

# Spurtle



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**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER**

**Free**

**April  
2018**

**No 272**

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## TRAM PLANS SPARK OUTRAGE

Draft plans for extending the tramlines by nearly 3 miles between Broughton and Newhaven have been greeted with widespread dismay.

Critics say the Council's professed order of precedence – pedestrians, cycles, trams, buses, motor vehicles – has been abandoned between Pilrig Street and the Foot of the Walk in favour of trams, buses, motor vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists.

They say the proposals for two lanes of traffic along Leith Walk in each direction discard the supposedly tramproof improvements (Phases 1–3) of recent years, gobbling up newly widened pavements and forcing cyclists to leave non-segregated lanes and share space with traffic dangerously close to the trams around loading and parking sections.

Cycling campaigners at Spokes described the plans as 'astonishing' and 'shocking'. Elected representatives, past and present, were variously 'extremely disappointed', 'spitting tacks' and 'absolutely furious'.

Other voices have been raised in support of Leith Walk as a place for people, not exclusively as a transport project. The draft Traffic Road Order proposals can be downloaded from [[goo.gl/3NLvBU](http://goo.gl/3NLvBU)], and there will be public information events on: 3 April (McDonald Road Library, 10am–4pm); 12 April (Leith Community Education Centre, 3pm–9pm); 21 April (Ocean Terminal, noon–5pm). A presentation by CEC/Anturas Consulting Ltd will be made at Leith Central Community Council's next meeting on 16 April (see p.4). You can consult online at [[goo.gl/H5EgXy](http://goo.gl/H5EgXy)] until 29 April.



## BOO!



When did this surprising crocodile pop up in Broughton Road playpark? We don't know who put him or her there or for what reason, but we're glad they did. When you find yourself chased by a crocodile, don't fret. If you survive the initial lunge, self-appointed Internet experts claim crocs can attain speeds of only 11–21mph and are unable to catch anyone running in zig-zags.

## DRUMMOND SAFE FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE

English Medium Education will not be replaced by Gaelic Medium Education at Drummond Community High School.

This verbal assurance was first given publicly at the informal consultation between councillors, officials and members of the Drummond community on 27 February. It was repeated at a consultation for GME parents on 5 March. Then on 6 March it was issued again by Cllr Ian Perry, Convener of the Education, Children & Families Committee as he addressed a deputation of pupils and Parent Council members at City Chambers (see our website 6.3.18).

M a d i h a Choudhury and Mohshin Syed (S2 and S6 pupils at Drummond) plus David Sterratt and Rachel Guatelli (Chair of Drummond's Parent Council and Vice-chair of Leith Walk Primary School Parent Council) had gone seeking further confirmation of this sort, and were pleased with the result. It ends a period of anxiety for pupils, parents and carers at Drummond and its three feeder primaries.

Officials will now examine all the alternatives for GME in the capital and present a report to the ECF Committee in May. One possibility is for it to run in parallel with EME at an expanded Drummond. However, the Bellevue site's confined space makes this option very unlikely (see *Briefly*, p.3).



## RITCHIE IN HOT WATER

Two separate allegations of sexual misconduct by Leith Walk's Cllr Lewis Ritchie surfaced in the *Edinburgh Evening News* last month (9.3.18; 15.3.18; Issue 271).

One unnamed female complainant said she had gone into detail about persistent unwelcome advances because Ritchie had avoided a disciplinary hearing by resigning from the SNP. She wanted a wider audience to understand the nature and seriousness of her claims.

Ritchie concedes harmful alcohol-related actions on his part, but denies sexual misconduct. He says the former SNP colleague's allegations form one element of an orchestrated smear campaign to force his resignation, trigger a by-election, and re-establish the SNP as the party with most members on the Council. *Spurtle* does not know the accuracy of that 'conspiracy' theory. However, there is certainly considerable local interest in contesting a by-election sooner rather than later.

On 27 February, the Corporate Policy & Strategy Committee considered a report (called for in November) reviewing the complaints procedure against councillors, partly with a view to initiating a system whereby one councillor could formally complain about another. Committee members reluctantly voted to maintain the somewhat cumbersome, ineffective and slow procedure already in place. However, they will support 'wider changes proposed to the Councillors' Code of Conduct to strengthen the current position regarding harassment and inappropriate behaviour'. Pending such changes (at a more national level), 'the informal process operated by the Chief Executive and/or the Monitoring Officer will remain in place'.

Cllr Ritchie's position was raised at Leith Central Community Council last month. Members noted the effective loss of a local elected representative, and his continued absence from LCCC meetings.

