

# Spurtle



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**No 244**

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**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER** Free

## STOP PRESS: CANONMILLS



Just as *Spurtle* went to press, City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) refused Glovart Holdings' application to demolish 1-6 Canonmills Bridge.

This was an astonishingly good result for local campaigners.

*Spurtle* is torn between admiration for a community energised

behind a common cause, and bewilderment at the Council's logic.

CEC has now approved planning permission for a development on the site, but refused permission to demolish the old building.

The explanation apparently concerns previously unaddressed concerns about the Inverleith Conservation Area.

For more coverage, see our website (26.8.15).

## GOLDEN TURD OR POETRY IN MOTION?

CEC has granted planning permission for the 'Golden Turd' ribbon hotel in the new St James Quarter (SJQ), against the advice of its own officials (Issue 240).

Rosemary Goring in the *Herald* said the structure would resemble 'a body-builder, chest inflated and arms akimbo as it intimidates everything in its environs'. The decision, she continued, was the equivalent of 'a cultural war crime' (17.8.15).

Architectural commentator David Black argued that CEC's financial stake in the SJQ means its consent emerged from a conflict of interest. He says the matter should be referred to the European Court of Justice.

New Town & Broughton Community Council (NTBCC) deliberations on the proposal reached no clear consensus. On the one hand it supported the project's ambition, on the other it baulked at the bulk. See: [<http://goo.gl/roGD3U>].

Meanwhile, the controversy has added further grist to the mill for an online petition expressing 'No confidence in the City of Edinburgh Planning Department' [<https://goo.gl/RTWzpu>].



## CEC WASTE SERVICES ON LEITH WALK

Harald Tobermann of Leith Central Community Council (LCCC) has written to Transport & Environment Convener Leslie Hinds. He calls for better refuse collection on Leith Walk and its side streets. He wants resources deployed to reflect population density and intensive use, not just surface area. He also backs locals in demanding improved street cleansing for the area. Hinds had earlier conceded that, initially, Waste Services had too few side-loading vehicles suitable for Leith Walk's large communal bins. That problem has now been resolved. See CEC's 'Cleanliness of the City' report at: [<http://goo.gl/xBZMSE>].

## RODNEY STREET REVIVAL



Meet Jon-Paul and Amy Ranaldi, newly arrived bakers on up-and-coming Rodney Street. They specialise in gluten-free, dairy-free, vegan delights which are every bit as good as the mainstream alternatives. All their products are made fresh on the premises, and some customers are coming from as far afield as Aberdeen to snap them up. Watch out too for Findlater's bread and Steampunk coffee. Now turn to page 2.

## GEORGE ST CONSULTANTS - OPEN TO GOOD IDEAS

Newly appointed George Street design consultants Julian Farrar and Janet Pope say they have no preconceptions about what should happen there.

CEC has hired Ironside Farrar Ltd to establish design principles and options for George Street, and to shape its future 'place making' once the experimental arrangements end.

Talking to NTBCC on 3 August, Farrar said he will consider all suggestions that would allow the street to be 'legibly Edinburgh' and more attractive. His priority is to establish clear consensus on 'how we want it to be, what primary purpose it should serve'.

'Good luck with that,' muttered everyone in the room.

Farrar said he recognised a need to balance contending opinions on their merits, not just on how loudly they were expressed. Articulate pressure groups should not drown out quieter, less organised voices, including residents'.

A 'charette' was held on 13 August, with another due later this summer to 'illustrate emerging principles'. A presentation to the steering group will follow in October, and a final paper will be made public in November when the George Street experimental traffic regulation order is formally wound up.

Work to restore the former layout (+ advisory cycle lane, see Issue 241) will be phased by block: Assembly Rooms (7.9.15); Dome (14.9.15); Frederick-Castle St (21.9.15); Castle St-Charlotte Sq. (28.9.15).

For more on Farrar Ironside and its brief see: [<http://goo.gl/KJiHxP>]; [<http://goo.gl/g5duVN>].

## Briefly



Batleys, the McDonald Place cash and carry, seek a review of the Council's decision not to allow **Sunday trading** during the Festival (see our website 4.8.15). They claim CEC's position is self-contradictory because officials agreed with a **Noise Assessment** that found no undue disturbance. However, they also argue that locals don't need once-a-week respite from this **supposedly non-existent problem** because they can have it every other Sunday in the year. It's all very confusing ... unless you live nearby, where the argument for limiting Batleys' **car park racket and on-street throb** is self-evident.

