

Spurtle



Find us at: www.broughtonspurtle.org.uk

BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

**December
2011**

No 201

Tel: 558 8574

spurtle@hotmail.co.uk

AMAZON TO DELIVER ON JOBS



First Minister Alex Salmond officially opened the new Amazon customer services and software development centres on 2 floors of Waverley Gate (the revamped GPO building at Waterloo Place) on 15 November.

Some 750 permanent jobs and 1,500 temporary ones (at Christmas) will be created. 'Edinburgh is an outstanding location, providing us with access to a highly-skilled workforce,' said Alan Lyall, Vice President of European Operations, unaccountably forgetting to mention that it is also very conveniently placed for Broughton. To find out about jobs there, visit: [www.amazon.co.uk/careers].

A spokesman for Amazon politely refused to tell *Spurtle* how long their lease here is.

GREETINGS!



Photo © Mark Johnstone

For details of our festive photo competition, see 'Briefly', p.2.

KIDS FACE BAD PARKING AND HAZARDOUS ZIGZAGS

Children crossing Bellevue Place on their way to and from primary school are being put in danger. The youngsters cannot see approaching traffic because of parked cars outside Drummond CHS.

'Not only parents but learning-support taxis park on the school's "Keep Clear" zigzags,' one mother told *Spurtle*. Drummond staff say they are powerless to intervene, parking attendants offer little help, and community police have failed to respond to emails.

Now the exasperated parents have approached Leith Walk councillor Deidre Brock who is investigating the problem for herself.

STEPS IN RIGHT DIRECTION

Precipitous steps leading down from Summerbank to King George V Park have for ages presented a challenge.

A combination of rotting timber, wet leaves, soil erosion and canine practical jokes have encouraged only fools to rush in.

Friends of King George V & Scotland Yard Parks have now secured funds from the Inverleith Neighbourhood Partnership Environmental Programme to replace the steps and provide a handrail before the worst of winter sets in.

In other news, the Scotland Yard Activity Centre featured briefly in the BBC's *Children in Need* coverage on 18 November. Scotland Yard is a brilliant space with wonderful staff who understand the value to people with learning difficulties (and their carers) of safe, untrammled play. Let's keep supporting them through 2012.

To find all the latest FKGVSYP news, background, and a fascinating historical overview, visit their new website at: [<http://www.kgvsy.org.uk>].

FIVE-RING CIRCUS BEGAN ON BROUGHTON STREET



A perfect storm followed *Spurtle's* scoop last month concerning an application by the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games's (LOCOG) to erect advertisements on the north-west side of Edinburgh Castle (*Breaking news*, 15.11.11). Various local, national and international media quickly picked up on our online story and ran off with it.

Spurtle's initial interest in the matter stemmed mainly from its relevance to an earlier piece we had run about City of Edinburgh Council's enforcement order banning – we felt unobtrusive – signage outside Real Foods on Broughton Street (*Breaking news*, 1.11.11). One reason for the ban was the unconsented and supposedly inappropriate shade of 'bright green' used on an A-listed property. However, no such considerations seemed to have tempered LOCOG's garish designs during pre-application discussions with Planning officers. We detected double standards.

Real Foods have appealed to Scottish Ministers against the ban, and at the time of writing some 1,170 people had signed their online petition. Paper versions are in the shop. Malcolm Chisholm, MSP is lending his support.

Briefly



Last chance to view **Alison Auldjo's** highly acclaimed solo exhibition at the Union Gallery on Broughton St – *Gone to Earth* – which runs until 5 Dec. (see review in Breaking news 14.11.11). A *Christmas Exhibition* follows from 8 Dec.–24 Jan., featuring work by regular contributors and award-winning artists Colin Brown and Audrey Grant.

City of Edinburgh Council and the Police have no plans at present to move on **well-behaved anti-capitalism protestors** in St Andrew Square. Some locals suggest the campers may eventually acquire **squatters' rights** on the privately owned land if allowed to remain. During December, the campers have agreed to occupy the north and south areas of the Square. A spokesman for the movement told *Spurtle* there are currently c.1,000 such encampments worldwide, including 400 in the US.

The father of a cyclist killed under a bin lorry at **Broughton Point** is to sue City of Edinburgh Council, according to the *Sunday Mail* (13.11.11). He says the circumstances of **Craig Newton's** death on 28 April, and police investigations afterwards, have not been adequately explained.

