latter one, they were not.

A Council spokesman has since told the *Spurtle* that a Planning officer had 'made a mistake'. The project should never have been

## CATHERINE HAS WOOL TO WIN



Kathy's Knits on Broughton Street has been nominated in the 'Scotland's Best Local Independent Yarn Store' category of the British Knitting Awards 2013. The honour comes just a year after the shop opened – (*Breaking news*, 10.7.12) – something which astonished the editor of sponsor *Let's Knit* magazine when she phoned to tell proprietress Catherine Robb the good news. Vote before 23 September at: [<http://goo.gl/RllcQ>]. Results will be announced in November. More knitting at *Breaking news* (12.7.13).

## LEITH WALK PLAN IN PROGRESS

Issue 220 reported the generally positive response in June to Council plans for upgrading Leith Walk. Since then, CEC's plans have changed – arguably for the worse.

In the Broughton area, for example, a new 2-way segregated cycle lane between Elm Row and Annandale Street has been reduced (instead of extended to Pilrig Street as lobbyists suggested), potentially leaving northbound cyclists dangerously exposed at their junction.

Greener Leith vigilantly detailed the changes (and questioned handling of the consultation by officials) on 21 July at [<http://greenerleith.org.uk>]. Transport Convener Leslie Hinds responded on Twitter that plans had been changed to take into account also the competing demands of pedestrians and bus users.

*Spurtle* suspects the new plan's shortcomings owe as much to CEC's conceptual timidity as to sensible compromise. Bolder Continental city planners remain streets ahead.

treated as a Major Development since it involved the reorganisation of an existing structure, not the erection of a new one.

We applaud the Council for coming clean, but are baffled by how such an error could have been made in the first place. To their credit, Kingsford staff later offered to discuss their plans with locals at their office or in the Magnum, or at a hastily arranged but more formal drop-in event in McDonald Rd Library on 8 July (*Breaking news*, 3.7.13).

## Briefly



**'Sleepyhead'** – serene, peculiar, and reminiscent of Millais's 'Ophelia' – appears in the first solo exhibition by **Glasgow-based artist Kevin Low** at Union Gallery this month. Low's quirky portraits are first created using a digital tablet and pen, then printed with archival papers and inks. *The Pleasures of Nature* runs from 2 Aug–2 Sept.

A new Lothian Bus service is running between **Bristo Place and the Royal Botanic Garden** this summer. The No. 28 operates every **20 minutes from 10am–6.17pm until 15 Sept**, travelling via the Mound, Hanover St, Dundas St, Canonmills, Inverleith Terrace, Inverleith Place and Inverleith Row.

How time flies! On 25 July **Leith Time Bank** celebrated 12 months of 'building the coproduction economy of the future' (Issue 208). **LTB brokers the exchange of services** (not money for services), and over 100 Time Credits have been earned so far, with skills including: cake decorating, English development lessons, CV writing, knitting, minor DIY, teaching Polish, computer skills, researching a new mobile phone contract, sewing, visiting an art exhibition, teaching about nutritious food and herbs, and leaflet design. LTB is based at **19–21 Buchanan St (Tel. 553 2559)**.

**David Watt of Bellevue Place** has written in to welcome levelling-off and raking of earth at the until recently unkempt **Rodney St Triangle**. 'I hope this is not being done at the expense of the ratepayers,' he says. 'The **various utility contractors** who caused the mess in the first place should be paying for it' (Issue 214, *Breaking news*, 18.3.13).

**Broughton** featured prominently in Susan Stellin's *New York Times* guide to **'36 Hours in Edinburgh'** on 11 July. Calton Hill, the Botanic, Glasshouse Hotel, Portrait Gallery and the Gardener's Cottage restaurant **shone in a select list**.

Abigail Houston and daughter Mia were killed in a car crash in the Highlands on 8 July. Andrew Houston – a solicitor-advocate and partner at **McSporrans Criminal Defence on E. London St** – was seriously injured, as was the couple's second daughter Lily. *Spurtle* extends its condolences to all concerned.

