

Spurtle



Find us at: www.broughtonspurtle.org.uk

**March
2011**

No 192

Tel: 558 8574

spurtle@hotmail.co.uk

BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

ANGER AND INCREDULITY AT NEW SUPERMARKET PLAN

The Cooperative Group has applied for planning permission to convert the former Hopetoun Bar Diner at 8 McDonald Road (Ref. 11/00435/FUL) into a Class 1 retail unit ('convenience store').

The proposed outlet (in property currently owned by the Alloa-based Maclay Group) would operate from 7:00am–11:00pm, and occupy a net retail floor area of 222 m². No new access or parking arrangements are proposed

'Given the small size of the proposed development and the relatively-restricted range of goods,' says the Coop's agent, 'it's likely that most of the trips to the proposed development will be made on foot from residents of and visitors to ... surrounding dwellings.'

Elsewhere, it goes on: '[W]e do not anticipate ... significant or harmful trade diversion effects' upon Tesco Express at 4–6 Brunswick Place, or Scotmid at 209 Leith Walk, or a detrimental impact upon 'the overall health of Leith Walk town centre'. Instead, the proposed store would 'facilitate healthy competition in the local area, ensuring that prices are competitive and consumer choice is expanded to the benefit of local residents'. Independent traders will point to careful use of the word 'overall'.

Leith Central Community Council members voted unanimously to oppose the application on 21 February, principally on grounds that adequate provision already exists and alternative uses for the premises would be preferable. Concerns were also raised over the likely disruptive frequency of small-van deliveries. (Other local reactions appear in the box right.)

An important distinction between this and the recent, successful application by Tesco was noted: the premises at 8 Picardy Place already enjoyed a Class 1 retail licence; 8 McDonald Road does not. This may extend the grounds on which any battle against the proposal may be fought.

However, the Coop proposition is far more nuanced than Tesco's was, and effective objections must respond carefully to points made in the application's supporting statements. For example, there are contradictions in Coop's assessment of the quality of goods on offer locally; and omissions in respect of the range of businesses likely to be affected.

Spurtle will monitor the story. Meanwhile, for extended coverage and links, see *Breaking news* (22.2.11).

EVERY LITTLE HURTS ...

'Working with the community to make a difference' has a hollow ring for independent retail outlets at the top of Broughton Street.

Since the Tesco Express store opened at Picardy Place in January, 6 independents have expressed concern for their futures to Spurtle. Those most seriously affected are sandwich/takeaway shops, grocers and newsagents. Some are losing 3-figure sums per day. Others have noted a major loss of student custom. Many remain incredulous that Council Planners ignored Broughton's opposition to another behemoth on its doorstep.

The Broughton Street Traders Association has reacted with a poster campaign – 'SHOP LOCAL. USE US OR LOSE US'.



LOCAL REACTIONS

'I will certainly be putting in an objection on the grounds that we would like Leith Walk to remain a vibrant and varied shopping district.'
Cllr Angela Blacklock

'I don't mourn the pub's closing ... A better alternative is to divide the premises into a few smaller businesses ...'
Robert Rothenburg

'I think there are already sufficient supermarkets in the area.'
Malcolm Chisholm, MSP

'Supermarkets thrive because people are desperate to give them their money. How to change such an attitude?'
@apotropaicatom on Twitter

'At some point planners have to take a decision to protect local shops and businesses, and that means refusing permission for mini-supermarkets like this one.'
Shirley-Anne Somerville, MSP

'Another one? Unbelievable!'
Tattie Shaw's

'I would urge the Planning Committee to refuse it.'
Margo MacDonald, MSP

HUSTINGS DATE ANNOUNCED

Spurtle will run hustings for the 2011 Scottish Parliamentary Election at 7:30pm on Wednesday 23 March at Broughton St Mary's Parish Church, Bellevue Crescent.

23 March may seem early given the election is on 5 May. But the date avoids hustings-congestion in and around Easter, and enables timely coverage in our printed April edition. Our early hustings will precede publication of most party manifestos, meaning candidates must present themselves in states of startling political undress. Their statements may therefore provide very interesting points for comparison a little later in the campaign.

Bring your revealing questions and binoculars!

Parents dig in for eco-garden



Broughton Primary School's Parent Council (PC) hope to turn a vacant plot of land adjacent to the playground into an 'eco-garden' for children, staff and families.

