

# Spurtle



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**October  
2015**

**No 245**

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**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free**

## SNP and Labour win Ward 12

Lewis Ritchie for the SNP and Labour's Marion Donaldson won the two available seats in last month's Leith Walk (Ward 12) Council by-election.

In a disappointing turnout of only 6,407 voters (25.1 per cent of the electorate), Ritchie secured 2,290 votes, and Donaldson (after 10 rounds in the STV system) 1,623. Three out of four Ward 12 councillors are now Labour.

Susan Rae for the Scottish Greens came third with 1,381 votes. Gordon Murdie for the Scottish Conservatives was fourth with 558 votes.

The next citywide council election will be held in May 2017 to avoid a clash next year with the Holyrood election.

## OLD ROYAL HIGH PLANS ENTER NEW PHASE

Debate over the future of the old Royal High School reignited last month with the unveiling of new proposals for a hotel there and submission of a detailed planning application (Ref. 15/03989/FUL).

Most controversy focused on the 6-storey western accommodation block. Some admired its daring but 'respectful', stepped-back terraces blending with the hill behind. Others bewailed its 'tawdry' 'Mayan' bulk looming over the central Hamilton building and other features of Regent Road.

With certain crucial provisos, the advisory body Architecture and Design Scotland welcomed aspects of the proposal. However, Adam Wilkinson of the



Edinburgh World Heritage Trust, the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland, the NTBCC, and Historic Scotland all criticised it, particularly the disruption of views and the relationship between neo-classical centrepiece and landscape setting. (See our website: 2.9.15; 3.9.15; 8.9.15; 18.9.15; 22.9.15; 23.9.15; 25.9.15.)

Historic Scotland's opposition means that Scottish Ministers will now 'call in' the proposal for a detailed public inquiry if CEC gives planning consent.

On 23 September, the Royal High School Preservation Trust announced it had made a formal legal bid to buy the site from City of Edinburgh Council for £1.5m. It also named Richard Murphy and Simpson & Brown as architectural partners on the project.

## COUNCIL CONSULTS ON PARKING

City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) is running a major consultation on its draft Parking Action Plan.

The Plan aims to keep Edinburgh traffic moving freely, improve road safety, and manage vehicle numbers in the city. Main proposals include: extending parking controls to weekends, and later on weekday evenings; shared places so that residents can also use pay-and-display spaces (but not vice versa); introducing visitor permits in city-centre resident spaces. All the information and links are available online here: [<https://goo.gl/R07JkH>].

The New Town & Broughton Community Council last month described the Plan as 'mostly clear, precise, and jargon-free', and urged locals and businesses to respond to the consultation by the 31 October deadline.

## SAME BEES, NEW STRIPES



There's always a bit of a buzz about Broughton Street. But last month it grew louder. Daniel Bee took over at Something Fishy on 1 September, having shadowed his Uncle Richard there since the start of February. Richard – featured in Issue 228 – has now retired and plans to do nothing but enjoy long lie-ins until the New Year. Daniel worked part time in the shop for his father John some 15 years ago, but then struck out on a different career in hotel and bar management across Edinburgh. Now he's back, and plans to revive the shop's fortunes, which have dipped a little since the arrival of Tesco on Picardy Place in 2011. In an interesting turnabout, John Bee will return to work for a couple of mornings a week to help out. We wish the whole hive every success.

## MUDDLED RECYCLING BEGS QUESTIONS

Bellevue and Claremont residents have again been left baffled by waste collection arrangements on local streets.

Repeated observations from across the trial recycling area reveal landfill and recyclable rubbish being routinely emptied into the same lorries at the same time.



Photo: courtesy of Ella Taylor-Smith

Members of the public who question this practice are either told casually 'Don't worry about it' or that only 'contaminated' recycling is so treated. However, there is no evidence of the recycling bins being checked first.

Spurtle's and other local individuals' and organisations' enquiries have so far been batted off with bland assurances and unhelpful statistics. So we have now issued a Freedom of Information request to the Council and will report back in due course (see our website 16.9.15).

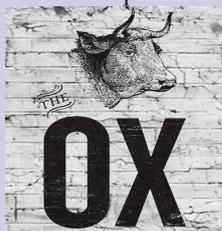
## Briefly



**Hello possums!** Edinburgh North & Leith's Deidre Brock MP has been channelling fellow shy and retiring matriarch Dame Edna Everage. She will be wearing pink on Friday 23 Oct to raise money for research charity **Breast Cancer Now**. For more information, visit [<http://wearitpink.org/about/>].