## Police on new zigzag alert

Parking on zigzag lines at the zebra crossing outside McDonald Road Co-op continues to endanger Spurtleshire pedestrians and cyclists.

Despite the risk of three points and a £60 fine, Co-op shoppers, delivery drivers, and even local residents flout the law and block sightlines by parking on the zigzags.

Neil Inglis tweeted this picture after his wife was nearly hit by a vehicle. 'The cars parking here completely block the view, causing bikes, other cars and even fire engines to swing out and not see people until nearly too late,' he said.

Some residents also park on a dubiously legal single-yellow here (previously a double-yellow until Council contractors erred when repainting after roadworks). This single-yellow has a 'broken window effect' as one illegally parked car encourages others to do the same.

When contacted, Police promised to increase foot patrols in the area to combat dangerous parking, but said it was up to the Council to correct and enforce the yellow line.



## First term for new primary

Edinburgh's first dedicated Gaelic Medium Education primary school opens this month. Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce – or Parkside Primary – occupies the refurbished former Bonnington PS on Bonnington Rd.

The school will start with 190 pupils, but has room for 420 and provision for a 40:40 nursery. P1 numbers have increased from 36 last year to 56 this year, and Education officers anticipate that numbers will continue to grow as there has also been a noticeable increase in children joining the Gaelic nursery class at the school and attending Gaelic playgroups.

Parkside's catchment is citywide, although places are available to those from further afield in what is only Scotland's third dedicated Gaelic primary school.

It will continue the emphasis of its Tollcross-based forebear on traditional Gaelic and Scottish culture, especially music. It also aims to continue thriving on the 'strong multicultural, multilingual and wide-ranging social background' of its host community.

Headteacher Anne MacPhail, appointed in February, says 'The opening of the new school is a significant commitment to the future of Gaelic language in the city'.

## McDonald Road TA Centre to close

The 2-storey Category B-listed Territorial Army Centre (with unlisted addition to the rear) at 124 McDonald Rd is to close. Functions will transfer to Redford Barracks, probably by 2018.

The building has previously housed the Infantry (Royal Scots, 52nd Lowland Regiment and 6th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland), and is currently used as a base for a detachment of the Intelligence Corps. About 120–50 soldiers currently use it.

A Ministry of Defence spokesperson told *Spurtle* that the property's future will be decided jointly by the MOD and the Lowland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association. No decision to sell has been made, and no date for such a decision exists.

No. 124 was originally designed for the Royal Artillery Regiment (1912) by Sir Thomas Duncan Rhind, the architect also responsible for the practical but unlovely TA Centre on E. Claremont St.

## Dundas Street's green secret

Art aficionados will be familiar with the garden at the rear of the Scottish Gallery in Dundas Street, but it is otherwise secluded from the public gaze.

This charming, understated space features artworks in metal and other media which one chances upon as if exploring a classic corner of one of Gertrude Jekyll's creations. Here Art and Nature fuse in a gentle echo of Andrew Marvell's 'green thought in a green shade'. *JRM*

Two further garden treasures – 'hidden, overlooked, or taken for granted' – are celebrated in *Breaking news* (1.8.13).



## Much abuzz about meadows

Readers may have seen our online coverage of the Insect Pollinators Initiative's perennial meadows in St Mark's and Pilrig Parks (Breaking news, 3.7.13). Project organiser Damien Hicks, of Edinburgh University's School of Biological Sciences, explains:

The idea in this third year of the scheme is to understand the community of interacting plant and insect species through network analysis. Because the same studies are being carried out in Reading, Leeds and Bristol, we hope to be able to reach conclusions relevant UK-wide.

The work follows surveys on farmland and nature reserves in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee in 2011, and on a range of habitats in Edinburgh (e.g. parks, road verges, cemeteries, private gardens, allotments) in 2012. We are assessing the floral resources of urban meadows (i.e. the amount of pollen and nectar), and using molecular techniques to gauge species and populations.

The various teams' blogs can be seen at [<http://goo.gl/Aqq4GD>].