The land, at 113 Bellevue Road, was formerly occupied by a City of Edinburgh Council-owned derelict workshop, demolished last May. CEC made vague assurances that the school would be allowed to use the ground as a resource for planting, learning and recreation, but then

went quiet.

In December 2010, CEC put the plot on the market without informing interested parties at the school. CEC's City Development is now advertising it together with an adjoining car park as suitable for a 4-storey, 0.57-acre, residential block.

The PC's campaign to revive the eco-garden plan was backed in February by the New Town and Broughton Community Council. It is now examining 4 options: (1) CEC assigns land to the school free of charge; (2) CEC divides the plot, enabling a smaller bid to be made for the 'garden' area; (3) A community buy-out of the whole plot; (4) PC negotiates school/community use of a garden area with the eventual purchaser.

In today's climate, CEC's first instinct will be to sell to the highest bidder. However, it must tread carefully in handing over for private development land which overlooks and abuts school property. Here, and at 154 McDonald Rd, the most commercially attractive option may not make the most sense. *Spurtle* suggests that concerted pressure applied to local politicians may well bear fruit.

For background, see Issues 183, p.4; 189, p.3, *Breaking news* 4.5.10, 19.5.10; *Extras* 1.3.11.

Bank supports local Reed

Congratulations to rising field athletics star Kimberley Reed, and family supporters, who last month received a letter telling them that she had been invited to become a 'Bank of Scotland Local Hero'. Below, father Scott Reed tells us what it means.



'This is a scheme which provides vital funding to promising young athletes. It is very exclusive and there were only 3 young athletics people from Scotland chosen last year.

'Kimberley will be getting a cheque for £1,000 to help with the cost of training and competition – which is absolutely fantastic. She's to go through to Glasgow for a reception at the end of March to collect the cheque.

'This has really taken the pressure off for the coming season, because we knew that we were going to have to make two trips down to England to compete at the Under-17 and Under-20 England Athletics Championships in Bedford.'

For a fuller round-up of Kimberley's winter training and plans for the coming months, see *Breaking news* (1.3.11).

Singh aims to fight his way out of a corner



Like many independent retailers today, Johnny Singh faces hard times. But the man behind Bellevue

Newsagents on the corner of Annandale and Bellevue Streets will fight back in March with a vigorous programme of internal and external refurbishment, longer opening hours, increased stock, an offsales licence, customer-tailored products, deliveries, and a petition to Camelot demanding a lottery ticket machine. He says the shop has been in the neighbourhood for at least 50 years, 30 of them under his ownership, but in today's financial climate locals must continue to use it or lose it.

Competition

Our Jan.–Feb. photo competition seemed to flummox readers (see Issue 190). It was one of the splendid details outside the Gurkha Brigade restaurant in Antigua Street, and – we think – represents Ganesha, the elephant-headed Hindu god of foresight. This month, identify the telephone box: £15 prize.



NTBCC bursts Government bubbles

The New Town and Broughton Community Council has responded to the Scottish Government's consultation on 'householder permitted development rights (PDR)' (see Issue 189).

In a closely argued letter, Planning Convener John Knight makes the case for no PDR in the World Heritage Site (if not the buffer zone too), and for information on controls to be made readily available by the Council.

Among other caveats, he voices concern that the appearance of streets outwith the EWS containing good Victorian tenements and 2-storey 1920s/1930s villas could be ruined by aerials, masonry cladding, porches, wind turbines, solar panels, and poor-quality repairs made within the 1 m 'bubble' to which no restrictions would apply.

'It is these streets, of which McDonald Road and Bellevue Road are prime examples, that we feel could be most affected by relaxations in PDR as it could jeopardise their potential listing and/or conservation area status in the future.'

In addition, he warns of unwelcome results which could result from loose wording in the draft legislation ('house' and 'flat') and inexplicable omission of the term 'tenement'.

You can read the full text in *Extras* (1.3.11).

Waiting for a bus shelter? Bring bench and broly

Reader Henk Teisma asked Lothian Buses when the eastbound shelter and real-time bus tracker on York Place would be restored. (It was removed prior to infrastructural works there from January–March 2010.)

Lothian Buses said they had repeatedly asked the Council, who referred them to Trams in Edinburgh. There the chain of communication had snapped.

