

Spurtle

Find us at: www.broughtonspurtle.org.uk

**October
2009**

No 175

Tel: 558 8574

spurtle@hotmail.co.uk

BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

SHRUB PLACE PLANS DRUBBED

Locals oppose Silverfern (The Wharf) Ltd and LDC (Shrubhill) Ltd's current plans for two 120-bed hotels and groundfloor retail space at 7 Shrub Place (Ref. 09/01872/FUL).

Pilrig Residents Association and Leith Central Community Council (LCCC) objected to, among other things, the bland design and how it departed from an existing masterplan for the area, particularly in not providing a proper street off Leith Walk (a key element in the successful planning enquiry against Wimpey in 2004), and preserving the street's existing strong vista.

They pointed to an alleged oversupply of hotels in the area, and questioned the arrangements for dropping off guests once trams are operational. There was insufficient parking, they said.

In a section welcomed by *Spurtle* (Issues 169-74), LCCC also questioned the need for yet another supermarket in the area (Waitrose may be interested). How, it continued, could deliveries reach such a store without clogging narrow residential streets to the rear?

New Town and Broughton Community Council found the plans 'sketchy' and 'almost entirely devoid of architectural merit'. It questioned the necessity of losing 3 trees, and the provision of only 7 car parking spaces. It again made no comment relating to supermarkets.

LCCC reserved particular criticism for architects Hackland + Dore who, it suggested, had been given only 4 weeks to draw up the plans, had not submitted them timeously in accordance with Planning Dept Guidance, and seemed unaware of likely traffic constraints caused by the trams. With crushing generosity, LCCC remarked to CEC Planning: 'Perhaps some of the issues we outline ... might have been addressed had the Architects had the time to consult and consider these. Perhaps the Committee should view this application as an "outline" submission.'

Go to 'Extras' on the *Spurtle* website for links to relevant papers.

HOPETOUN CRESCENT GARDEN WINS NATIONAL AWARD

In August, Hopetoun Crescent Garden (HCG) was lauded with a prestigious national award. The National Green Flag award scheme, launched in 1996, sets the benchmark against which parks and green spaces are measured, similar to the Blue Flag for beaches. Council officials and the Chairman of Friends of HCG received the award at a ceremony in Bournemouth. The award consists of a certificate and an impressive green flag which was erected beside the recently streamlined notice boards at a celebration on 6 September.

This is a major accolade as HCG is one of only 10 winners of the award in Scotland this year. What with HCG's success, the opening of the marvellous Barony Community Garden, ongoing work in the 'greening' of George V Park by its own indefatigable Friends, not to mention the spectacular floral 'triffid' in the Mansfield Place roundabout, 2009 proves to be an *annus mirabilis* for Broughton's dear green spaces, despite the economic blues.



Friends of HCG Mitchell Manson and Maggie McClure. Photo courtesy of CEC.

BROUGHTON IS NEW VENUE



*A major exhibition of 19th and 20th-century Scottish paintings was held at Mansfield Traquair Centre on 15-17 Sept. prior to their Sotheby's auction in London on 30 Sept. They included a fine collection by the great Colourists Peplow, Cadell ('Lady Lavery in Black', photo courtesy of Sotheby's), Hunter and Fergusson, as well as the dreaded Howson and Vettriano. A Sotheby's spokesperson told *Spurtle*: 'We are thrilled to hold our two preview exhibitions of Scottish paintings in this wonderful building, and from now on it will take place here biannually.' Formerly, the event was held in the Assembly Rooms on George St.*

SPURTLE TO STIR ONLINE

Spurtle offers new services and reaches new readers following the launch of its website at: [www.broughtonspurtle.org.uk].

The usual 4-page paper will still be distributed through pubs, clubs, shops, cafés and letterboxes. But the online version will offer glorious colour and:

- news bulletins when important stories break between monthly publication dates
- extra photos and articles for which there isn't space in our standard format
- a letters page
- a searchable archive of past *Spurtles* – initially back to 2007 but eventually to 1994
- a rolling events planner
- a directory of local services
- an archive of *Broughton History Society Newsletters*
- advertisements from local businesses and organisations.

To keep the website relevant, accurate and up to date, we'll continue relying on readers' input. See 'Competition' (p.3).

Briefly

Broughton History Society will meet in Drummond CHS at 7.30pm on 5 Oct. Millie Gray will discuss 'A Leith Childhood'. On 2 Nov. (same time/venue), Alex Hill will talk on 'Weather-telling: Past, Present and Future', weather permitting. Members free, visitors £2.