The Initiative's other perennial meadows in Edinburgh are at Joppa Quarry, Saughton and St Katharine's Park. Its annual meadows are in: Montgomery Street Park, Drum Brae Drive, Jewel Park, Hailes Quarry Park, Firrhill School, West Pilton Park, Davidson's Mains Primary School, Cairntows Park, Sighthill Park, and Inch Park.



## George V Park to be closed throughout the summer



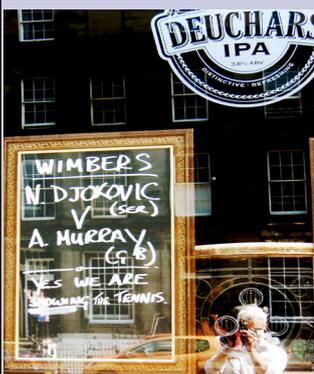
With very regrettable timing, the eastern end of King George V Park will be closed for the entire school summer holiday. New play equipment – Domino, Roll-up, Rodeoboard and Baubles – and a seating area of terraced steps (boxed area above) are being installed after numerous unforeseen postponements earlier in the year. The work – which began in mid-July – is expected to take between four and six weeks.

## A walk on the wet side



Without warning, fanfare or official explanation (Issue 220), Bell's Bridge at the end of Bell Place is at last open. So, too, are the new ramp leading from St Mark's Park and the raised walkway overlooking the Water of Leith on Warriston Road (above). All three are attractively designed and appear to have been competently finished. (Sad that competence nowadays merits comment!) *Spurtle* will pass over the eye-swivelling expense.

## Och bin ein Dunblaner



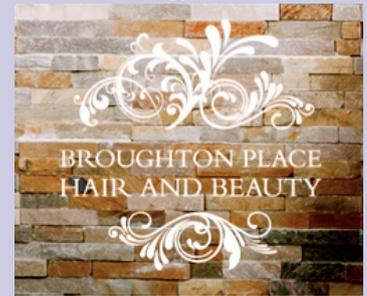
(Breaking news, 10.9.12; Issue 212). Similar plans are now in the offing for a Wimbledon-themed bench, of which more anon.

Broughton Street reverberated to the sound of tennis fans sipping lime cordials on 7 July. Last year, Drummond Tennis Club commemorated Andy Murray's Olympic gold with a specially painted bench

## Something fishy in the state of Norway

Twenty-two local kids (and 6 leaders) from the 11th Edinburgh North East Scouts joined 13,000 others in Stavanger for the 2013 International Jamboree last month. Activities included a BBQ, football, bungee-jumping, swimming, campfire songs, map reading and a hilly 24-hour hike through the best and worst of the Norwegian summer without adult supervision. Assistant Scout Leader Scott Richard's favourite eavesdropping of the week: 'He's trying to scrub the dishes with a frozen salmon steak.' More in *Breaking news* (5.7.13, 13.7.13).

## Briefly



Welcome to **Broughton Place Hair & Beauty**, now filling the spot formerly occupied by Olive Branch sandwiches at No. 2a.

Noisy protests were made outside **Leith Job Centre** on 11 July. Demonstrators organised by the **Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty** claim a local manager insists 30% of claimants should be sanctioned for not meeting **Job Seekers Allowance** conditions. This policy, they say, 'is being translated into **oppressive bullying treatment** on a daily basis'. *Spurtle* hears from within the Job Centre that some **staff are themselves unhappy** with management policy and seek transfer.

Early evening customers were inconvenienced on 12 July when the **ceiling collapsed at The Other Place**. Three people were ambulated to hospital to be checked and treated for **head, shoulder, back and foot injuries, and one deep arm wound requiring stitches**. This was an unlucky interruption to what otherwise has been a highly successful start for **Broughton Rd's newest bar** (Issue 220).

Over the road, Canonmills's newest bar **Cross & Corner** opened on 16 July. Visitors to **Facebook** [<http://goo.gl/dkE8x>] have been entertained by pictures of **refurbishment in progress**. Those desirous of a night on the tiles need **look no further**.