Teisma is made of sterner stuff and persisted until he got an answer – no time soon.

A spokeswoman for TIE told him that estimates for the job are currently being sought. 'From experience elsewhere,' she continued at some length, 'it can be realistically assumed that the shelter should be able to be installed in about 5–6 months' time, as the installation programme will be dictated by the timing of the provision of a power source by Scottish Power, who generally take about 6 weeks to confirm their sub-contract order and 12 weeks to programme the installation.'

'I just can't believe that they've taken it all away months ago and only now are seeking quotations,' comments Teisma. 'I thought it would have been quite obvious that taking it away would mean it had to be replaced at some point as well, which could all have been arranged in one go at the start of the project.'

'I guess that would have been far too sensible.'

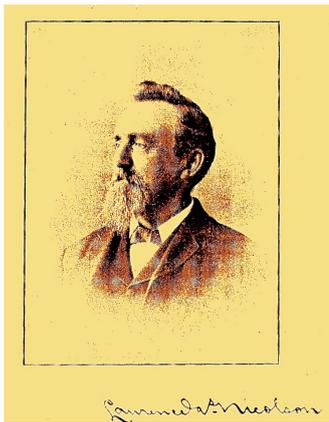
Profile: Laurence James Nicolson (1844–1901): the ‘Bard of Thule’

In Rosebank Cemetery sits ‘da last noost’ (winter berth) of Laurence James Nicolson, born in Lerwick in Shetland in 1844. He is remembered today as a minor poet and lyricist, for descriptions of ‘home’ recalled across miles and time which earned him the title ‘Bard of Thule’.

He first appears locally in the 1861 Census, living in Dalkeith as an apprentice cabinetmaker. He married in 1869, and thereafter is mostly listed as a ‘commercial traveller, tobacco’ in Edinburgh. He and his new family moved frequently about town, in the 1890s residing in Montgomery St, Union St, Broughton Place, and finally Hart St.

Publication of Nicolson’s collected works in 1894 was tinged with paradox. The Bard of Thule had been as concerned to express modern socialist and atheistic principles in standard English and Scots as he was to celebrate his fatherland in dialect (e.g. his parody of Tennyson’s sycophantic Jubilee ode ‘Carmen Sæculare’, 1887). His publisher, however, emphasised Nicolson’s dainty melodiousness, his ‘heart thrilling under the enthusiasm of humanity’. Others focused upon his ‘plaintive’ romanticism and the ease with which his verses could be set to the ‘wild’ and ‘untaught chords’ of Shetland ‘violins’. The Tennyson parody did not appear. Gardner coyly described the poet’s radicalism as ‘a patient faith in science and man, the expression of which gives to [him] a somewhat unique position among our song writers’.

Nicolson died at 17 Hart Street of cardiac disease and a cerebral embolism. The fact that his headstone was erected ‘by a few friends’ suggests that any apparent affluence concealed tight financial margins of error. Maddeningly, the inscription quotes him out of context, making uncontentious at the last one who in life was very far from conventional. A much fuller version of this article is online at *Breaking news* (1.3.11). *AM*



Briefly

The next meeting of the **Broughton History Society** will be at 7:30pm on Mon. 14 Mar. in Drummond CHS. **Diana Henderson** will talk on ‘**All Change! The Impact of World War II on Daily Lives**’. Genealogical tips will be provided.

Drummond Civic Association’s rearranged AGM took place on 2 Feb. There was a superb presentation by **Dorothy Marsh** on the work of the City’s **Museums Collection Centre** in Broughton Market. Mrs Gaby Holden (former Honorary Secretary), Mr Rheinhart von Hof and Julienne Thurrott were elected to serve on the committee.

Further **questionable science** from local A-boards. Outside **Artisan Roast**: ‘Sleep is just another term for caffeine deprivation’.

The ‘consented’ **hotel at Shrub Place** is delayed due to the economic climate. Instead, a beautiful new **53-space car park** is proposed for up to 2 years (Ref. 11/00112/FUL). **Leith Central Community Council** suggests left-only turns in and out, preservation of trees and new greenery, and a payment structure to **favour local businesses** with relatively cheap stays of 1–2 hours.