CEC has approved plans for the Edinburgh New Town Cookery School Ltd at 7-7a **Queen Street**. The B-listed property, built in 1775, has housed offices for 100+ years and was radically remodelled inside in the 1960s and '80s. The new proposal is for a 'food and wine cookery school', including function room and ancillary retail sales area.

Sovereign Court Residents Association will meet on 6 Oct. For details contact [sovcourt@yahoo.co.uk].

Spurtle's pessimistic musings (Issues 173-4) were unfounded. After landscaping work in February, CEC has replaced Broughton History Society's explanatory plaque about the planting and replanting of the 'Soldier's Tree' in **Barony St**. It now faces out towards the street by the relevant rowan.

Schools break up for **mid-term holiday** on Friday 16 Oct. Resume on Tuesday 27 Oct.

Cold behind? Follow the Queen St A-board promising *HOT FOOD TO SIT IN OR TAKE AWAY*.

Baffled seagulls are not raiding rubbish sacks slung by residents from railings. The new tactic started in **Fettes Row**, but spread across the New Town in an exponential rate reminiscent of **blue tits and milk bottle tops**. Quite how smelly bin bags suspended from listed properties in a World Heritage Zone are aesthetically better than **wheelie-bins** baffles everybody else in the city, but CEC is delighted by a **rubbish solution** costing nothing.

Local residents, schools, community and youth groups applying for a **CEC Waste Action Grant** have until 12 Oct. WAGs up to £2,500 are for local projects to reduce, reuse and recycle waste. (**How about training wild animals to eat it?**) CEC is trying to reach or beat a recycling rate of 42% by 2012. Tel. 469 5070; [wasteaction@edinburgh.gov.uk]; or download an application form: [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/environment].

No date has yet been set for the CEC Planning Subcommittee to consider a proposed Tesco Express at 8 Picardy Place.

Get the P.O. out of Portobello

Mark Lazarowicz, MP is pressing Post Office officials to restore a local sorting office for the EH6, EH7 and EH8 districts.

His move follows complaints from locals who have found the switch in July from Brunswick Rd to Portobello inconvenient (Issues 173-4). The East Telferton Industrial Estate is not on a direct bus route, and is to some people a secluded and intimidating area.

Lazarowicz – who was not informed of the change in advance – has now met and corresponded with Royal Mail management. He is urging wide publicity for their promised alternative redelivery methods, and full availability of them. However, he sees the only real solution as returning 'public' facilities to the area they serve.

'I would like the office to move back into an area in or at least nearer Leith and Leith Walk,' he says. 'I have urged Royal Mail to look at this possibility for the near future, even if it cannot be done immediately.'

Full steam ahead at Glenogle

Work on refurbishment of Glenogle Baths continues on schedule and on budget, reports *Linda Wilson* after a site visit on 2 September.

Work has begun on tiling the pool, while new concrete slabs around its edge and at balcony level have been finished. Filtration, heating and ventilation systems costing around £1m are being put in place. Decoration of the roof was completed before scaffolding was removed. Reflectors have been attached to the roof to bounce light onto the pool from lamps attached to the columns around the balcony. Many of the windows have been reinstalled but those that were beyond repair are being replaced with custom-made ones to match the originals. External repairs to the stonework have been completed, and a framework has been installed on the roof ready for solar panels.

To view up-to-date photos, visit: [www.ajwilson.net/saveglenoglebaths/collage-2009sept.html].

A message to readers

Thank you for reading the *Spurtle*: Broughton's unique and independent monthly paper. We aim to: report local news and interests accurately; report without party-political, religious or commercial bias; make connections between local events and the wider world; and generally stir things up a bit. The paper is a not-for-profit organisation and team members are unpaid volunteers. We seek publishable views and information from all readers.

Spurtle's production costs are paid through advertising, but subscriptions give us a core of financial stability. The yearly cost to have a copy delivered to your door or email address is £12. Subscriptions run from October to October each year. Donations of other amounts are never knowingly refused.

To support the *Spurtle*, please write to us at *Spurtle*, c/o Narcissus Flowers, 87 Broughton St, Edinburgh EH1 3RJ. Any cheques should be made out to *Spurtle*. Remember to include your preferred postal or email address. Thank you.

Gibbs hits on all sixes



Sean Gibbs – pictured playing at the Drummond CHS celebration of excellence this year – is an outstanding musical talent who plays trumpet with the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra. The SNJO provides a forum for performers and composers to make music and develop in a big-band setting. Sean has now 'graduated' to the City of Edinburgh Music School for specialist training.