NTBCC plans to hold a **public meeting** to discuss what many regard as the city's dysfunctional waste collection system. They plan to **quiz officials** in a systematic way, and will resist the urge to just moan.

Online advertisement of the garage on **E. Scotland St Lane** has resumed, with slightly different wording (see Issue 233). It is still erroneously described as an office. NTBCC's **planning convener** Richard Price described himself as furious at this latest twist, and will push officials to bring some closure to **the long-running disputes** about the garage's construction and legitimate use. Meanwhile, frustrated residents have taken their complaints about **Planning officials' conduct** in this case to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The last occasion on which we are aware of a complaint like this being made was in 2011. SPSO found that CEC officials had **failed to follow due process** prior to granting planning permission for a 2-storey extension.

**Broughton History Society's** new programme begins on 7 Sept at 7.00pm for 7.30pm in Drummond CHS. Alistair McEwen will skirl on '**Scottish Pipers in World War I**'.

A **chorus of disappointment** greeted our news last month that Costa Coffee will take over management of the **café pavilion in St Andrew Sq** (see our website 14.8.15). Over 62k followed the story on Facebook alone. Many would prefer a **distinctive local presence** to the multinational brand. Many **blame Essential Edinburgh** for what they see as yet another crass and insensitive intrusion.

**Iain McGill** has been selected as Conservative candidate for the **Edinburgh Northern & Leith** constituency in next year's Holyrood election.

## Coffee with added oomph

Next meet Iryna and Amy, two of the team at **Coffee Magic**, which opened on Rodney Street in August. The new café, established by Iryna's mother Elena and partner Raymond, is based partly on a belief in the aphrodisiac qualities of caffeine. Specialist fortified offerings include the **Don Juan** (for men) and **Oflameron** (for women). However you take your coffee, expect spooning.



## Devolution or buck-passing?

Following national legislative requirements, CEC's health and social care functions are merging, at least from recipients' point of view.

One result of this 'transformation' is that some public-health initiatives will be devolved to the local level.

However, a clear mismatch in expectations came last month when a CEC official asked Leith Central Community Council (LCCC) how it gathered data on the subject.

LCCC said that – owing to limited time, expertise and resources – it gathered no such data.

Community councils in the past have been resistant to official hints and enquiries suggesting they should take on more functions currently performed by cash-strapped local authorities.

They say expecting untrained volunteers to take on part of the role of professionals is unrealistic and would likely result in worse services. Critics of that view say community councils *could* prioritise certain areas such as Health if they made more effort to seek out volunteers with relevant experience, and if they focused their budgets accordingly.

Coincidentally, four north Edinburgh community councils are currently completing a skills-mapping audit funded by the Scottish Government and the Development Trusts Association Scotland.

## City of shadows

This stunning image – '**The Photographer**' – features in a joint exhibition of **black-and-white photography by local couple Paul and Lynn Henni**. Many of the locations will be familiar to Broughton residents. The show continues at the **Roamin' Nose Café and Bistro on Eyre Place until the end of September**.



## Creative map raises eyebrows

Leith is one of the top five culturally active places in Scotland, according to a new survey compiled by Leith Creative and funded by Creative Scotland and CEC.

It identifies nine hubs, eleven assets, and four festivals. The hubs provide 564 studio/desk spaces, from which 1,148 people work. They attract over 7.5k visitors per month.

It points also to a large number of 'creatives' living and working here, and the dearth of affordable studio space.

Which all sounds very useful. But Leith, according to this survey definition, includes EH6 and EH7 postal districts, and so embraces St Margaret's House in Meadowbank, Gayfield Creative Spaces in Gayfield Square, McDonald Road Library, the Embassy Gallery in Broughton Street Lane, and the Collective Gallery atop Calton Hill.

Even by *Spurtle's* elastic boundary-drawing standards, this seems to be stretching a point. See [<http://goo.gl/vKf691>] and [[www.leithcreative.org](http://www.leithcreative.org)].

## Local charity with national impact

ProjectScotland is a Hopetoun Crescent-based charity doing amazing work with young people, writes *Lizzie Rynne*.