A **battle of wills** rages on Bellevue Crescent. Persons unknown – presumably keen to exclude **dogs and riff-raff** from the more easterly ‘garden island’ – keep securing the gate with cable ties. **When Parks staff remove all such measures, persons unknown replace them.** A CEC spokeswoman told *Spurtle*: ‘This park is owned and maintained by the Council and is open to all city residents’.

The deadline for the public’s objections to the proposed **Leith biomass plant** was 28 Feb. Greener Leith’s management team concluded the scheme would be **too large, in the wrong place, would not help Scotland achieve its carbon reduction targets, and so should not be built.** See their analysis at: <http://bit.ly/ecVYUP>. LCCC voted to oppose the scheme on 21.2.11.

Felicitations to **L’Escargot Bleu**, which has received a special commendation in the prestigious **Michelin Great Britain and Ireland 2011** guide. Michelin recommends it as an ‘authentic French bistro which offers classic French dishes ... and a buzzy atmosphere’. *Spurtle* concurs. **Bon appetit!**

At the public consultation held to discuss variations to plans for **Logie Green Rd/Beaverbank Place** (Issue 190), it emerged that not only will some of the proposed commercial elements be **converted** to student housing, but even more will **not be built at all** until the economy revives. Neighbours appeared more bothered about **flashing lights and noise** from contractors’ vehicles.

Almost as predicted in Issue 191, opening hours at **Axolotl Gallery** on Dundas St are now from 11:00am–4:00pm, Wed.–Sat.

Prudent painters prefer paste



Since 2008, *Spurtle* has highlighted the work of a few, genuinely talented street artists whose images and gnomic phrases do much to puzzle and amuse us and beautify Broughton’s backwaters. We’re not talking about tags, but work like the wittily mounting ‘Jouster’ on Dublin St Lane (Issue 159) or more recently ‘**BUT I’M SOFT INSIDE**’ on a Forth St pavement (Issue 184).

In *Breaking news* (9.2.11) we wondered why artists had recently started adhering works to surfaces rather than applying paint directly. REMOTE emailed us with the answer: ‘First of all, thanks for featuring my paintings in a positive light. In regards to your question ... I’ve recently started using wheat-pasted posters when bombing areas with the same image. The posters can be mass-produced in the comfort of your own, warm home, they take far less time to put up than spraying straight onto the wall, they can be put up in almost any weather, and the possible punishment for being caught carrying a brush, some wheat-paste and a few posters is far less severe than having a bag full of spray cans. I hope this helps you understand some of the motives behind me and other artists dabbling in other techniques.’

We hope to hear more REMOTE and friends in future.

Paolozzi tribute



Photo courtesy of Leith Walk PS.

Sir Eduardo Paolozzi (1924–2005) was one of the most significant surrealist and pop artists to emerge from Britain after the war. Local children have been celebrating his early days at Leith Walk Primary School through reading, writing, artwork and a spectacular mural. Pupils, parents, staff and guests listened as Paolozzi’s sister, Yolanda Tartaglia, spoke of her brother before declaring the mural open on 4 February.

The mural came about after work produced by pupils during investigation of the artist’s life and work was studied by staff at the Newhaven Advertising Agency. They chose images by Elise (P2), Unzala (P6) and Lissie (P7) for the final design, and commissioned spray-paint specialist Danny McDermott to complete it. After the opening, pupils Kyle (P6) and Lissie (P7) gave interviews to a camera crew from STV.

A prolific sculptor, painter, collagist, print and filmmaker, Leith-born Paolozzi struggled to imbue meaning in the images of an increasingly fragmented world. The siting of his *Manuscript of Monte Cassino* – now the heart of Broughton’s ‘Bigfoot Territory’ (Issues 169, 172, 189) – is in part a tribute to his Catholic, Italian and Edinburgh roots.

Moreover ...



It's not exactly graffiti, or street art, or advertising. But this **intriguing exhortation** has been catching York Place pedestrians' imaginations and making them think. The same building hosted a **'legendary'** rooftop party overlooking Picardy Place last summer.

A telephone caller claiming to represent **'Midlothian Police'** contacted an Albany St firm of solicitors on 4 Feb. seeking contributions for a local children's charity. The solicitors remained unpersuaded. Lothian & Borders Police urge businesses and residents to be wary, and to report any **similar fraudulent attempts**.