A stakeholders' meeting to discuss the impact of **St James Quarter designs on repairs to Leith Walk**, scheduled for 17 Sept, was cancelled at short notice for the second time. **Leith Central Community Council (LCCC)** was not amused, and repeated locals' intense dissatisfaction at having to **wait 8 years for repairs** when all four Ward 12 councillors and their MSP attended the monthly meeting on 21 Sept.

Modestine forbids – Ian Gardiner will talk to the **Broughton History Society** about 'Robert Louis Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey*' on 5 Oct at 7pm in **Drummond CHS**.



Welcome back to **The Ox**. The London St eatery remained closed throughout much of Aug and Sept following a small fire. Now, with a tasty new kitchen, lick of paint and mouth-wateringly **refreshed menu**, it's time to moo on.

If you are concerned at the **plight of refugees** and want to know how you can help, here is a **useful website** set up by the Scottish Government and Scottish Refugee Council: [<http://goo.gl/7S8m7g>].

In an ongoing look at **Edinburgh's waste disposal system**, members of the New Town & Broughton Community Council's Environment Subcommittee were surprised to learn that only **5 environmental wardens patrol the entire city centre**. No wonder we're in such a mess.

**Leith Central Community Council** meets next on 19 Oct at 7pm in McDonald Rd Library. **Stockbridge & Inverleith Community Council** meets next on 21 Oct at 7pm in Stockbridge Parish Church, Saxe-Coburg Place. **All welcome**.

**Collective Gallery** has secured a £1.3 million Heritage Lottery Fund grant to conserve the Observatory on Calton Hill and create a **new HQ, gallery space and restaurant** in the compound. It still awaits planning consent. (See our website, 23.9.15.)

## Noisy Annandale Street balconies

WPH Developments Ltd seeks permission to alter its existing planning consent for the site at 52–52A Annandale Street (see Issue 243).

It now wishes to add two extra roof terraces and extend a third, alter window arrangements and building materials, and scrap an enclosed winter garden. In its place would appear 32 balconies (Ref. 15/04165/FUL).



Some of the changes reflect normal adjustments to be expected in the unfolding design process. The major change on balconies is a direct response to 50+ early sales enquiries, 90 per cent of which expressed interest in purchasing a balcony flat. If consented, acoustic glazing and acoustic trickle vents would be adjusted to limit peak noise levels in the most exposed bedrooms.

Noise levels on the proposed bus depot-facing balconies (excluding roof terraces) are predicted to exceed the World Health Organisation's criterion for outdoor living areas. But since these balconies would be too small to accommodate outdoor seating, WPH's technologists suspect that this may be irrelevant. However, pity any geraniums with sensitive ears.

## Familiar face quits Broughton

Recognise this face? You should do. Allan Buchan has been hairdressing on Broughton Street for 41 years, 27 of them in the current premises of Allan Hair at Nos 65–7.

We reckon he's one of the longest-serving business figures in the area.

Two years ago, he went part time, working two days a week. But now he's finally decided to hang up his scissors on 2 October and do something different.

The business will carry on under the leadership of Julie Muir, who took over in 2013. She started working for Allan at the age of 17, and 23+ years later says she couldn't have wished for a nicer boss.

She reckons he'll be sorely missed by his many friends and clients in the area, and we join them all in wishing him a very long and happy retirement.



## Jaywalking – an explanation?

*Spurtle* reader 'Paul@Fountainbridge' has been researching how long it takes pedestrians to cross key city-centre roads if they obey all the signals.

He found that crossing times worsened on York Place near Elder Street between February and September this year. The 21-metre stretch now takes 2 minutes 45 seconds, an increase of 10 seconds.

It may seem trivial, but the findings strongly suggest pedestrians are bottom of the heap when it comes to prioritising trams, buses, other vehicles and bicycles. No wonder impatient walkers often risk their lives dodging the traffic.

CEC's Transport & Environment convener Leslie Hinds has promised to look into the issue. For more on this story, see our website (14.9.15).