They help them to get on in life through quality volunteering opportunities that grow their skills, experience, and job prospects.

They strengthen the third sector as charities and not-for-profit organisations all over Scotland benefit from the talent and enthusiasm of young people.

And they create connections across the generations by assigning each young person a trained mentor with years of life experience to pass on. Last year alone, ProjectScotland supported 600 young people aged 16–30 towards brighter futures.

I started working with the charity a few weeks ago, but before that I'd never heard of them. Yet, here they are on our doorstep, celebrating their tenth anniversary, winners of prestigious awards, and a hive of energy directed at helping young people get onto the ladder of life.

So far they've helped 5,000 young people, who have given over 3 million hours of volunteering. And the model really does work, with 78 per cent of those young people going on to employment, education, or training after completing the programme. The job they do is fantastic.

If you're a young person in need of a helping hand, if you work for a charity that needs talented volunteers, or would like to support ProjectScotland, please get in touch: [www.projectscotland.co.uk].

## Look out for: Swifts

These consummate fliers will soon leave their nests under our eaves for sunnier climes in Africa. This year's chicks will remain constantly in flight for up to two years before maturing and landing to nest. Even mature birds will fly non-stop for the intervening months, eating, sleeping, mating and gathering nest material on the wing. Swifts reach over 100mph in pursuit of 'aerial plankton' (tiny insects lifted by wind and thermal currents). Another survival talent (which they share with cousins the Hummingbirds) is the ability to move into a semi-torpor when food is scarce.

*How to see them:* At first glance they resemble Swallows with long curved wings, but are larger, darker and hunt high above the ground. They have a distinctive, thin, two-toned screaming call delivered as they speed in groups between buildings.

*Also look out for:* Birds are starting to feed-up either to fly to warmer climes or to put on weight to survive winter. Most smaller ones flock as families or bigger groups at this time of year, so you may find your garden inundated with mixtures of finches and tits. — *Miles Forde*



Photo: Creative Commons [https://goo.gl/MAAlfP].

## Union bids farewell to Broughton

The Union Gallery enjoyed a spectacular August with its critically acclaimed exhibition of works by Edinburgh artist Audrey Grant (see our website, 9.8.15). Nineteen out of 23 works sold, many within a few hours of opening.

This, though, was the Union's last hurrah here. The business has outgrown its premises, and on 7 September will close its doors for the last time.

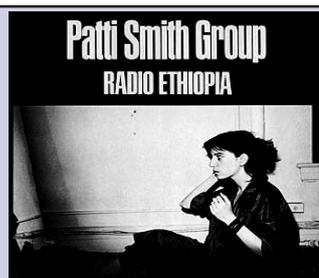
It's a bitter-sweet day for Broughton after six years of high-quality contemporary Scottish art on our doorstep. Artist/owner Alison Auldjo has nothing but praise and affection for the local residents, traders and customers who in various ways helped to make the venture flourish. We wish her continued success as she takes stock and prepares to relocate over the next few months

## For auld Laing syne

We were surprised and delighted last month by reaction to an article about the Standard Life frieze at 1 George Street (see our website 8.9.15).

Reader Euan Leitch pointed out that the first of the Foolish Virgins, installed on the 1975 infill, was modelled on US singer-songwriter Patti Smith as photographed for the 1976 album *Radio Ethiopia*.

Leitch, on a visit to Gerald Laing's studio at Kinkell, was told by the sculptor himself that – at the time of the commission – Smith had recently done something to annoy him. This was his pointed response.



## Briefly



Photo: © Edinburgh Spotlight.

Last month, *Spurtle* had another **exclusive splash** about Antony Gormley's *Six Times*. Thanks to some **specification changes**, engineering tweaks, and the **generosity** of an anonymous National Galleries of Scotland patron, the 4 missing figures will return to the Water of Leith in spring 2016 **at no additional cost** to the taxpayer. See our website (12.8.15). Meanwhile, dozens of artfully balanced, more or less human rock figures have appeared in the river to fill a gap (see online Letters 28.7.15).

Photographs and 50-word explanations of **favourite spots in Edinburgh** are sought for a community exhibition in **Rodney St Tunnel** in Sept/Oct. Send by 17 Sept. See our website (18.8.15).