Glasgow has welcomed **Brad Pitt**, Auchmithie has done the same for **Scarlett Johansson**, and Duntrune Castle may or may not feature in the new James Bond film starring **Daniel Craig**. On 17 Nov. it was Broughton's turn, with lights, cameras and stars arriving at the **Cask and Barrel** for a dramatic interior action sequence. We're not sure *which* stars, but apparently the scene was part of the Government's keenly awaited **Christmas Don't Drink and Drive** advertisement.

The **domestic whereabouts** of Father Christmas have long been the subject of speculation. Some say he resides at the North Pole, others in Lapland. **Observant locals**, however, have noted his continuous presence throughout the past year in Broughton. A **£15 book token** awaits the reader whose name is drawn from the **shoogle hat** after correctly identifying the location for our front-page photo. Please send your answer to the usual address on p.4 or the email address on page 1.

Young writers book place on shelves

Three months' self-analysis, plotting and redrafting climaxed on 2 December when 76 P6 and P7 pupils from Broughton Primary School launched their collection of short stories – *School Daze* – at City Chambers.

The 16 tales revolve around the Victorian school's quirky internal architecture, in particular its fascinating double-helix staircases which have long left parents and other visitors in a disorientated spin. In the stories, characters trapped inside must enter doors off the staircase and solve problems within before getting closer to escape. (It is not promoted as an allegory for education, but readers may draw their own conclusions.)

Central to the project has been Mary Turner Thomson, a former business development adviser for Scottish Enterprise turned professional author and educator [www.pencilcreativeideas.com]. She first encouraged the children to classify themselves in one of a range of personality types, then organised them into well-mixed groups of 4–5 and encouraged their creativity. Thomson crafted their ideas into words, inviting comments – good and bad – at each stage, suggesting additions, and also teaching the children about other elements in a book's production such as effective design, illustration and marketing. Now it has been published in time for Christmas, and any profits will go straight back into the school. *School Daze* is available from Broughton PS, direct from WhiteWater Publishing, from Blackwell's Bookshop (ISBN 978-0-9561368-6-2) and on Amazon. Price: £6.99.



Impenetrable supermarket windows a pain

The Barony Street-based Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland recently secured modest changes to the design of a new Sainsbury store in the South Side. Their remarks – available in full and in context at [<http://goo.gl/9snBR>] – will now be of interest to residents around Howe Street (see Issue 199).

They include this observation: 'Advertisements behind the glass should be kept to a minimum to allow maximum visibility into the premises. This principle is being broadly ignored by the large retailers that are replacing small shop units. A number apply coloured vinyl or frosted effects to either the whole window or at least above eye height and this is resulting in an increasingly closed streetscape.

'... As the number of supermarkets replacing smaller retailers seems likely to increase we would encourage CEC to give some consideration to the impact window dressing has on the conservation areas of the city and in this particular instance maintain the windows as visually penetrable.'

What about art of darkness?

City of Edinburgh Council is holding a public consultation about a new lighting strategy. It reckons the 'morphology of the city and the grandeur of its buildings can be dramatically revealed through the intelligent and sensitive use of lighting', especially in winter.

The draft strategy aims to: boost Edinburgh's image, enhance 'safety, security, amenity and circulation'; establish and coordinate lighting; and minimise energy cost and light pollution.

Spurtle broadly welcomes the consultation, but suggests: (1) There is nothing intrinsically wrong with the dark – that's how we can tell it is night; (2) Edinburgh has long thrived on shadows; (3) Less lighting rather than more will always be cheaper.

You can view the draft strategy at Waverley Court or online at *Extras* (1.12.11). Send email responses to karen.stevenson@edinburgh.gov.uk by 31 December.

Bonnington Gaelic school an expensive short cut?

City of Edinburgh Council's Children and Families Department has not yet decided on a name for the new dedicated Gaelic school in Bonnington, but more worrying for some is a lingering doubt about where the new school's pupils will go next for their secondary education.

Locals hoping for an influx of families had imagined a local secondary school might benefit – either Drummond CHS or Trinity. But as early as December 2010, the Council had proposed Tynecastle as the preferred option.

Now *Spurtle* learns that parents are pressing for Gillespie's to remain the default option, as it has been since the Gaelic classes' inception at Tolcross Primary School.

This will do nothing to allay the fears of those sceptics who foresee additional cross-city school-runs by car in rush-hour; or of those misdoubters who have always suspected an interest in Gaelic education disguised middle-class parents' anxiety to secure out-of-catchment places at a popular secondary.