## Briefly



CEC has appointed **Daisy Narayanan** on a 1-year secondment as lead officer for the **Central Edinburgh Transformation** project to improve public realm and conditions for **pedestrians, cyclists and public transport**. Ms Narayanan – described by CEC as ‘one of Scotland’s leading placemaking and transport experts’ – is **Deputy Director of Sustrans Scotland**, the organisation whose expert advice on placemaking and transport CEC rejected when pushing ahead with the **Picardy PI gyratory**.

The **Picardy Residents Group** is fast evolving into a **formally constituted residents association**. The upgrade will give them added clout at local-authority and community-council levels. They hope to welcome new **members and business interest** from nearby streets (a map will be available soon), and will hold their next meeting on 17 Apr, venue to be confirmed (see our Events page online).

Refurbishment costing £836k at **Broughton Primary School**, will begin this summer and finish in March 2020. **Works include:** roofing, window replacement, internal and external fabric improvements, pool works, electrical installation upgrade, external improvements, decoration, and replacement floor coverings. Some **term-time disruption** is apparently inevitable.

Drainage and resurfacing maintenance on the **North Edinburgh Path** network began last month and is expected to last until mid-Jun. **Expect some closures and diversions**. Close to home, the project will include: St Mark’s and King George V Parks; Rodney St Tunnel; Warriston, Goldenacre and Chancelot Paths.

Locals overwhelmed by the brilliance of the huge **Croall PI** digital advertising hoarding have complained about it to **Planning Enforcement**. We reported similar complaints in 2014 (Issue 229; online 14.7.14). Meanwhile, **JCDecaux** wish to install LCD display panels on bus shelters in **Hanover and Frederick Sts** (our website 23.3.18).

Two brothers were convicted of **assault and robbery** on 7 Mar. Michael and Derek Douglas attacked one woman on Crown St and another on **Bellevue Rd** on 22 Oct 2017, stealing handbags, phones, jewellery and cash. They were arrested 3 days later. **Michael Douglas** also pleaded guilty to assaulting a man on Leith Walk in July and was jailed for 27 months with a 12-month supervised release order. **Derek Douglas** also pleaded guilty to possession of a weapon and was jailed for 13 months.

## NTBCC backs locals against Academy Plans

Residents on Perth Street and Henderson Row have been mounting concerted resistance to Edinburgh Academy’s plans for expansion (Ref. 18/0563/FUL; our website 7.3.18).

The school seeks planning permission to build new facilities hard up against its eastern boundary behind the library and Clerk Maxwell Science Centre. Neighbours say this would entail numerous breaches of Edinburgh’s Design Plan and Design Guidance Principles.

They point to: inappropriate scale, density, position and materials of the proposal; demolition of listed structures; loss of privacy, light, views, trees; potential noise nuisance from a multi-purpose hall; likely fumes from a new chemistry-lab flue; and negative impact on local residential amenity.

At a meeting of the New Town & Broughton Community Council on 12 March, former MSP Sarah Boyack led a presentation to explain fellow neighbours’ objections. She said those present might seem calm but were struggling to control the depth of their anger and worry.

While sympathising with the school’s aim to improve educational provision, NTBCC members were mostly critical of the Academy’s proposals. Planning Convener Richard Price described the application as ‘over-ambitious’ and ‘pushing the boundaries significantly’. He has written to the Council detailing NTBCC’s misgivings.

## Essential Edinburgh bids to continue

Essential Edinburgh, the organisation behind the city centre’s Business Improvement District (BID), will begin balloting members for a third 5-year term this month. Postal voting starts on 12 April and closes on 24 May.

EE says its priorities are: improved way finding; funding extra police resources; addressing the issues caused by begging and homelessness; city-centre-focused marketing; enhanced cleaning services and high-quality city dressing; ‘animation and management of public space during the Festival periods’.

Some BID firms are very happy with EE’s track record. Others resent the expense of belonging to it whether they want to or not, and claim that big businesses in the area wield undue influence over how the BID budget is spent.

*Spartle* remains uneasy about any delegation of public-space management to a body which is not elected by most of the locals who use it. We have often doubted EE’s judgement in this over the last ten years, in particular regarding the ‘animation’ of St Andrew Square and George Street.

We share the concern of those who say the city centre is increasingly rendered unbearable to local people because of concerted efforts by EE, Marketing Edinburgh and the Council to squeeze too many visitors into too small a space. Proliferating short-term lets for these visitors are rapidly displacing Edinburgh’s permanent city-centre population.

We say Edinburgh urgently needs to adjust the balance between people and profit, and dismantling the BID system here would be a positive first step.



## Tragic Leithers laid to rest

The remains of 54 adults and 23 children who died in Leith’s calamitous outbreak of bubonic plague (1644–45) were reburied in Rosebank Cemetery on 16 March.

They were unearthed two years ago during construction of a new classroom at St Mary’s (Leith) RC Primary School. Archaeologists then discovered a Leith Links mass grave whose precise location had previously been forgotten.

