

Spurtle



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No 243

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

BY-ELECTION FIRST FOR WARD 12



Leith Walk will make Scottish history next month.

Following the resignation of Councillors Deidre Brock and Maggie Chapman, the 10 September by-election will be the first in which two candidates are returned under the single transferable vote system. Voters will rank as many candidates as they wish in order of preference.

The deadline for nominations is 10 August, but as *Spurtle* went to press

Marion Donaldson had already been selected for the Labour Party and Susan Rae for the Greens.

The Greens are pushing hard to replace Chapman with one of their own, but there is speculation that the SNP may not only try to replace Deidre Brock but ride the party's current wave of popularity by fielding a second candidate.

To apply for a postal vote, or to register to vote, call the Electoral Registration Office on Tel. 344 2500 by 25 August. More info at: [<http://goo.gl/pvmV2E>].



It's often difficult choosing which Fringe or Festival event to attend, but this Charlotte Duffy bust in cardboard does not depict such agonies of indecision. Rather, it was part of a series shown last month in Broughton Street's Concrete Wardrobe, examining the mixed pleasures of travelling in Britain by train. Find out more about her work at: [<http://goo.gl/xJTP8w>].

NEW PLANS FOR CANONMILLS



The development of 1-6 Canonmills Bridge is entering a new phase.

At the very end of July, City of Edinburgh Council's Development Subcommittee was scheduled to decide on demolition of the building now occupied by Earthy. An official report, circulated earlier, had recommended granting consent. Over a thousand people signed a petition opposing the demolition.

At the same time, the developer Glovart Holdings Ltd last month sought to make changes to the scheme here for which it already has planning permission.

It wants to move the position of the entrance, redesign the ramp, and make the ground-floor commercial space a single unit instead of two. Glovart has struggled to find potential occupants for the 2-unit option.

Spurtle detailed the issues on our website (22.7.15). We have mixed feelings about it. We retain affection for today's low-rise structure and its current use. On the other hand, we are not appalled by the modern replacement's design, as many people seem to be.

In any case, we consider the argument was decided in 2013 when CEC first granted planning consent to a plan of roughly this size, design and proposed usage.

MONEY DOWN THE DRAIN?

A Freedom of Information request by the *Spurtle* has shed light on the eye-watering cost of Antony Gormley's vanished statues (see our website 15.7.15).

The National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) installed *Six Times* amid much ballyhoo in June 2010. But for the last three years, four of the component pieces have been removed from the Water of Leith and kept in storage.

The statues were designed to topple at a certain level of water pressure in order not to trap flotsam and cause flooding. But the frequency and cost of righting them proved unsustainable.

The FOI request revealed costs as follows:

FUNDING Private funding (including Art Fund and NGS Patrons): £370k; NGS funding: £80k; Total funding: £450k

COSTS Acquisition of sculptures: £270k; Planning, engineering and installation including ecological surveys, dive teams and legal fees: £150,480; Leaflet and maintenance: £16,976.16; Total costs of acquisition: £437,456.76

Costs incurred by National Galleries of Scotland since the launch of the work:

Removal of 4 works: £35,003; Regular removal of debris build-up: approx. £2k; Engineers' fees: £9.2k; Total: £46,203.

In other words, so far, taxpayers are £33,659 out of pocket, and have only two Gormleys to show for it. Despite *Spurtle's* frequent requests since 2012, NGS has not explained how or when the situation will be resolved.



Briefly



Bellevue Cres is at last blessed with 5 new communal bins, **skilfully camouflaged** in green on the garden side of the road. Once residents have located them, CEC remembers to empty them, and London St takes possession of its own set, the area may at last see a reduction in **marauding gulls**.

Those readers who enjoy **nifty apps** on their smartphones may enjoy a nifty gadget on our website. Select the new **'Story map' button**, zoom in, and you can see exactly where any of our geo-tagged online reports was based. Stories outwith Greater Spurtleshire aren't covered, so Aeneas McHaar's trips to **Parallel Broughtons** do not feature.

