

# Spurtle



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**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER** Free

## ARRESTING SCENE

Irvine Welsh's 6-part adaptation of his 2008 novel *Crime* began filming in Scotland last month. This scene occurred on Drummond Pl.

Co-adapted with Dean Cavanagh and directed by James Strong, the drama stars Dougray Scott as a troubled detective investigating a schoolgirl's disappearance. The adaptation – described by Strong elsewhere as 'dark, visceral and shocking' – focuses on the early Edinburgh-set part of Welsh's novel. A Miami-based sequel could follow.

The series is expected to stream on the BBC/ITV platform BritBox UK later this year.



## METAPHYSICALLY MINDED



To his friends and admirers on Broughton Place, Stevie the Staffordshire bull terrier is no ordinary dog. See Page 3 for more on this distinguished vicenarian.

## HOLYROOD WINS FOR SNP

In the Scottish Parliament Election there were two wins for the SNP.

Angus Robertson took Ruth Davidson's former Edinburgh Central seat from the Conservatives with a 10.4 point swing and a majority of 4,732 over Tory candidate Scott Douglas (11,554). Robertson was later appointed Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture.

It was a thumping reversal of fortune (-2.7) for Tory voters, which left many of them disappointed. Those we spoke to questioned why a more experienced candidate with local knowledge and a proven track record in the area could not have been selected. They all seemed to be thinking of one person, whose blushes we will spare here.

In Edinburgh Northern & Leith, Ben Macpherson retained his seat for the SNP with an increased majority of 11,569 (+1.2). There was a notable +13.1 swing towards the Greens, with Lorna Slater coming third. Macpherson was later appointed Minister for Social Security and Local Government.

Successful Lothian list candidates were: Miles Briggs, Susan Webber, and Jeremy Balfour (Con); Alison Johnstone and Lorna Slater (Grn); Sarah Boyack and Foysoyl Choudhury (Lab).

## NEW TOWN BIN ROW RUMBLES ON

As reported in Issue 306, Council avoidance of a promised consultation on replacing gull-proof bags with communal bin clusters in parts of the New Town has caused much anger. It shows no sign of abating.

New Town & Broughton Community Council has set up a steering group to address the proposal, with chair Carol Nimmo promising to leave no avenue unexplored. She describes the introduction of large-scale fixed installations here as every bit as important an issue as the future of the old Royal High School.

Nimmo warns against 'playing' with this 'hugely important streetscape', and says a one-size-fits-all approach to waste management is inappropriate. Some within NTBCC object to a possible loss of car parking spaces, others bemoan the absence of an accessibility assessment for those with mobility issues. There are plans to coordinate NTBCC's position with other affected community councils.

City Centre councillors Baxter, Miller, Osler, and Mowat have voiced various degrees of reservation, irritation, and disappointment. The Cockburn Association and Edinburgh World Heritage are also concerned.

*Spurtle* finds the Council's circumvention of promised consultation deplorable. We have sympathy for those responsible residents who use gull-proof bags sensibly. However, we note that, despite initial objections, properly serviced communal bins have generally proved more popular and effective than not in other beautiful New Town locations.

We also acknowledge Council claims that uniform communal-bin arrangements will bring operational, cost, and staff-safety benefits. Much will depend on sensitive arrangement of bin-clusters. But, in principle, *Spurtle* does not share some critics' categorical disgust for this necessary function happening in plain view.

## CYCLEWAY CLOSED – LEITH WALK DIVERSIONS

Trams to Newhaven contractors are implementing closures of the temporary bi-directional cycleway on Leith Walk from 24 May to August 2021. After that, the new permanent cycleway will open. For now, diversions via Annandale St Lane and Cambridge Ave are in place.

Timing of additional closures during the summer and autumn has yet to be confirmed, but suggested alternative routes can be seen here [[bit.ly/34dfloC](http://bit.ly/34dfloC)].

Spokes and other campaigners have pressed, with limited success, to maintain as much cycle access for as long as possible along Leith Walk during the tramworks. They say this safe through-route and vital lifeline to homes, shops, and services could be maintained by better phasing of the construction. Keep up-to-date with developments here [[bit.ly/2TijJAx](http://bit.ly/2TijJAx)].