Last month’s private reinterment service involved around 60 members of the local and school communities, builders, staff involved in the excavation, and elected members. It was led by the Rev. Iain May of South Leith Parish Church.



## New Coalition for city centre

Last month, urban development and design-related organisations across central Edinburgh began coordinating their engagement with City of Edinburgh Council.

Their Coalition will promote a 'positive' collective vision around: 'the needs of local residents *vis à vis* local economic and commercial growth; improvements to all aspects of the public realm, including pedestrian and cyclist movement; conservation and improvement of the City's heritage; and enhancement of the overall cityscape and architectural design of central Edinburgh'.

On board so far are: The Cockburn Association, Edinburgh World Heritage, Leith Central and New Town & Broughton, Community Councils, Living Streets Edinburgh, The Scottish Civic Trust and Spokes. Others are expected to join soon.

The Coalition will focus first on the Central Edinburgh Transformation Project (looking at strategic traffic management and public-realm improvements). They will send a deputation to the Transport & Environment Committee on 17 May.

## Look out for: Pheasants

Although I have not seen Pheasants in the area yet, I have heard reports of both male and female birds. One rumour has it that someone is breeding them, but whatever the reason they would be a welcome addition to our local fauna.

Pheasants, it is believed, came originally from Asia and the Romans are credited with introducing them to the UK. Since then, they have become a top game bird and are bred in a semi-wild state for sport shooting.

Both male and female have a distinctive long tail and a heavy body. The plumage however differs greatly, with the female having a mottled brown plumage and the male a stunning combination of brown, black, gold and russet feathers topped off with a white neck collar, iridescent green head and bright-red face wattles.

Pheasants are generally seed eaters, but like chickens will peck away at anything. They generally feed on the ground and will choose to run rather than fly, although they are strong flyers over short distances. Pheasants like to roost in trees overnight, although the cryptically coloured hen is compelled to remain on the ground during the nesting season, which begins around now.

Sadly, it may be that they will remain casual visitors due to the pressure of traffic, dogs, cats and of course people. It is however nice to see them giving the area a look and I wish them luck. — *Miles Forde*



*Photo: Gary Noon [goo.gl/RAxWB]*

## Iseabail Macleod (1936–2018)

Many in the Broughton community and farther afield were deeply saddened by the death of Iseabail Macleod on 15 February at the age of 81. She was principally known as a distinguished lexicographer and co-editor of the *Concise English-Scots Dictionary* (CESD). For this and related work she received the MBE in 2001.

Iseabail hailed from the West. Born in Dalmuir, West Dunbartonshire, she and her brother Iain were evacuated to Achiltibuie in 1941. Here she attended her first school. She retained a deep affection for the village and the Gaelic West for the rest of her life. After the war, she was educated in Dumbarton and Clydebank High School. In 1957 she received her MA in language studies from Glasgow University.

After a period of teaching languages in Bregenz, Austria and several Glasgow schools, she found her true métier when she was appointed Editor at Europa Publications in London in 1965. After this stint, she moved to Edinburgh where she settled in Scotland Street and took up employment with the great publishing houses of Collins and Chambers.

Apart from the seminal *CESD*, she was a freelance editor of five other significant lexicographical works. Iseabail was honoured in this sphere by her selection as Editorial Director of the Scottish National Dictionary Association (1986–2002).

In addition to her academic projects, she found time to work on two other fascinating books: *The Edinburgh Pocket Guide* (Colin Baxter Pocket Guides, 1996), a joyful and scholarly salute to her adopted city; and *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Scotland* (Oyster Press, 2004).

Iseabail was a convivial 'hail-fellow-well-met' lady of great charm, becoming modesty and independent spirit. She relished life in the city and the open air, and was an enthusiastic walker. She loved music and the theatre, regularly attending Lyceum productions with her friends Mona Macleod and Gaby Holden. She also loyally supported the *Spurtle*.

It was always a joy to meet Iseabail in Broughton Street and say hello again. Now, alas, that is a memory. But it is a golden one. As one of her many friends said of her, 'She was an angel passing through.' — *John Ross Maclean*



## Briefly



Catch it while you can. This grimy and rather wonderful tribute to the late great singer-songwriter **Amy Winehouse** is beginning to peel and probably won't last much longer. It appears at the foot of the steps leading down from **Summer Bank** into King George V Park

Lothian Buses will not sell off all or part of their Broughton depot any time soon. A spokesperson told *Spurtle* last month, 'Lothian has been on site at **Annandale St** for a great many years – we have no plans to change that.' **Speculation** about the site had arisen after CEC officials suggested that **Drummond Community High School** might be greatly expanded (see p.1). No-one could understand where.