Hostel defies Council ban

A New Town hostel has operated throughout 2009 despite being refused retrospective planning permission in November last year.

The Bus Station Backpackers Hostel, which advertises 16 beds in the basement flat at 30a Dublin Street, caused controversy in 2008 when neighbours complained about disruption and 'free nightly pub crawls'. Owners Mr and Mrs Nicoll appealed CEC's decision this May, but may have to wait until February 2010 for a final resolution by the Scottish government. Meanwhile, the B-listed property is the subject of its third CEC enforcement notice since 2007 concerning unauthorised change of use. Officials are 'keenly interested'.

The hostel received mainly positive online reviews for its facilities and friendly atmosphere from guests who stayed there between 5 July and 4 August 2009. However, one described the rooms as 'humid' and another complained that it was '[a] bit difficult to find it. No notices and no lights downstairs to the main entrance door.' One website lists the hostel as having 24 beds.

Broughton witches and warlocks

Four hundred years ago, Broughton Street was notorious as the haunt of alleged witches and warlocks, and as a place for their execution.

Sir Lewis Bellenden, the Baron of Broughton and Lord Justice Clerk of Edinburgh, was a noted trafficker with warlocks. The *Domestic Annals of Scotland* of 1592 record that he made a deal with Richard Graham – ‘a known necromancer, and common abuser of the people’ – to raise the Devil. This was done in Sir Lewis’s own backyard in the Canongate, and apparently he was so terrified that ‘he took sickness and thereof died’.

Accused witches were incarcerated in Broughton’s old tollbooth before being strangled and burned at the stake. The foundations of this building may possibly remain in the basements of local shops.

On 1 December 1608, 3 women were put to the stake in Broughton, with the event recorded in Privy Council minutes. The Earl of Mar declared that they had been identified in Broughton as witches, had been put to an assize and convicted. The women persevered in their denial to the end, yet were burned alive in such a cruel manner that some of them ‘died in despair, renouncing and blaspheming’. Some broke out of the fire, only to be cast back into it until they were burned to death. The manner of the execution caused an outcry within the city. The names of the women have been lost over time, but records held by the Scottish Witchcraft Survey show that in the same year 3 Brechin women were executed, so it may be that they had been brought to Edinburgh.

So this Halloween, when you’re dookin’ for apples or carving out your tumshie lantern, spare a thought for those innocents who perished – and be thankful we live in more civilised times in Broughton. *FW*

Nooks and crannies: a dream for the winds

The blood-and-thunder press often reports the latest act of vandalism perpetrated by ‘mindless’ young people. It overlooks their creativity and ingenuity in unexpected places. Searching for brambles and windfallen apples in the wasteland behind Drummond Tennis Club’s grounds, I came across this charming object. Was it an art installation in progress, a dwelling inspired by a wigwam, yurt or kraal, or camouflage to protect the swing from those rampant rascallions? It lifted the spirits. This young artist will go far. Her name is Alicia of London Street. May the good winds go with her. *JRM*



Prize competition

Next to the online *Spurtle* masthead [www.broughtonspurtle.org.uk] are 32 close-ups of Broughton people and places. (They appear in random order, 4 at a time, with a different selection on each page. You may need to visit more than once to see them all.) We’re offering a **£32 prize** to the person correctly identifying the greatest number (name or location). In the event of a tie, a winner will be drawn from the shooglie hat. **Happy hunting!** Please send your answers to [spurtle@hotmail.co.uk] or to our postal address (see page 2) by 15 Nov.

Briefly

In a bid to curb disruption, CEC won’t permit further **late-night, hot-food, carry-out shops** on Broughton and Forth Sts, Broughton St Lane, or between Picardy Place and London Rd. **Ye’ve hud yer chips.**

The Edinburgh Saltire Gaelic Choir’s open evening is in 6 North St Andrews Street at 7.30pm on 28 Oct. All welcome.

Fans of authentic **Auld Reekie** experiences have been enjoying **Rodney St**, where recent downpours brought all manner of **honking horrors** to the surface. *Spurtle* told Scottish Water, who were quickly on the job.

Pipearrow Ltd’s application to build a 3-storey house behind 6 Baxter’s Place (Issue 172) has been **refused**.

Peter Verity, a Scotland St **victim of brass kickplate theft** (Issue 174), reports that police have made no progress. Meanwhile, this crime-tide has risen to front doors on Regent Terrace and Calton Hill.

DCT Civil Engineering are digging **investigative holes** in Warriston Rd. They are locating ‘**buried services**’ by the Water of Leith, not – as rumoured – hunting **buried treasure** to pay for the much delayed, cash-strapped **flood prevention scheme**.