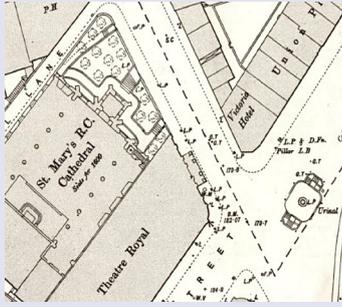
## OFFICIALS IN A TIGHT SPOT

An obligation to 'secure the Council's estate' prompted repairs last month to Warriston Cemetery's East Gate on Warriston Rd. A cast-iron spar here had been absent for 25+ years, giving limber locals convenient access. But officials, facing potential insurance/legal issues if members of the public should injure themselves squeezing through, felt obliged to plug the gap. Some cemetery users objected on social media, and feared another informal access from Warriston Junction would soon follow suit.

Others suggested a better solution would be to formalise and improve access for all at both points. Mysteriously, the new spar went missing 3 days later. Police Scotland have been informed.



# Briefly



In Issue 306 we reported how local stakeholders are being invited to think about uses for the central **Picardy Pl island**. We suggest including a public toilet. This **Ordnance Survey map** of 1893/4 (courtesy of National Library of Scotland) shows there's a precedent. An updated (and accessible) version would be a **convenient addition** to the emerging transport hub. Work on Picardy Pl is scheduled to start in Nov this year and conclude in Oct 2022.

A reader asks **how to interpret** references in our printed issues like this [bit.ly/3y8zFFq]. They are **abbreviated hyperlinks** which, if inserted (without square brackets) into the search box of a web browser, convey the reader to **additional online information**. They give *Spurlite* interesting hidden depths.

A **new headteacher** has been appointed for Drummond Community High School. She is **Mrs Rachel Robertson**, current Depute HT at Liberton High School, and will take up her post in **August 2021**.

**Signature Pubs Ltd** wants to replace current ancillary space at its **8–10 Dunedin St** brewery with a new 'bespoke' 2 and 3-storey extension for an office, extra storage, and visitor centre (21/02038/FUL). The design and its **sandstone-coloured facings** are intended to blend in with the neighbourhood. SP's Cold Town Beers brand began in a **Grassmarket micro-brewery** 3 years ago, but has frothed since and now supplies outlets across the UK.

Consideration of the **Powderhall NW–SE Green Corridor**, repurposing the redundant waste-transfer railway line as an active travel route [bit.ly/3bAGm9w], is behind schedule. Council staff have focused instead on **Spaces for People**. Leith Central Community Council has written to CEC's **Executive Director of Place, Paul Lawrence**, requesting resources be reassigned to this 'vital piece of green infrastructure'.

Not for the first time [bit.ly/3tQF9kI and bit.ly/3wbNEs4], **Leith Central Community Council** is unhappy about the performance of Leith Walk's **Cllr Lewis Ritchie** (Ind). Members say emails to him are hard-bounced back unanswered, suggesting a full inbox. Others, **including ward councillors**, are also concerned about whether he is fulfilling his duties, and questions have been raised with **CEC's governance officer**. We understand LCCC has now sent a letter to the Council's **CEO, Andrew Kerr**.

Do you **feel the need** for a free-standing incidental shed, summerhouse, garage, orangery, bike store, greenhouse, or hermit's grotto? **Untangle your curtilages**, and work out whether you need **planning permission** at [bit.ly/3bxbOW1].

## High hopes for shopping mall

Phase 1 of the St James Quarter opens on 24 June, with numbers and social distancing monitored to ensure comfort and safety. A series of launch events will unfold over the following 10 days.

Comprising retail, hospitality, leisure, cultural, creative, and residential elements, the SJQ aims to serve both locals and visitors to Edinburgh [bit.ly/3hJmfd8]. It is, insist its promoters, not a *shopping centre* but a *new district*.

One-third of the floor space will be retail, but only 60% of the spaces will be filled at first. This, we're told, is not the result of Brexit, Covid, and Internet shopping, but of a deliberate 'incremental revelation'. Some 80–85% retail occupancy is expected by October, followed by the opening of the Everyman Cinema, then a Roomz Aparthotel, then, in late 2022, the tapeworm-inspired W coprotel.