**Steve West** was horrified to hear about trees in **Picardy Pl** being cut down (Issue 271). 'I suppose doing it in advance of the bird nesting season is the correct procedure from a **bird nesting point of view**. However, those trees served as a communal winter roost for **Pied Wagtails**. Many times on winter evenings, when walking by, I've seen the immediate vicinity alive with masses of Pied Wagtails **gathering noisily** in and around those trees. I wonder where they have moved to now? Does any reader know the answer?



Work on **Bellevue Chapel** proceeds apace. The rear extension, vestibule and main sanctuary are expected to be handed over in June, and the side extension on **Cornwallis Pl** should be ready by September. For the time being, Sunday worship will continue in **Drummond CHS**. For updates on progress, including 'significant repairs' to the rose window's **exterior stonework**, visit [goo.gl/fw55iN].

## Moreover ...

A masked man robbed the **Brunswick St Oddbins** at knifepoint on 4 Mar, making off with a 3-figure sum. Police detained and charged a **50-year-old man** for the robbery on 19 Mar, and he was remanded in custody pending his **next appearance in court**. He was also charged in connection with the recovery of drugs from **Lady Nairne Pl** a few days earlier.

Councillors are considering the establishment of a not-for-profit **arms-length external organisation** to manage a replacement Ross Bandstand. Ownership of W Princes St Gardens would remain with CEC. See our website (21.3.18).

Piling work which began at Places for People's construction site behind **Dryden St** was scheduled to last for no more than 3 weeks. Careful monitoring of vibration and effects on nearby structures was promised.

Leith Central Community Council's **petition on extending parking controls** to Pilrig St and beyond has so far gathered over 300 signatures.

A new working group on **short-term lets** is being chaired by CEC's **Convener of Housing and Economy**. It has met twice to formulate proposals for a local solution to problems (Issue 271) and has met representatives from the **Living Rent Group**, **Scottish Association of Landlords**, and CEC's own hard-pressed **Planning Enforcement**. Council officers have met counterparts in the Scottish Government and called for fresh regulatory options in this area.

On 11 Mar, the lights went out on **Lumen**, a Marketing Edinburgh **son et lumère** designed to transform St Andrew Sq, the Assembly Rooms' west lane, and the Mound precinct into '**zen-like portals of tranquility**'. Suitably tranquilised, consumers were then expected to fork out in the city centre's 'vibrant retail, culture and restaurant offering'. **What was that funny noise?** Probably Council Taxpayers' teeth grinding at the **£80k price tag**, enough to cover nearly 4 probationary-teacher salaries.

Swings and roundabouts on **Albany Street**. Charles Kivlin, owner of New Town institution CK Hair, is set to retire after 46 years in business at No. 2. Next-door neighbour **Meta Architecture** has applied to take over the premises (Ref. 18/00775/FUL), and will itself be replaced by a **new hairdressing salon** at No. 4.

**Spurtle Team:** E. Dickie, J. Dickie, M. Forde, J. Hart, M. Hart, D. Hill, A. McIntosh, J. R. Maclean, S. Michael, M. Orr, L. Rogers, C. Roussot, T. Smith, D. Sterratt, E. Taylor-Smith, D. Young.  
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**LONDON1 HOT SHAVE BARBER**  
Appointments not necessary,  
18 Rodney Street, Tel. 557 2393



## LEITH CENTRAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

A forum for local people who want to engage with and work for their local community.

Participate in local democracy.

Make representations to City of Edinburgh Council, other public bodies and private agencies on everything that matters locally.

Next meeting: 7pm, 16 April 2018  
Nelson Hall, McDonald Rd Library

[leithcentralcc.co.uk/meeting-dates](http://leithcentralcc.co.uk/meeting-dates)



Leith Central Community Council

**Deidre Brock MP**  
Edinburgh North and Leith



Regular Surgeries

**Leith: 1st Friday of the month**  
1–2pm, 166 Great Junction Street  
**Leith Walk: 2nd Friday of the month**  
3.30–4.30pm, McDonald Rd Library  
**Stockbridge: 3rd Friday of the month**  
1–2pm Stockbridge Library  
**Royston/Wardieburn Community Centre:** Last Friday, 4–5pm  
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## Ben Macpherson MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament  
for Edinburgh Northern  
and Leith Constituency



## Constituency Surgeries

(no appointment necessary)

**Every Monday:**  
5-6pm at  
Leith Library  
28-30 Ferry Road  
Edinburgh  
EH6 4AE

**Every Friday:**  
4-5pm at  
Royston/Wardieburn Community Centre  
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## Broughton

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**NEW TOWN & BROUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
represents the views  
of local residents to  
City of Edinburgh Council.

You're very welcome to attend.

Come along and make a  
difference at our next meeting  
**7.30pm, 9 April**  
Broughton St Mary's Parish  
Church, Bellevue Crescent

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