A Children and Families spokesperson told us: 'The decision will be made by the Council, but will also require approval from Scottish Ministers. And we have not yet agreed the timing of any consultation.' Watch this space.

From Albany Street to Malawi: working for an equal future

In Issue 198 we explored the antecedents and 19th-century development of the Deaf Action organisation and its 'silent church' located at 49 Albany Street. In the Spring of 1924, the then 'Edinburgh Deaf and Dumb Benevolent Society' purchased No. 54 next door. After alterations, the enlarged premises, including a lecture hall, recreation room, committees boardroom, library and reading room, a sitting-room, workshop and store room, a 'ladies recreation room', and a further room for committee members were opened in 1928.



The interior fabric of the building remained virtually unchanged until 1993 when it was ravaged by fires caused by an arsonist. The Society temporarily relocated to 13 Johnston Terrace while the 'silent church' was accommodated at Broughton St Mary's

Parish Church on Broughton Place. The Albany Street premises were completely redeveloped and refurbished at a cost of £309,000 and were officially opened in May 1995. Though no longer housing its famous church, the reconstruction preserved fine wood-arched features which survived the fire. The re-named Albany Deaf Church moved to Greenside Parish Church in 2001, and in 2003, the original church area was converted into the current Learning Centre.

Nos 49 and 51 Albany Street now comprise the National Head Office of Deaf Action, with satellite offices in Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Fife, Inverness, Tayside and West Lothian. All the rooms are spacious and provide state-of-the-art facilities for its many activities and interests. Happily, the old Society's title also metamorphosed into 'Edinburgh and East of Scotland Society for the Deaf' in 1974, and again in 2003 to 'Deaf Action'. This reflects the national, and international aspect of this extraordinary organisation whose inspiration extends as far afield as Malawi and Saudi Arabia. Deaf Action's vision states: 'Working together for an equal and better future for all deaf people'. It should be noted that the term 'deaf' here includes those who are Deaf British Sign Language users, and those who are deafened, deafblind, and hard of hearing. The tireless application of Deaf Action's vision at home and overseas will be illustrated in a future article. *JRM (with thanks again to Deaf Action)*

Birthday

At a quarter to six he comes pattering
Through to our room, asking can he unwrap
His presents. Most are in coloured paper,
Sellotaped together. Excitement has no bounds

As he flits from package to package, lays out
His new draughts pieces, the triangle
From my mother, rustles through the tissue
For what he may have missed. Since midnight,

He says, he has been five. Brilliant, under
The centre light, he touches the heart.
Outside, in another murderous
Dawn, the world prises itself apart.

Stewart Conn

'Birthday' appeared in *Stolen Light: Selected Poems* (1999) from Bloodaxe Books. Last December we highlighted Stewart's collection *The Breakfast Room* which went on to win the Scottish Poetry Book of the Year award in 2011. To inaugurate 2012, the January *Spurle* (Issue 202) will include a new poem which it will be our privilege to publish for the first time.

Welcome return of SNPG

The newly refurbished and much expanded Scottish National Portrait Gallery has reopened on Broughton's doorstep. Its many high-profile pleasures are amply covered elsewhere, but keep an eye out also for the 2-screen HD video-work *Missing* by Graham Fagen. This investigates the vividly experienced but mostly invisible lives of those who slip from view: runaways, fugitives, down-and-outs – the peripheral faces never usually portrayed in galleries.

Tree felling axed ... for now

Canonmills residents successfully campaigned against the felling of mature trees at Canonmills Bridge last month.

Council officials ordered a last-minute, temporary halt to preparations for flood defence works after it emerged that planning permission might not have been applied for or received to cut down around 11 willow and sycamore trees. Opponents say that had the trees been threatened by proposals, early public response would certainly have more accurately matched the 1,100+ signatories to their later online petition.

Locals – backed by Malcolm Chisholm, MSP – say the felling is unnecessary. Contractors Lagan's and the Water of Leith Conservation Trust argue that, regrettably, the trees must go during installation of underground barriers. They claim twice as many trees are planned to replace them. See *Breaking news* (21.11.11; 26.11.11).

Briefly



Volunteer **Jonathan McBride** has been busy on Broughton Street, raising awareness for World AIDS Day on 1 December and gaining the support for **Waverley Care**, the locally based charity which helps people living with HIV and Hepatitis C. **Local businesses** lending their support include: Apple Pharmacy, Barony Bar, Boombarbers, Broughton Bookshop, Coco on Broughton, Crolla's, Curiouser & Curiouser, Dragonfly, Egg Hair and Body, Essential Therapies, Joey D, The Street Bar, ThreadBare, ThriftChic Boutique, Villeneuve Wines, Vino Wines.