At September’s New Town and Broughton Community Council, **rampaging rickshaws** mounting pavements and damaging historic kerbstones were discussed. A PC present advised contacting the rickshaw firms’ owners. They are **very strict with transgressive samlors**.

Whether you agree with him or not, there’s no denying Edinburgh North & Leith MSP **Malcolm Chisholm** is a principled politician. In the Holyrood debate of 2 Sept., he was the only Labour MSP to speak and vote in favour of releasing the terminally ill Libyan terrorist Abdelbasset al-Megrahi on **compassionate grounds**.

CHAMBERS AT RISK

Chambers-Harrap – the famous publisher of dictionaries and reference works, based in Hopetoun Cres. – may close by the end of 2009 with the loss of 27 jobs. Its parent company Hachette UK plans to transfer production of profitable titles to London and Paris. Local unionists see this as ‘blatant asset stripping ... which would put an end to 190 years of Edinburgh publishing tradition’. They will fight closure. See ‘Extras’ on website for further details.

Belle's View



Hi fans

Everything around us is turning gorgeous shades of orange and yellow – including myself. I really must lay off the old carrot juice! What's for fun in autumnal **Broughton?**

Galloping green gourmets! Concerned about your carbon footprint? I should think so too! Get along to the Botanics (Sat. 24/Sun. 25 Oct., 1–4pm, Real Life Science Studio, John Hope Gateway) for **Transition Edinburgh – Sustainable Food**: a community initiative working to reduce carbon emissions and our reliance on oil-based products. Get top tips from local organisations on sourcing food in an environmentally friendly way! (No booking required; ages 5+; free; www.rbge.org.uk)

Forget foraging for autumnal nuts and berries – there's a new funky eatery to hang out in: the **Elbow Bar and Kitchen** (133–5 East Claremont Street, Tel. 556 5662). Billed as 'the local you want to move next door to,' it's the brainchild of local DJ **Trendy Wendy Schofield, Fran 'Tastic' Rossi** and **Jane 'Blanche' Corrigan**. Nibble on a pain-au-chocolat or indulge in a full Scottish breakfast rustled up by **Bonsai Bob** while sitting under a twirling disco ball! [www.elbowedinburgh.co.uk]

And when the nights are fair drawin' in, there's nothing like a good old sing-song to warm the depths of the soul. Whether you want to *Stand by Your Man* or *mend an Achy Breaky Heart*, get along to **Priscilla's Cabaret Bar** at 17 Albert Place and try out their fabulous karaoke with **Jamie Lee Morely** – you can win yourself a bar tab! Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays, until 11pm. [www.edinburghgayscene.com/pricillas.html]

Till next time!

Persephone Rene

Puncture alert for cyclists ...



Tax ahead on Scottish roads

Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Lothians



Surgery Times:
Mondays 10.00–12.00pm
at the Scottish Parliament
Other times by arrangement
Call or email for an appointment
email:
Shirley-anne.somerville@scottish.parliament.uk
Tel: 0131 348 6823
www.shirleyannesomerville.org

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:
9am Leith Library
10.30am Royston/Wardieburn
Community Centre
12pm Stockbridge Library
Email: Malcolm.Chisholm.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

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@marklazarowicz.org.uk
www.marklazarowicz.org.uk
Friday advice sessions:
4.00pm Stockbridge Library,
42 Hamilton Place
5.00pm Ainslie Park Leisure Centre
6.00pm Constituency Office

Spurgle Team: John Dickie, Maria Hart, George Hosey, Alan McIntosh, John Ross Maclean, David Sterrat, Fiona Watt. Spurgle, c/o Narcissus Flowers, 87 Broughton St, Edinburgh EH1 3RJ. Printed at Broughton St Mary's Parish Church

New Town/Broughton Community Council

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

Next meeting on:
5 Oct. at 7.30pm
Drummond Community
High School

mowats@blueyonder.co.uk

THINKING OF LETTING YOUR PROPERTY?

We always require properties to
meet constant demand.

Broughton Property Management

61-63 Broughton Street
Edinburgh - EH1 3RJ
Tel 0131 478 7222

email: info@broughtonproperty.co.uk



Network not working?

Call John and get it fixed.

t: 07771 784 058 / 0131 557 9577

e: john.robinson@yuiop.co.uk

Computer support and consultancy
for small businesses and individuals

AM DECORATING

Your local painter + decorator

Alastair McAlpine

Tel: 0131 556 4841

Mobile: 07866 222 656
alastairmc Alpine@btinternet.com