



## TROUBLE ON THE HILL



Locals called in the Council again last month when part of the hill leading down from the Claremonts to Broughton Road tenements' back greens gave way, taking with it a section of fence (*Breaking news*, 14.4.14).

Residents claim the collapse followed illegal removal of earth from private property in Claremont Bank.

When neighbours later spotted the workers shifting earth from the top of the slope to lower down, they called in Planning officials who agreed that this activity constituted more than 'clearing', overstepped the mark and could result in a 'stop order'. Contractors on the site have promised to make permanent repairs to the fence, and not to move earth until the results of a CEC topographical survey are clear. A more in-depth CEC site investigation will follow, taking into account recent underpinning of some properties on Broughton Road.

Some workers here have grown increasingly irritated by the close attention of neighbours. One resident was verbally abused recently in his own garden, and threatened with having a camera rammed somewhere very few amateurs have ever successfully photographed. Bizarrely, contractors have even taken to blacking-out a company name from items of equipment, and still refuse to identify their employer.

In the meantime, Malcolm Chisholm MSP, Mark Lazarowicz MP and Councillors Brock and Gardner have all taken an interest. Neighbours meet again on 6 May.



## 'EASTRE (HYMN TO THE SUN)'

This stunning bronze is by John Duncan Fergusson RBA (1874–1961) and will feature in Lyon & Turnbull's sale of Scottish Paintings and Sculpture in Broughton Place at 6pm on 22 May. It's expected to fetch between £12,000 and £18,000. Locals are invited to examine the entire sale during viewing (18–21 May, and until 1pm on 22 May), or drop in at any other time for advice.



## STILL ON A HIGH AT OUT OF THE BLUE



Out of the Blue (OOTB) has been a hothouse of creativity since it began in 1994 in a small shop in the capital's Old Town. At that time, finding creative space in Edinburgh was a massive challenge. Two years later, the Bongo Club started in the complex of studio, workshop, exhibition and performance spaces which OOTB had by then carved out from the former New Street bus depot.

Ducking the wrecking ball, in 2002 OOTB moved to the B-listed former army drill hall in Dalmeny Street, and the Bongo Club to the Cowgate via the University after a successful 'Save the Bongo' campaign.

In the last 20 years, hundreds of thousands of people have participated in thousands of OOTB workshops, classes, performances, festivals, gigs, clubs and events. For a free taster of what's on offer today, visit 16 Dalmeny Street on Saturday 17 May, 10am–5pm. There's also a free 'Out of the Blue is 20' exhibition running here from 12 May to 23 May, featuring many iconic artefacts and images from the Trust's first two decades.

## RBS OUTLINES LOFTY EYRE TERRACE PLANS

Royal Bank of Scotland seeks 'permission in principle' for a major new development on 4 ha fronting Eyre Terrace and Place (Ref. 14/01177/PPP; *Breaking news*, 8.4.14).

The plans by Michael Laird Architects envisage an as yet undetermined mix of residential, office, commercial ground-floor, hotel and care-home uses, reaching 3 storeys above ground level in some places and with up to 70 car parking spaces.

The proposal would build on the patch of 40-year-old wilderness facing Eyre Place (once a tenement) with no compensating patch of greenery elsewhere. Two unlisted properties (an uninhabited house and warehouse) would be demolished.

A long stretch of buildings would 'surveil' the western end of King George V Park in a way some locals consider too tall and overbearing. Overall, however, many welcome a return to active community use of this long semi-derelict brownfield site.

Readers with opinions on the plan should contact both the CEC Planning Dept and the New Town & Broughton Community Council.

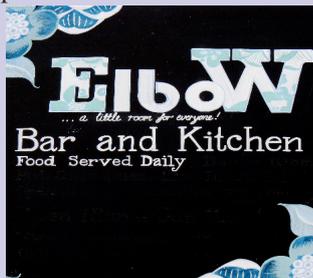
## Briefly

**Broughton History Society** meets next on 12 May at 7pm in Drummond CHS. David Ingram will talk on **Gayfield House**. May interest the hard of harling (*Breaking news*, 30.10.12).