Batleys – the **McDonald Place cash-and-carry** – has been refused permission to trade on Sundays during the Festival. Neighbours may continue to rest easy, **once a week**. *Spurtle* quietly applauds this decision (see our website 6.7.15).

Premises at **44 Broughton St** (formerly Pieute and before that **White Rabbit** and before that Broughton St Bookshop) have been refurbished and will open soon as a **gift shop**.

Behind the scenes, *Spurtle* has been enjoying a long wallow in the pages of the *Caledonian Mercury* (published between 1720 and 1867). Back issues of the Edinburgh-based newspaper contain **many curious items of interest** to locals today. Depending on space, we will republish the best of them either here or online in the months to come. **We begin with a fire** on page 3.

The Broughton/Barony St restaurant **Port of Siam** has mysteriously and suddenly closed until further notice. **Tables are laid. Chairs are tucked in. But nobody's there ...** Even more mysteriously, the gone-but-not-forgotten Blue Moon appears to be haunting the place. Signs in the window advertise the former **Broughton St institution's** application for a licence to sell alcohol between 11am and 1am. What's going on? We don't know. We can't concentrate for the cheers of local **'Macaroni Cheese with chips'** connoisseurs.

Old Observatory House on Calton Hill faces an uncertain future. The **Vivat Trust Ltd** – an architectural heritage and restoration charity which sublet the structure as **holiday accommodation** from City of Edinburgh Council – has gone into voluntary liquidation. See our website (20.7.15).

Mystery homes in city-centre park

Do you live in Barony Place or New Broughton?

Have you been disturbed recently by the sound of tiny pitter-pattering feet? Have your cats and dogs been going more berserk than usual?

Chances are you're being troubled by Fairies.

In a world exclusive, *Spurtle's* Rhys Fullerton has discovered that an unknown number of the tiny creatures have set up home in Barony Community Garden.

Although Fullerton has not yet spotted any of the new arrivals in person, he has found clear evidence of at least five unauthorised housing developments in the park and is curious to learn exactly who is responsible.

'Where have they come from?' he asks.

'Do they have a Twitter account, and are they paying Council Tax?'

If you can resolve any of these important questions, please tweet us using #SillySeason.



Good food on tap

A new way of buying and selling food is coming to Broughton.

When the scheme launches on 29 September, customers will be able to buy directly from farmers and food producers (on average 30 miles away) at a one-stop website. On Monday evenings they will then collect their orders from the back room at Jeremiah's Taproom on Elm Row.

The 'Leith Food Assembly' is organised by Will Bain and Stuart Guzinski, both Gastronomy students at Queen Margaret University. They will start with around 10 suppliers chosen for their sustainable and ethical credentials as well as proximity.

Guzinski (right) told *Spurtle* that the lack of a middleman means customers get a better deal, and producers keep over 80 per cent of the revenue. The remainder will be split between maintaining the website and reinvesting in the business.

Suppliers include Breadshare, Plan Bee honey, and Hugh Grierson's free-range eggs and meat.

Food Assemblies began four years ago in France when 'communities formed buying cooperatives to purchase food directly from their local farmers'. The movement has since spread across Europe, and this venture will be the first in Scotland.

For more information and a website/registration link, visit the Facebook page here: [<https://goo.gl/TuPUip>].



Sixty new flats approved for Annandale Street

Planning permission has been granted for demolition of the former call centre at 52–52A Annandale Street and its replacement with 60 flats (Ref. 14/04044/FUL).

Ranging between four and six storeys in 3 blocks, the development will comprise 11 one-bedroom, 47 two-bedroom and 2 three-bedroom units. Fifteen units will be affordable housing. There will be 45 car parking spaces.

Developers WPH Developments Ltd will work with Environmental Health to ensure sound insulation reduces disturbance from the bus depot opposite to an acceptable level.