## Please put a penny in the *Spurtle's* hat

At this time of year, we traditionally remind readers that their new or renewed subscriptions would be gratefully received. Subscribers' annual contributions protect us from any unexpected expenses or temporary downturns in advertising revenue, and give us a firm bedrock of proven friends to whom we can turn for advice when necessary. We suggest a sum of £12 for hand-delivered copies, or £18 if you wish to receive a copy by post. Please make out cheques to *Spurtle* and drop off c/o Narcissus Flowers (see address on p.4), or see [<http://goo.gl/FM9ya2>] for electronic transfer details. Remember to include your name and delivery address. Thank you from all in the *Spurtle* team.

## Indian summer in Canonmills

'We have lately been entertained with Accounts of Fruit Trees blossoming in different Parts of England, we imagine (if the Northern Climate of this Country be attended to) our Readers will be as much surprized, when we assure them, that there is now in a Garden, belonging to Mr. Clark at Canon-Mills, a white Rose Bush full blown, the Roses in as great Perfection, in Colour, Size, and Smell, as could be expected in the Month of June.'

(From the *Caledonian Mercury*, Thursday 26 October 1758.)

## A Manuscript of Monte Cassino

'A manuscript at Monte Cassino addressed to Paul the Deacon. Letter from my hand/Go now with swift and easy flight/As you pass without delaying/Through woods, hills and valleys/Seek out the welcoming house/of Benedict, loved by God./There the weary always find rest,/for guests there is an abundance/of garden herbs, fish and bread./Among the brethren there is consecrated peace,/lowliness of heart,/and uplifting harmony/as they come together at every hour/to offer praise to Christ/in love and adoration.'

This is a translation of the Latin text set in raised capitals around the foot of Edouardo Paolozzi's remarkable 3-piece sculpture outside St Mary's Metropolitan Cathedral. It comes from a manuscript in the archive where St Benedict first established monasticism in the West in AD 529.



Why is there no explanatory plaque in this area? Visitors and residents alike often view the ensemble with bewilderment.

The work is undoubtedly complex. In this writer's view, it can be interpreted both as Paolozzi's deeply felt homage to his home city (he was born at 6 Crown Place, next to the old Leith Station) and to his family's antecedents in Monte Cassino, near Rome. It can also be seen as a poignant memorial to the 75,000 killed or wounded in the terrible battle there of January–May 1944. Here is no heroic human image, but only vestiges thereof – a foot, an ankle, a hand.

Curiously, another link to Monte Cassino will soon appear in Edinburgh. A bronze sculpture of Wojtek – the famous bear of the Polish 11 Corps, who carried artillery shells during that conflict – is planned for the terrace walk at the west end of Princes Street Gardens. — *JRM (Part 2 of this piece will appear next month.)*

## Look out for: Migrants arriving

This month, tens of thousands of Pink-footed, Bean, Greylag and Barnacle geese are flooding south from beyond the Arctic Circle to winter in our warmer climes and rich coastal feeding areas. These powerful and sociable birds make journeys of up to 2,000 miles, travelling in family groups which join others in the characteristic 'skeins' or arrow-heads you will see over Broughton. The geese adopt this formation to benefit from the slipstream behind the goose in front. How they share this task is still debated, but they can make rapid progress, sometimes at extreme heights.



Photo: Wikipedia, Creative Commons.

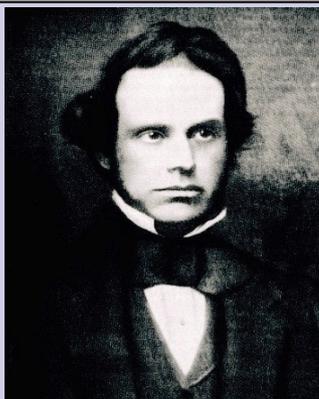
*How to see them:* Usually the first clue is the clear gagging sound as they communicate to each other in flight. Look up and you will see the long regular lines passing overhead. If you want to see their spectacular assemblies, we also have huge roosts at Aberlady Bay and Loch Leven.

*Also look out for:* Increased numbers of Mute Swans (the type we see around our local waterways) and the vocal and beautiful Whooper and Bewick Swans. Even from a distance, swans in flight create an audible whistle from their wings and are a remarkable sight for anyone lucky enough to see them. — *Miles Forde*

## Pilrig plaque for pioneer vet

The distinguished veterinary scientist John Barlow (1815–56) is being commemorated with a blue plaque on his former home at 1 Pilrig Street.