Opening hours for the as yet unopened **Lidl branch on Logie Green Rd** have been extended by 2 hours per day on weekend evenings (*Breaking news*, 2.2.14). All **deliveries and collections** are confined to 7am–7pm (Mon–Sat) and 9am–7pm (Sun).

CEC's Transport & Environment Convener **Cllr Lesley Hinds** (Inverleith ward) has been selected to stand as Labour's candidate for the **Edinburgh Northern & Leith** constituency in the next Holyrood election (2016).

*Spurtle* exclusively revealed details of the latest unsubstantiated rumour concerning new **ownership of St Stephen's Church** last month (*Breaking news*, 7.4.14). It was, we heard, definitely being bought by a **senior executive** at Edinburgh-based video games developer **Rockstar North** for partial use as a props store ... perhaps.



**Elbow**, Broughton Point's alternative bar with 'a little room for everyone' (Aug 2009–Nov 2013) has reopened under new management. **Creaky Gate Ltd** – whose other interests include the **Bakehouse** on Broughton St and the newly refurbished **Harbour House Hotel** in Port Patrick – has taken over the remaining 8 months of the lease from **Punch Taverns**. It will bid when that elapses and owner **Scotmid** sells the property.

The next meeting and AGM of **Leith Central Community Council** is on 19 May in McDonald Rd Library at 7pm.

Last month, **clock, chimes and illumination** at St Stephen's resumed after a telecoms upgrade in the tower.

**Scottish Water's sewerage-related** 3m-deep hole in E. Claremont St, finally closed and tidied after a 3-week presence last autumn, reopened on 14 Apr. It was euphemistically described online as 'carriageway repairs' but a spokesperson told *Spurtle* otherwise. 'We had hoped the previous work would suffice. Unfortunately, some further work has been identified as necessary. It is **quite a deep pipe** and very old infrastructure we are dealing with, so **not entirely straightforward**'. Repairs were estimated to last 2 weeks.

## Anthony John Harmar FRSE

Professor Tony Harmar, a distinguished academic pharmacologist and neuroscientist at the University of Edinburgh, died on 10 April.

After a BA in Biochemistry and a PhD in Pharmacology at Cambridge (1976), Harmar researched in Switzerland before joining the staff of the Medical Research Council's Brain Metabolism Unit in Edinburgh in 1981. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1996. In 2001 he joined the staff of Edinburgh University, with a Personal Chair in Molecular Pharmacology, and became Head of the School of Biomedical Sciences. It was at around this time that he moved to Broughton. In 2006 he was appointed Professor of Pharmacology.

His research interests included the control of circadian rhythms, and the serotonin transporter (important in some classes of anti-depressant). He was also vice-chair of the International Union of Basic and Clinical Pharmacology Committee on Receptor Nomenclature and Drug Classification (NC-IUPHAR), and for some time chaired its Database Subcommittee.

Former colleagues at the University describe him as 'an immensely kind man, as well as a great scientist'. Our condolences go to wife Jillian and family.



## Cherry Tree, at Dusk

The gales have, this past week, been worse than at the equinox; leaves spiralling, as though caught in a thermal; the main bough

of next door's sycamore crazily overhanging. Through it all, amazingly, the blossom has clung on: each bloom, a tiny beacon.

Stewart Conn

*SC's The Touch of Time: New and Selected Poems was published by Bloodaxe Books in February: ISBN 9781852249984.*



Members of Edinburgh's Sikh community paraded in spring sunshine and fine style to celebrate Vaisakhi last month. Children led the way down Pilrig Street (*Breaking news*, 20.4.14).

## Margo MacDonald MSP

Margo MacDonald MSP died on 4 April. She will be remembered as an indomitable, forthright and articulate politician. Her integrity, charm and no-nonsense approach were much admired, not least at the *Spurtle* hustings she attended in 2003, 2007 and 2011.