The firm will also contribute around £56,000 towards the cost of providing extra places at local state schools.

Twenty-one letters of objection were submitted, but officials found the material concerns – including height, scale, density, loss of privacy and daylight, increased traffic, noise, and pressure on local services – had either been addressed or were insufficiently important.

New Town & Broughton Community Council welcomed the proposal and supported it as 'a significant improvement' to the area.



Catastrophic fire cost ‘millions’

On Saturday 30 August 1755, the Caledonian Mercury reported a devastating industrial accident:

‘Last Night, a Fire broke out in one of the Canon-mills called the Barley-mill, and burnt with such Violence, that it was entirely consumed with other two adjacent Flour-mills; and if proper Assistance had not come down from Edinburgh, all the other Mills would have undergone the same Fate.

This unhappy Accident is said to be owing to the Carelessness of the Man that had the Charge of the Mill, who fell asleep, and did not take Care to grease the Iron-works at the proper Time, which by the Velocity of the Spindle, were so overheated as to burn the Timber-works, and all in a Flame before he waken’d. The loss is computed at 500 l.’

We think the mills in question were somewhere along a lead-stream between today’s Primate at 1 Canon Street and Boat Green on Warriston Road, but have found no contemporary map showing exact positions. The loss would have been worth around £8 million in today’s money. — AM [map detail from Ainslie, 1804]



Look out for: The eclipse

A curious thing happens to our Mallards at this time of year. Yes, we are treated to the ducks who – having had to put up with the constant and rough wooing through the spring and early summer – have now successfully and without help got their ducklings safely to water. But what’s happened to all the striking but indolent drakes? Normally easy to spot with their iridescent green heads, bright yellow bills and curled black tail feathers, they are apparently nowhere to be seen.

How to see them: The drakes are in fact still with us but in different plumage (see image). Ducks go through a moulting process known as ‘eclipse’ when they replace most of their flight feathers, leaving them temporarily flightless. This makes them vulnerable to predators. During this time, the conspicuous drakes do a quick change into a scruffier, more casual outfit to closely resemble the camouflaged females. If you look carefully you can see faint traces of green on their heads and the toned-down yellow on their bills. Normal livery will be re-established later in the autumn.

Also look out for: On hot, still evenings in August spot the large flocks of gulls and other birds feeding on flying ants. Such a bonanza doesn’t occur every year, but when it does the skies above Broughton are filled with hundreds of birds circling, twisting and turning to snatch these small but nutritious morsels lifted on warm updrafts.

— Miles Forde



Photo: Jean-Philippe Boulet, [https://goo.gl/kKTdY9].

Sizzling Scouts enjoy French adventure

An evening train from Waverley to London King’s Cross, a painfully short sleep in a local youth hostel, an early Eurostar journey and finally a coach trip to Ruoms in the Ardèche left the Broughton Scouts tired but happy last month as they were warmly welcomed by instructors at the La Savanne Adventure Centre.

In 40° C+ heat, the Scouts were only too happy to dump their backpacks and jump into the centre’s open-air pool for a cooling and revitalising swim.



They then set about a host of outdoor activities each day, ranging from some seriously scary caving, climbing, abseiling, canyoning, and kayaking before the Troop set off on a two-day kayak descent of L’Ardèche River through the spectacular Jurassic limestone gorge, bivouacking overnight and jumping into the river (sometimes from a 6m-high cliff) to cool-off in the blistering heat.

The night market in Ruoms provided a great selection of French tourist ‘gifts’ for pocket money, and before we knew it, a week had passed and it was time to leave. Planning for the next adventure in 2017 was a hot topic of discussion on the train home.

The Scouts meet at Broughton Primary School gym in term time from 7.15–9pm. For further information, e-mail [11thescouts@gmail.com] — Scott Richards

Briefly



Two of Britain’s brightest young stars visited **Drummond Tennis Club** earlier this summer, writes *Mark Fergie*. **Matt Storey** (17) has a top-450 world junior ranking, is ranked 6 in Britain, and narrowly missed out on a wild card for Wimbledon. **Alexandra Hunter** (15) has won 10 European ITF titles, and played for Britain since the age of 9. They spent a couple of hours out of their **busy schedules** to play with the members prior to competing in the Scottish championships at Craiglockhart.