The New Town and Broughton Community Council (NTBCC) **will not fight Gregs of Scotland's** proposed arrival on Broughton St. Its Planning convener has examined the application and found 'no material grounds' for objection.

NTBCC is concerned at an application for yet another mobile phone antenna atop the **Waverley Exchange on E. London St** (Ref. 11/03285/LBC). No plots of beam intensity are provided as required by CEC Telecommunications Policy advice, despite the building being directly across the road from St Mary's RC Primary School. The fact that new masts are replacing existing ones is immaterial.

Broughton History Society's latest Newsletter is now online at [<http://bit.ly/qsyOc0>].

There is to be **no pantomime at the Playhouse** this year. *We will Rock You* will disappoint instead. Those wanting an **alternative pantomime-related thrill** without the expense and inconvenience of travelling to Tollcross should gather near LRT's Annandale Street terminus and **hiss at any passing bus**. Grant Stott's face will almost certainly be on the back of it.

We were saddened to hear of Stewart Blaik's death on 9 November, aged 75. Mr Blaik was an active and altruistic citizen in Leith, a Labour Party member and trade unionist for over 50 years, and best known in northern Broughton as Chair of the Leith Central Community Council after its reorganisation in 2006. Our condolences go to his family and friends.

Moreover ...



Reader **John MacDonald** is perhaps a little less in favour of 'street art' than we are at the *Spurtle*, requiring more persuasion before he can think of it as truly artistic. However, this recent appearance in **Canonmills** had sufficient *aw* in the paws to make him smile and send us the photo. We love it. Further examples are very welcome.

Some readers were temporarily confused by Fiona Harvey's November **Seasonal Bake** (*Breaking news*, 11.11.11). An editorial hitch resulted in our posting her delicious recipe for **Cranberry & Orange Muffins** minus 2 key ingredients: **cranberries and oranges**. The error was soon corrected, but we apologise to anyone who beat us to it and made slightly underwhelming **Air & Air Muffins**.

To all our **Hungarian readers** we extend a hearty *boldog karácsonyt* You can find out more about some of them in *Breaking news* (7.11.11). The phrase above is a festive blessing, not an explanation of recent **underfoot unpleasantness** on Fettes Row (Issue 200).

We wish all our other readers a **Merry Christmas**. We quite understand that not everybody relishes this time of year or is able to enjoy it as much as they'd like, and to them we express the sincere hope that we will all have a **Happier New Year**.

Spurtle's AGM has been rescheduled for 8 Jan. 2012 at 7pm in Broughton St Mary's Parish Church (Garden Room), Bellevue Cres. Subscribers, readers, contributors, and any **newcomers** wishing to get involved in any capacity are **most welcome**.

Santa's Broughton presence –



a completely impenetrable mystery

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:
Leith Library, Ferry Road: 9am.
Royston Wardieburn Community
Centre, Pilton Drive North: 11 am.

Email: Malcolm.Chisholm.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

New Town/Broughton Community Council

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

Next meeting:

Monday 5 December
at 7.30pm

Broughton St Mary's Parish
Church, Bellevue Crescent
(Drummond Room)

secretary@ntbcc.org.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

Spurtle Team: John Dickie, MF, Ali George, 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.

y u i o p IT services

Wifi woeful?

Call John and get it fixed.

t: 07771 784 058 / 0131 557 9577

e: wifi@yuio.co.uk

LONDON1



HOTTOWEL SHAVE
TURKISH STYLE
BARBER

TRADITIONAL HAIRCUTS
MONDAY-SUNDAY

18 RODNEY STREET, EH7 4EA ☎ 557 2393

AM DECORATING

Your local painter + decorator

Alastair McAlpine

Tel: 0131 556 4841

Mobile: 07866 222 656

alastairmc Alpine@btinternet.com

Broughton

Property Management

Thinking of
Letting your
Property?

See your local agent
We always need
property to let

info@broughtonproperty.co.uk

0131-478-7222

61-63 Broughton Street
Edinburgh, EH1 3RJ.



Gentle Petsitting



Dog walking and pet minding
services for busy pet parents

T: 0131 555 5347/07521 315 813

www.gentlepetsitting.com

JEWELLERY TO YOU
& MORE

Dress & Costume Jewellery
plus Accessories

www.jewellerytoyou.com
support@jewellerytoyou.com

10% discount code – enter JTY10 at checkout