Aimed at LGBT and non-LGBT women, the splendidly named **Amazing Gracies Women's Football Club** meets for friendly kickabouts each Wednesday (7–8pm) on the 5-a-side pitch outside Drummond CHS. **All ages, fitness-levels and footballing abilities** are welcome, as are newcomers. More info: [[amazinggraciesfc@hotmail.com](mailto:amazinggraciesfc@hotmail.com)].

Two years ago (Issue 197), we reported residents' campaign to **retain a well-known and trusted postie** on his Bellevue round. A petition and intervention by Malcolm Chisholm MSP and Mark Lazarowicz MP brought about the desired result. **Royal Mail now has new plans to move him**. Mary-Rose Grieve urges locals to 'Save Dave Again', by writing to the same 2 politicians and **Joanne Taylor in Royal Mail Group's Chairman & Chief Executive Office**: [[joanne.taylor@royalmail.com](mailto:joanne.taylor@royalmail.com)]. Another petition may follow. See *Breaking news* (25.7.13).

# Moreover ...



After a few days in the **Rodney St Tunnel last month**, this sensitive pasted depiction of a geriatric Haka was **mysteriously removed**. *Spurtle* seeks information on who expunged him and why.

**Pupils resume at state schools in Edinburgh on 14 Aug.**

**Friends of Warriston Cemetery** will tap volunteer and Council support in restoring the site as a **source of history, culture, urban wildlife and safe public leisure**. Annual membership costs £6. Email: [bobreinhardt2003@yahoo.com].

[www.broughtonspurtle.org.uk] is the place for searchable **back issues of the Spurtle**, a local directory and regularly updated **Breaking news**. Wee items of local interest also appear on **Twitter (@theSpurtle)** and **Facebook (Broughton Spurtle)**.

For Broughton **Fringe-nicks** exhausted at the prospect of fossicking in distant parts, **here is a list of venues close to home:** Artisan Roast, Café Camino, Dundas Gallery, Edinburgh Academy, Edinburgh Christadelphian Church, Edinburgh City Football Club, Edinburgh Masonic Club, Edinburgh Playhouse, Edinburgh Printmakers, Greenside, Jamhouse and Mansfield Traquair Centre. **For an interactive map showing hundreds of places to stay clear of**, visit: [http://goo.gl/pRv6U].

## The Berlitz Language Centre

seeks welcoming host families for students this summer



City centre or nearby  
1+ bedroom, ideally with private bathroom / Breakfast and dinner each day

Ask for Louise, 14 Frederick St  
Tel. 226 7198  
edinburgh@languagecentres.com

**Spurtle Team:** F.Booth, J. Dickie, T. Griffen, M. Hart, J. MacDonald, A. McIntosh, J. R. Maclean, T. Smith, D. Sterratt, E. Taylor-Smith. Post: Spurtle, c/o Narcissus Flowers, 87 Broughton St, Edinburgh EH1 3RJ.

## Malcolm Chisholm MSP

Edinburgh North and Leith



Constituency Office:  
5 Croall Place, Leith Walk, EH7 4LT  
Tel: 0131 558 8358  
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

## Marco Biagi MSP

Edinburgh Central



Constituency Office:  
77 Buccleuch Street, EH8 9LS  
0131 668 3642

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



## 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)

# Broughton

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Edinburgh EH1 3RJ.



## Mark Lazarowicz

MP for Edinburgh North and Leith



Constituency Office:  
5 Croall Place, Leith Walk, EH7 4LT  
Tel: 0131 557 0577  
Fax: 0131 557 5759

[mark.lazarowicz.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:mark.lazarowicz.mp@parliament.uk)  
[www.marklazarowicz.org.uk](http://www.marklazarowicz.org.uk)

**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 5 August**  
at 7.30pm

Broughton St Mary's Parish Church, Bellevue Crescent  
[secretary@ntbcc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@ntbcc.org.uk)

## AMDECORATING

Your local painter & decorator **Alastair McAlpine**  
Tel: 0131 553 6589 **Mobile:** 07866 222 656 [alastairmc Alpine@btinternet.com](mailto:alastairmc Alpine@btinternet.com)