Broughton Primary School parents have vowed to resist plans by **Kingsford Developments Ltd** to build an electricity substation next to **the playground** on Broughton Road (see our website, 14.7.15). The proposal is an unforeseen part of the **hotly contested redevelopment** as housing of 154 McDonald Rd.

Spare a thought for **Scottish National Galleries staff** this summer – not only **poked in the Gormleys** by *Spurtle* (see p.1) but **tweaked in the Dean** by Health & Safety. SNG’s outdoor maze, erected to accompany the **Escher Exhibition** at Modern 2, was visited by officials who insisted on extra **emergency exits** and clearly marked ‘Way Out’ signs throughout. Common sense stood on its head.

After this year’s **Open in St Andrews**, Broughton-based, ceilidh-style, hip-hop-inspired, Highland-dancing mash-up beat-combo-with-knobs-on **Whisky Kiss** entertained guests at a wedding hosted by golf legend **Gary Player**.

Janice Johnson contacted us last month to report **marauding gulls**. The anxious new parents nesting on roofs had taken against a **young heron** in one of the back greens south of Forth St. With **deafening cries and repeated dive-bombings**, they refused to let it settle but would not allow it to fly off. After several unsuccessful attempts, **the heron escaped**, accompanied down Broughton St by about 40 pursuers. **Residents and their cats** are reluctant to sit in the garden at this time of year.

Working Lines collective artists will exhibit recent work on paper at **Venue 208, 2 Howe St from 21–31 Aug**. They are Marrison Barron, Ruth Thomas, Sheila Chapman and **former Ward 12 councillor Trevor Davies**. Admission free.

Moreover ...



The Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh are working with The Gate Interactive on a film about the dismantlement and reconstruction of **Botanic Cottage**. Two clips featuring well-kent local faces are here: [<http://youtu.be/7cXd7dfOPsg>] and [<http://youtu.be/dkMKN4fjRLU>]. Have a look also at our website (21.7.11) for an article on the **untimely demise** in 1780 of former RBGE principal gardener John Williamson.

We hear recent work to smarten up **16 Rodney St** was in advance of a beautician's opening here. Work appears to have stopped though, with no new occupant in place. Meanwhile **Sugar Daddy's** gluten-free bakery and carry-out opened at No. 5 on 1 August. See their shy and retiring Facebook page at [<https://goo.gl/xjuXXb>]. Meanwhile, over the road at No. 10, prepare for the opening of a new café – **Coffee Magic** – of which we know nothing.

Pierre Victoire on Eyre Place has opened under **new management**. The reasons behind **quicksilver entrepreneur-chef** Pierre Levicky's latest change of direction are not clear to us.

An Edinburgh estate agency began advertising an unusual property on the Internet in early July. It was described as follows: 'Office with **unrestricted parking** in a quiet residential area of the prestigious New Town. Freestanding Office with fitted kitchen, wc & free standing shower. Including appliances, hob, oven & fridge. Total size is 250 sq.ft., metered electricity, water/drainage.' On the market at **offers around £100k**, this bijou opportunity 'currently has Class 4 use but could be a variety of uses subject to gaining the necessary change of use'. Class 4 is effectively an office space suitable for research and development of products or processes, light industry. But this property **had no such classification**. It was the **controversial garage on E. Scotland St Lane**. A local pointed out the mistake and other errors of wishful thinking conveyed to those visiting the property. **The advertisement was later taken offline.**

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Alison Johnstone MSP for Lothian Region



On the 1st and 3rd 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.

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3 August
& 7 September
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Broughton St Mary's Parish
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www.ntbcc.org.uk/contact/

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