Some welcome exciting trade and employment opportunities in the SJQ. Others fear an enormous car magnet and temple of self-indulgence sucking life from prime shopping streets elsewhere in Edinburgh. It is not expected to make money for its investors until around 2052, by which time perhaps we will all have learned to love or at least tolerate it.



## 20 minutes to change your life

Local activists at Better Broughton (BB) last month discussed local implications for a 20-minute Neighbourhood (20MN) here.

The concept is a Scottish Government aspiration but lacks an official Scottish Government definition or timetable. An explanation was offered by guest Irene Beautyman, a former convener of the Royal Town Planning Institute in Scotland who now works for the Improvement Service.

A 20MN (10 mins there, 10 mins back) should service local needs with local: shops, health facilities/services, schools/lifelong learning opportunities, playgrounds/parks, green spaces, and sports facilities. It should include local: safe streets, affordable and diverse housing, 'ability to age in place', walkability, safe cycling and active travel networks, local public transport with good connections to elsewhere, and employment chances.

A 20MN puts its people at the centre, envisaging a sense of civic belonging, influence, and control. It entails joined-up thinking and action across physical, social, and economic sectors. It aims to improve residents' well-being and sense of safety, and to help them achieve a net-zero carbon reality.

Former Council leader and MP Mark Lazarowicz read out the results of a provisional Broughton audit. It identified micro areas lacking shops, community centres, play areas, safe routes, electrical and DIY shops. There's a lack of speed-limit enforcement, recharging points, social and sheltered housing, public toilets. There's too much cyclist/pedestrian conflict. Hospitals are inconvenient to reach.

In discussion afterwards, it was agreed that any 20MN plans must prioritise 'invisible' and disadvantaged parts of the community, including older and disabled people.

BB now intends to refine the audit using professional help, and to establish a place plan for the area. It then hopes to involve community councils and ward councillors in using this to inform and coordinate all levels of local-government planning and execution in the area. For more, see [bit.ly/3haezA7].



## Tramways Bowling Club conversion blocked

An application to change the use of the former Tramways Bowling Club building from leisure to residential, and to rewild the green space attached, has been refused (21/00528/FUL).

Officials found the proposal for 54 Rosslyn Cres would be a loss of protected open space (Local Development Plan Policy Hou 5) and was not for a community purpose as required (Env 18).

The proposal had failed to establish if there would be an adverse impact on protected species (Env 16), did not show compliance with Des 12 on alterations and extensions, and supplied insufficient information about materials and neighbouring amenity.

As reported in Issue 305, some 25 neighbours and Leith Central Community Council objected to the proposal, calling for wider community access and amenity to be retained [bit.ly/3h7OEt2].

## Joy and the canine Caruso

This is my dog Stevie, writes *Broughton Pl* resident Joy Hendry. On sunny mornings, he offers regular hour-long audiences on the platt, and has extended conversations with his favourite folk strolling by.

He is quite a personality locally – I would even venture that since his arrival back in 2007, he's made a significant contribution to the social interaction in the street, both in terms of quantity and quality.

He's also something of a canine Caruso, having a vocal range and variety of tone, mood and timbre which is quite remarkable. We have concerts, duets even, most evenings when we're in the mood.

I gave up on any notions of canine obedience with this one shortly after his adoption. He's just too clever for that. Everything has to be done by discussion and negotiation. But, he *does* have a clear idea of when it's in his own interest (and safety) to do as he's told.

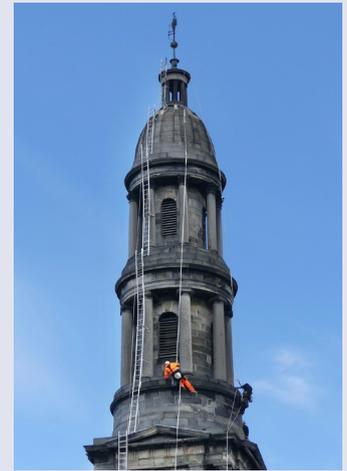
Stevie (also known as 'the Puppy') is a rescue, so age is not possible to determine exactly, but he must be pushing 140 years old in human terms. Sadly, he is becoming increasingly crippled, and I doubt if he'll see the daffodils in Bellevue Park next year, his favourite spot for deep metaphysical thought.