She was elected as an MSP for the Lothians in 1999 (SNP), and thereafter as an Independent list MSP for Edinburgh and the Lothians.

Other sources have now covered her political career and causes in detail. Here we confine ourselves to last month's three thumbnail bulletins by Twitter follower @\_d\_o\_s\_s :

'Had the pleasure of hearing her speak at a few hustings. You'll rarely hear a more sincere, passionate & committed voice in politics.'

'And even in the midst of the most heated debate she had a sharp, wicked sense of humour. Sadly, her ilk are no more in politics now.'

'She was a joyous, principled contrast to the grey, careerist slugs we endure nowadays. She ate Nicola Sturgeon for breakfast.'



**Issue 228 featured streets whose names remain on corners despite having changed. This month, correspondent Tim Smith points out another.**

**Hartington Terrace** is now restricted to one quoin of a spur off Rosslyn Crescent, but from 1875–94 honoured Spencer Cavendish, Lord Hartington, the Liberal Opposition leader. Hartington Gardens and Place survive in Merchiston.



## Burns to ignite Indy Ref poets

In the run-up to the Independence Referendum on 18 September, we've been bombarded by both sides with historic, economic and political opinions of every kind. But what would someone like Robert Burns be writing if he were alive today?

That's the challenge of 'The Referendum Rant' – a poetry competition running between now and mid-August, and open to anyone aged over 16. Any number of entries per person can be submitted (in any form and in English or Scots), online and for free. Entries must be original, not accepted for publication elsewhere, and no more than 150 lines long. You can be as serious or as playful as you wish.

Organised by First Scottish, a charity backing the development of creative ideas, the competition will be judged by Charles MacLean, Broughton resident Hugh Lockhart, Professors David Purdie and Alan Riach, and two other eminences. For full details, visit [<http://goo.gl/LdVPf3>].

## Through a glass, brightly

Local resident John Knight is full of praise for this restored Georgian fanlight on London St.

'It is superbly made,' he enthuses. 'So often, joiners' fanlights have irregular curved sections as they are difficult to do accurately ... but this one looks so good that it is hard to believe it's not original.'

'Together with the reinstatement of the [96-pane] astragals to the windows, the whole pavilion block has now got back its original Georgian appearance'. The work was carried out by Bryan Wilkie of B&M Joinery on Rodney Street. He took a month to measure examples in adjacent properties, make a template, build the 37-pane fanlight and install it.

Knight – a retired architect and former NTBCC planning convener – understands that the Council may soon refuse planning permission to reinstate original fenestration in old buildings as they now consider plate glass to be as venerable. He describes such a policy as 'daft'.



## From a screen, too brightly?

Forrest on 9 April narrowly won retrospective planning permission for its much-bigger-than-first-consented advertising hoarding at Croall Place (*Breaking news*, 6.3.14) to last 5 years. Sixteen critics objected mostly on grounds of loss of local amenity.

Reader Richard Rennie says the screen violates new conditions as at least 50% of the displays remain animated, they change every 8/9 seconds (not 15 seconds), and brightness fluctuates to former levels. He wants CEC enforcement.

## Spurtleshire: a statistical snapshot

Leith Neighbourhood Partnership held a meeting – 'Understanding Leith' – on 3 April in Bun-sgoil Toabh na Paire (Parkside PS). The presentation used figures abstracted from the Census 2011, from which we have further abstracted figures for the 3 community councils intersecting Spurtleshire: New Town & Broughton; Leith Central; and Inverleith. The last two columns below give averages for Edinburgh and Scotland. We make no claims for the subject range of this snapshot, but thought it would still be of interest. For Leith-specific information, visit [<http://goo.gl/80O5Cc>].