A great-great-grandson is behind the move, which has been financially supported by the Royal Dick Veterinary College where Barlow was once a professor. Locals who admire the great man's prize-winning paper on puerperal fever in cows will be particularly pleased. For more, see our website (2.9.15).



## Briefly



Zsuzsa and Jerry Farrell have set up **Leithers Don't Litter** to convert local discontent into tidier streets. They plan to coordinate **better reporting** of mess and fly-tipping with **proactive tidy-ups** by active residents along the length of Leith Walk and neighbouring streets. See their Facebook page at: [<https://goo.gl/BhmJmJ>].

Andrew Bennie Planning Limited – new owners of the **controversial garage on East Scotland St Lane** – have now appealed City of Edinburgh Council's decision to refuse change of use to a studio office (Ref. PPA-230-2154). ABP argue that **CEC's decision was flawed** because use as an office would not have any materially detrimental effect on nearby residents, and point out that CEC has already consented a **similar conversion to office space** at 8 East Scotland Street Lane. A Reporter inspected the site on 17 Sept, and aims to report by 19 Oct.



Only a **set number of Gormleys** can remain upright in the water at any one time, it seems. No sooner was the re-erection of **four Six Times figures** in the Water of Leith announced (Issue 244) than **Land**, a life-sized cast at Kimmeridge Bay in Dorset, **nose-planted into the English Channel**. On the bright side, it remains as intended, 'a catalyst for reflection'.

**TRI Scotland** seek planning permission for **5 single-bedroom flats** on a vacant car park in Gayfield St Lane (Ref. 15/03988/FUL), opposite the side of the police station.

A sale of **Pictures, Scottish Books and Ephemera** will be held in St Andrew's and St George's West Church (George St) on 29–31 Oct. Some **antiques and collectables** will be available on the last day. Funds raised will go towards **Christian Aid**.

**Friends of Pilrig Park** will hold their AGM in McDonald Rd Library at 6.30pm on 12 Oct. All welcome.

State schools' **mid-term break** begins on Fri 9 Oct. Pupils resume on Wed 21 Oct.

# Moreover ...



**Alfie went missing** from Bellevue Place last month. At first there were fears he might have been killed, and his body removed. **But more recently there are hopes** that he has been spotted alive and well in gardens on the **Shrubhill side of McDonald Rd.** If you see him, please let us know and we'll pass the message on.

**Kingsford Developments Ltd** have applied for planning permission to create two new gates in the wall and railings of **154 McDonald Road** (Ref. 15/03993/LBC). One would be on McDonald Road itself, the other on Broughton Road next to the adjacent school playground. No reason is given for either change to the **Category B-listed property.** Suspicious locals have said they will object. Kingsford's earlier plans to build an **electricity substation and summer house** hereabouts were withdrawn (see our website 28.8.15).

At its Sept meeting, **Malcolm Chisholm MSP** told LCCC of local concerns about **Logie Green Rd** being used as a rat-run. **Cllr Marion Donaldson** reported locals' objections to pollution on **Pilrig St**, congestion and dangerous cycling conditions there caused by **unrestricted parking**, and difficulty crossing between Dryden St and Cambridge Ave.

This menacing '**Pipsqueak**' has appeared on the south-facing side of the Regent Gardens wall on **Calton Hill.** Beautifully rendered in black, white and luminous purple spraypaint, she is particularly alarming in poor light. We take our hat off to the anonymous artist.



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Every Monday 6.30pm

I also offer appointments at community venues around the constituency if that is more convenient. Please call to arrange.



## 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.

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White Space Gallery  
25 Howe Street Edinburgh



Saturday 17 - Thursday 22nd Oct 2015

1030am - 6pm Saturday - Wednesday  
1030am - 4pm Thursday

## New Town/Broughton Community Council

THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL REPRESENTS THE VIEWS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS TO EDINBURGH CITY COUNCIL

Next Meetings:

12 October  
& 9 November  
at 7.30pm

Broughton St Mary's Parish Church, Bellevue Crescent

[www.ntbcc.org.uk/contact/](http://www.ntbcc.org.uk/contact/)

## AM DECORATING

Your local painter & decorator **Alastair McAlpine**  
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