From DIY to toys to wedding bells ... Welcome to **Lameseley Bridal's** dazzling emporium at 109 Broughton St, which opened in Feb.

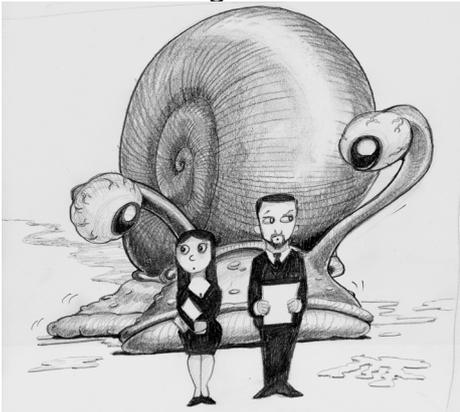
Very occasionally, a pesky gremlin may nibble at a *Spurtle* text. The Feb. piece on **General Dworak** stated that he resided at 109 Great King St. In fact he lived at No. 39. Thank you to all the many local experts on **Polish military history** who pointed this out.

Not everyone in Broughton is delighted by the Council's recently distributed **'Kerbside Recycling Calendar 2011/12'**. One describes it as 'the most confusing document ever', and cavils at its description of a plastic bag as opaque 'when it is clearly see-through'.

Gallery diary: New, huge oils of Edinburgh architecture by former E. Claremont St artist Frank McGonigal and Transpersonal creations by Simon Pontin will show at Axolotl Gallery from 4 Mar.-Apr. Union Gallery's coast-inspired group exhibition - **'Making Waves'** - will run from 17 Mar.-14 Apr.

Broughton St's **Organic Pleasures** will soon move to London and Paris to sell branded products online. **Aphrodite Boutique**, a reinvention/expansion of the old shop, will open later this year at an as yet **undisclosed Edinburgh location**.

L'Escargot Bleu ...



welcomes Michelin scrutiny

SHIRLEY-ANNE SOMERVILLE
MSP – Member of the Scottish
Parliament for Lothians
(Scottish National Party)



SURGERY TIMES:

- Every Monday 10.00–12.00pm at the Scottish Parliament
 - Call or email for an appointment
 - Other times by arrangement
- Email: shirley-anne.somerville.msp@scottish.parliament.uk
Tel. 0131 348 6823
www.shirleyannesomerville.org

Malcolm Chisholm MSP
Edinburgh North and Leith



Constituency Office:
5 Croall Place, Leith Walk, EH7 4LT
Tel: 0131 558 8358
Fax: 0131 557 6781
Saturday surgeries:
9am Leith Library
10.30am Royston/Wardieburn
Community Centre
12pm Stockbridge Library
Email: Malcolm.Chisholm.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

Mark Lazarowicz
MP for Edinburgh North and Leith



Constituency Office:
5 Croall Place, Leith Walk, EH7 4LT
Tel: 0131 557 0577
Fax: 0131 557 5759
mark@marklazarowicz.org.uk
www.marklazarowicz.org.uk
Friday advice sessions:
4.00pm **Stockbridge Library**,
no appointment necessary;
5.00pm **5 Croall Place**;
other surgeries throughout the
constituency – phone for details

New Town/Broughton Community Council

The Community Council
represents the views
of local residents to
Edinburgh City Council

Next meeting:

Monday 7 March
at 7.30pm

Drummond Community
High School (Library).

secretary@ntbcc.org.uk

Broughton

Property Management
Letting your
property?

Bring this Spurtle
for a discount of
£25
from the first let

info@broughtonproperty.co.uk

0131-478-7222

61-63 Broughton Street
Edinburgh, EH1 3RJ.



y u i o p
IT services

Computer trouble?
Call John and get it fixed.

t: 07771 784 058 / 0131 557 9577
e: john.robinson@yuiop.co.uk
Computer support and consultancy
for small businesses and individuals

AM DECORATING

Your local painter + decorator

Alastair McAlpine

Tel: 0131 556 4841

Mobile: 07866 222 656
alastairmc Alpine@btinternet.com

Spurtle Team: John Dickie, MF, Ali George, Elfreda Harrison, Maria Hart, George Hosey, Alan McIntosh, John Ross Maclean, Graeme Robertson, David Sterratt.
Post: Spurtle, c/o Narcissus Flowers, 87 Broughton St, Edinburgh EH1 3RJ.