A 12-month trial of the **Edinburgh Community Triage Service has begun at weekends**. Police officers will now first consult specialist NHS nurses by phone when attending cases of people in **psychiatric or drug-induced crisis**. It's hoped that appropriate agencies will be contacted sooner, and that fewer people will suffer the trauma of **police detention or escort** to hospital. A similar pilot in Glasgow was successful.

LCCC has again voiced unease at the new **student flats** going up at Shrubhill. They're not sure they match the **approved plans**, and will check.

A *Spurtle* contributor pointed to the area's **abundant gutter flora** earlier this summer (see our website 2.7.15). Some readers think it a mess, others admire it. Ward 12's **Councillor Nick Gardner** says spring spraying was washed away by rain, but a new programme for the Leith Walk ward began late last month.

As **Lidl 'smarter shopping cards'** were distributed across EH7 by post last month, valid until close of business on 28 Oct, *Spurtle* learned that the new store on **Logie Green Rd** will not open until some unspecified date in Dec. Thanks for nothing.

**Broughton Scouts** are now on Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/BroughtonScouts].

Farewell **Aurora Books** of Tanfield, which has closed. A note on the door **warmly thanked** 'all our loyal customers and suppliers for 12 happy and prosperous years in business'.

## Moreover ...

Candidates standing in the Leith Walk (Ward 12) Council by-election on 10 Sept. are: **Marion Donaldson**, Scottish Labour Party; **Mo Hussain**, Scottish Liberal Democrats; **Tom Laird**, Scottish Libertarian Party; **Alan Melville**, UK Independence Party; **Gordon Murdie**, Scottish Conservative & Unionist; **Susan Rae**, Scottish Green Party; **Natalie Reid**, Scottish Socialist Party; **John Lewis Ritchie**, Scottish National Party; **John Ferguson Scott**, Independent; **Bruce William Whitehead**, Left Unity.

You could hardly sleep for fans' peels of laughter when **St Stephen's Church** clock began striking the hours on the night of 3/4 Aug. You could hardly sleep for detractors' **cheers of relief** when the chimes stopped on the night of 4/5 Aug. This vexed topic is still not resolved.

Administration at Westminster can be **painfully slow**. The SNP Group only received working telephones in early Aug, and still awaits a **full update of online details**. In the meantime, you can contact **Deidre Brock MP** via the constituency office at 166 Great Junction St: Tel. 559 7009; email [deidre.brock.mp@parliament.uk].

Permission has been granted for **offsales by BottleDog** at 25A Dundas St, **subject to adequate sound-proofing**. Adjacent residents are not pleased (Issue 241).

**LGBT Health & Wellbeing** is in the running for three awards. The **Howe-Street based** organisation has been shortlisted by **The Equality Network**, Scotland's national LGBTI equality and human rights charity, for 3 categories: **Diversity; Equality Initiative** (particularly for its work in age capacity building); **Community Group of the Year**. Win or lose, we wish them every continued success. The ceremony will be held in **The Grand Central Hotel, Glasgow**, on 10 Sept.

In other Planning news, NTBCC has lodged objections to proposals to: **develop housing** on the Sandy Hill (see our website 3.7.15); **demolish 1-6 Canonmills Bridge** (29.7.15); build an electricity substation outside the Broughton Rd elevation of **154 McDonald Rd** (14.7.15).

Crumbs! Check out the **Biscuit Factory**: a new venue/arts and work space at 4 Anderson Place: [https://goo.gl/svmBDR].

The arrival of **2 new picnic benches** for Pilrig Park has been delayed. The items are temporarily detained in their place of manufacture: HMP Saughton.

**Spurtle Team**: J. Dickie, M. Forde, R. Fullerton, M. Hart, D. Hill, D. Jackson Young, A. McIntosh, J. R. Maclean, C. Roussot, L. Rynne, T. Smith, D. Sterratt, E. Taylor-Smith. Post: Spurtle, c/o Narcissus Flowers, 87 Broughton St, Edinburgh EH1 3RJ. Printed by Minuteman Press, 63 Elm Row.

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Monday of the month

1:30pm

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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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### New Town/Broughton Community Council

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REPRESENTS THE VIEWS  
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EDINBURGH CITY COUNCIL

Next Meetings:

7 September

& 12 October

at 7.30pm

Broughton St Mary's Parish  
Church, Bellevue Crescent

www.ntbcc.org.uk/contact/

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### AM DECORATING

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