These days, he can only reach Gayfield or Bellevue if transported, either in the car or a dog-pram donated by a neighbour. However, he appreciates the more elevated view, and howls his delight all the way to our destination.

*Intrigued by Joy's observations, Spurtle sent cub reporter JRM along to find out more. Read his article on our website from 1 June.*



## Briefly



Contractors dangled from **Broughton St Mary's** last month to repoint stonework. Trembling onlookers watched aghast.

**Chatter Scotland** is a network recently set up by Broughton resident Chris Lee. By providing **coaching, one-to-one support, and a sympathetic ear**, it offers experienced and skilful help for those harmed by **disordered gambling**. To find out more, visit [bit.ly/3tPN2ql].

The **controversial application** to remove a wall, extend the driveway, and install new gates behind the Atlas Guesthouse at **30 London St** has been refused (20/02290/FUL). Some 38 locals and New Town & Broughton CC had objected, most fearing the proposal would increase traffic on quiet **E Scotland St Lane** [bit.ly/3tSB6nP]. Officials said the proposal would not preserve the Conservation Area's **character and appearance**. It would not be in keeping with listed buildings here, and would harm a historic structure and diminish its interest.

Now that **summer's here**, are you looking forward to 'some together time with family and friends, as you discover sparkling **tunnels of light**, dancing waterside reflections and trees drenched in jewel-like colour'? If so, it may interest you to know that tickets for **Christmas at the Botanic** are now on sale here [bit.ly/2R4GkiX].

**McDonald Rd and Stockbridge Libraries** reopened on 10 May. Printed issues of the *Spurtle* are available there.

Permission is sought to convert offices at **24 Dublin St and 1/1A Abercromby Pl** into 5 residential units (21/02195/FUL). The separate addresses comprise a single **Category B-listed building**, the ground floor of which is occupied by Dunpark Property.

Developer **Artisan REI** says the 7 blocks of 2/3-bedroom housing units (180 in total) comprising Canonmills Garden on **Warriston Rd** take their 'horticultural inspiration' from flora found around **Scotland and the immediate neighbourhood**. They are named: Aster, Carlina, Muscari, Viola, Rubus, Tilia, and Sophora, and sound like a scrapyard full of rusty Alpha Romeos. **What a missed opportunity** to use lovely old Scots names like: Crawfeet, Cow-cracker, Smear docken, Hag nipple, Deil's meal, Piss-a-bed, and Stinkin Willie.

## Old mural stirs fresh hopes

A section of mural recently 'rediscovered' in King George V Park has sparked considerable interest [bit.ly/3uWEz6o and bit.ly/3huj8FQ]. The now faded, delapidated, defaced, and overgrown design dates from 1976, and is the work of artist and local resident Miguel Vivanco. The building it decorates faces demolition, but conversations have begun about whether the work can somehow inspire new public art in the development that will soon replace it.



## Prepare to be warmer

As we bask in another shimmering Edinburgh summer, it may be hard to remember the chill and expensive miseries of uninsulated property at other times of year. Help is at hand, though, and now is the point to plan ahead. Home Energy Scotland is a Scottish Government-funded organisation offering free and impartial advice on how to reduce heating costs and improve energy efficiency. They can also work out whether you're eligible for the Scottish Government's Warmer Homes Scotland grant, worth on average around £5k with savings of £300 per year on fuel bills. HES is managed in the South East of Scotland by the environmental charity Changeworks, based at Newhaven Rd. To contact them about making *your* home warmer and cheaper to run, call 0800 808 2282.

## The perils of Promotion

*From the Scotsman, 18 September 1897.*

The aesthetics of bill-sticking have been discussed by all sorts of Cockburn Associations, art congresses, and professional and dilettante bodies that exist for the purpose of telling the public when its sensibilities ought to be shocked by exhibitions of the inartistic and the unrefined. It has been left for a member of the Sanitary Institute to show that bill-sticking has its ethical or moral aspect.

Dr Marsden vindicated his action before the Sanitary Congress by pointing out how that special form of advertising atrocity, the theatre poster, might become a vehicle of criminal suggestion in such a way as to bring it within the scope of the department of public mental health.