	NT&B	LC	I	E	S
Single-person households	44.8%	49.1%	48.1%	39.1%	34.7%
Households with 2 rooms	8.3%	15.0%	6.2%	6.3%	2.3%
Average no. rooms per household	4.30	3.60	4.50	4.60	4.90
Average no. rooms per person	2.31	2.04	2.50	2.20	—
'Overcrowded' households	2.5%	3.8%	0.9%	2.4%	1.9%
Non-white ethnic groups	8.3%	11.1%	6.6%	8.3%	4.0%
Born in Europe but not in UK	12.4%	15.5%	7.3%	7.5%	3.3%
Economically active, aged 16–74	74.7%	79.2%	75.9%	69.0%	69.0%
Full-time employees, aged 16–74	47.2%	50.5%	46.5%	40.3%	39.6%
Unemployed, aged 16–74	2.8%	4.8%	2.9%	3.9%	4.8%

## Briefly



The Magnum Bar & Restaurant on Albany St offers *Spurtle* readers a **15% discount** on orders with food until the end of this month (*Breaking news*, 4.4.14). Just say '*Spurtle*'.

**Congratulations** to local eateries praised in the *List's* 2014 *Eating & Drinking Guide*: **Earthy Canonmills; Peter's Yard, L'Escargot Bleu, Blue Parrot Cantina, Pomegranate and The Gardener's Cottage**. Even more congratulations to L'Escargot's **Fred Berkmilller**, who wins a Special Award for services to food.

Scottish Gas Network's **mains replacement project** between Barony and E London Sts began on 31 Mar and will continue to close sections of the northbound carriageway on **Broughton St** till 13 Jun.



The seeming massive blocks lining the **embankment on Bellevue** are not as massive as first imagined, and some of the **facing stones** are now parting company from the **crumbly sandstone behind**. CEC is aware.

Just to be clear, our online story about changing the name of the **York Place** tram stop to **Leith Gateway** was untrue (*Breaking news*, 1.4.14).

**Broughton Scouts** were last month yet again locked out of their Fri evening venue at St Mary's RC PS due to **chronically unreliable agency janitors**. Now, though, with help from **Cllrs Deidre Brock and Andrew Burns** (the latter an ex-Scout), the permanent janitor at a nearby school will **arrange access**. Scout Leaders will also be entrusted with a **spare set of keys** to be prepared for unforeseen glitches.

The **Cameron Guest House Group** has applied to convert 4B Gayfield Place from an office to a **B&B/guesthouse** (Ref. 14/01197/FUL). Not all CGHG neighbours are always entirely cheerful.

## Moreover ...

Broughton Primary School's **Summer Fair** is from noon–2.30pm on Sat 31 May. **All welcome:** circulating, bric-a-bracking, **mums being embarrassing**, eating, up-and-downing, nauseating, dads' fixed grins, too much sun, **scquelches**, weird smiling teachers, bad bargains, **pocket money gone**. Happy.

**Edinburgh Printmakers** have now secured £5m Heritage Lottery Fund backing for plans to **expand and relocate** in 2017 from **Union St** to Fountainbridge (Issue 228; *Breaking news*, 4.4.14).

After **Howe and Dublin St** closures, other local firms have stepped up newspaper deliveries across the New Town, **Margiotta's** and **Canonmills Newsagent Plus** among them.

Network Rail's recent application for a **Certificate of Lawfulness** to use part of Waverley Station's concourse for a **temporary craft market** (Ref. 14/00869/CLP; Issue 228) was approved after a 'Fast Track Decision'.

**Fusion House at 73 Logie Green Rd** has remained empty since completion in 2008. Owners now seek planning permission to **reconfigure it as 34 flats** (Ref. 14/01376/FUL; *Breaking news*, 15.4.14).

In Issue 228 we gave the impression that **Tattie Shaw's** on Elm Row might soon open on Sundays. In fact they were already doing so. Eating **5 a day 7 days** a week could not be more convenient.

*Spurtle* is **unimpressed** by a sign on the northern side of **St Andrew Sq Garden's** northern railing. Not only do its arrows resemble squashed cupcakes, but they point visitors seeking **Broughton St** to Multrees Walk.

State schools close on **19 May (Victoria Day)** and, where used for polling stations, on **22 May (European election)**.



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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:

12 May & 9 June

AGM then regular meeting at 7.15pm

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

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

## AMDECORATING

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