How will Dr Marsden establish canons of taste in wall posters; and, having established them, how will he apply them? And who are to judge whether a particular specimen of high art is correct in drawing and colour, and sufficiently reticent in suggestion, to be a healthy moral spectacle?

We have here another instance of the difficulty of attempting to draw the line. One can imagine readily that a poster which might outrage the sensibilities of Edinburgh people might easily pass muster in Leith. The difficulties of establishing a satisfactory bill-poster censorship are, in fact, insurmountable, and the Congress wisely enough refrained from passing an opinion on so perilous a subject.—*Abridged by AM. A full version with notes appears on our website (1 June).*



# Moreover ...

Friends of King George V and Scotland Yard Parks seek new active committee members. This is a key time for locals to **play an active role** in protecting and improving the area during **major development** of the site adjacent. For further details, see [bit.ly/3belipb].

Meanwhile, Standard Life Aberdeen has chosen **Friends of Hopetoun Crescent Garden** to receive a grant and business support as part of its **'Giving Back to Green Spaces'** scheme. The pilot project aims to increase local bio-diversity, regenerate park areas, and increase **community engagement**. It will last till the end of 2021. More here [bit.ly/3uLvE7I].

**Leopold Pl** locals say buses diverted from **Leith Walk** to London Rd create intolerable noise, vibration, and damage to road surface. As on **E London St**, who pays for repairs: Council or tramway contractors?

Among **Leith Central Community Council's** 8 issues regarding proposed tram-related **Traffic Regulation Orders**, 2 concern Spurtleshire. LCCC says the banning of left turns from **Leith Walk into London Rd**, and right turns from London Rd into Leith Walk would trigger rat-runs through narrow residential streets and/or extra traffic around the **Picardy Pl gyratory**. This would be contrary to neighbourhood traffic and environmental policies.

When **St James Quarter** enthusiasts began talking of the development as a new city 'district' last month, **Spurtle** sought clarification from the Council. A spokesperson told us that, while the centre itself is in **private hands**, most of the roads around it are adopted and will remain **under public control**. The external spaces will be accessible to the public at all times. There are also planning conditions attached to the development which mean that **public access is assured** through the centre at most times of day.

Painting exterior basement areas in order to **reflect light into the residential interiors** is common in old buildings across Spurtleshire. However, as demonstrated in a recent **Gayfield Sq** case (21/02407/LBC), it can lead to moisture becoming trapped behind the paint, failing stonework, and damp cellars.

Mitchells and Butlers propose to convert the 3 floors above All Bar One on **George St** into 6 two-bedroom flats, accessed from **Hanover St** (21/01065/LBC). Alternative office and hotel uses have been discounted as they would have a negative impact on the **Category A-listed building** (which has been vacant for 20 years) and on the successful bar/restaurant downstairs. To minimise **harm to the property**, the developers request a 'relaxation of the requirements for thermal performance'.

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## LONDON1 HOT SHAVE BARBER

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## 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: 21 June on Microsoft Teams.  
For local information visit the website at <https://leithcentralcc.co.uk>



## Deidre Brock MP Edinburgh North & Leith

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### Surgeries

Every first Friday 1-2pm Constituency office 166 Great Junction St	Every third Friday 1-2pm Stockbridge Library
Every second Friday 3.30-4.30pm McDonald Road Library	Every last Friday 4-5pm Royston/Wardieburn Community Centre

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#### COVID-19/Coronavirus Update:

Because of Coronavirus/Covid-19, and in accordance with the law and advice, my office is closed to the public until further notice. My team and I are working remotely and continue to assist constituents as normal.

#### Weekly Virtual/Phone Surgeries:

I have also had to cancel my weekly face-to-face advice surgeries. I will be holding telephone or electronic surgeries on Friday's. Please leave a voicemail or email my office to book a 15 minute surgery slot and someone in my team will get in touch to confirm a time.

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December 2020



NEW TOWN &  
BROUGHTON  
COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Representing locals' views  
to City of Edinburgh Council.

Tell us what you think  
and make a difference.

Next meeting:  
Monday 14 June on Zoom.

Contact us at  
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