

Spurtle



Find us at: www.broughtonspurtle.org.uk

January
2011

No 190

Tel: 558 8574

spurtle@hotmail.co.uk

BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

NOT CURTAILED JUST INCREMENTAL: TRAMS TO STOP AT ST ANDREW SQ.

Trams in Edinburgh's latest Update on the Edinburgh Tram Project went before full Council on 16 December (see *Extras* 1.1.11).

The report 'refreshed' the business case, gave the latest on mediation arrangements with contractors, detailed governance plans for tram development and tram/bus integration, and outlined how powers for land acquisition should be modified to keep open options in future.

Of most interest to locals is TIE's case for incremental delivery of the project, i.e. building the line from the airport only as far as St Andrew Square by 2012/2013. This, it estimates, could be done within the current £545m funding available, and would result in many of the economic benefits originally envisaged by the original scheme. It would also allow for integration with Lothian Buses and financial viability within the short to medium term. Disruptive traffic diversions would be more easily mitigated. The alternative, it asserted, would be postponement or cancellation of the project.

TIE remains committed to extending the line to Leith and Newhaven since this underpins proposed (but currently stalled) redevelopment at Leith Docks and the economic viability of North Edinburgh. TIE does not commit itself to a timetable for the continuation, but predicts a return to growth in commercial and residential development by around 2014.

The mediation process will start 'out of the public eye' early in the New Year.

Commenting on the report, NTBCC Transport Convenor Patrick Hutton told *Spurtle*: 'The project has got so far that cancellation cannot be a serious option. The main concern now is that if the tramline stops (temporarily?) at St Andrew Square then we do not want to see York Place used as a reversing siding, with all the disruption that would entail.'

'What should also be noted is that the new business case is hardly definitive, does not commit to completion within any sort of budget, and does not seem to address TIE's own failings.'

ASSEMBLY ROOMS PLANS

Many locals are concerned at plans for the refurbishment and partial development of the Council-owned Assembly Rooms on George Street.

All agree the crumbling Georgian structure needs restoration. But some question City of Edinburgh Council's plan to pay back around £6m in borrowings by converting ground-floor rooms into two new shops and a restaurant. They see this as a betrayal of the building's cultural purpose, and a serious blow to Fringe productions which have long relied on its variously sized venues.

CEC on 16 December voted through a £9.3m project to address leaks, decaying wood, rewiring and the upgrade of infrastructure between now and June 2012. It claimed anything less would compromise the venue's long-term structural integrity. It argued that in straitened economic times it has a duty to find private-sector revenue streams (new shop and Fringe production leases), that businesses likely to take up the leases have already been identified, and that improvements will result in more conference/corporate/wedding business in future.



Opponents pointed to the importance of the spaces being lost. In their more modest £4.6m counter-proposal – now rejected – they argued that the Arts outperform Commerce in recessions, and that 5-year-old CEC plans ignore today's financial climate. Broughton resident Sara Lodge says they oppose 'handing a beautiful and epicentric cultural resource over to this kind of ubiquitous cheesy commercial development'. CEC's plans are, she says, 'unimaginative and short-sighted' (see *Letters* 6.12.10).

Culture Convenor Cllr Deidre Brock insists Historic Scotland support the proposal. On 13 December she dismissed much of the opposition to it as 'misinformation and deliberate scare-mongering by those with a vested interest in seeing the building remain in its tired, crumbling state'.

Spurtle staff cannot judge the competing business cases here. Sentimentally, we regret any loss of performance spaces. But we also recall unsqueamish Georgians' flair for mixing fine principles with financial pragmatism. Ruinous Assembly Rooms would be of no use to anyone. Structurally sound ones can be reapportioned later.

COLD BETWEEN EARTH AND SKIES



Broughton shivered in sub-zero temperatures, sometimes as low as -15 °C, throughout much of November and December. Even these Greenside stalwarts, 'each in his own religious steeple', seemed to feel the cold. To see more of sculptress Helen Denerley's work download the pdf at [www.helendenerley.co.uk/pics/brochure_helendenerley.pdf].

Briefly

Congratulations to Pilrig resident Marianne Wheelaghan whose debut novel **The Blue Suitcase** launched on 25 Nov. (*Breaking news* 17.11.10). By 6 Dec. **Blackwell's Bookshop** on the South Bridge had restocked twice in a week, whilst their online shop was labelling the work a 'Bestseller'.

The next meeting of the **Broughton History Society** is at 7:30pm on Mon. 10 Jan. in Drummond CHS. Graham Cruickshank will talk on 'A Kaleidoscope of Scottish Ceramics'.

CEC's **Modernising Waste Team** have launched a survey about **rubbish collection in the World Heritage Site**. See *Breaking news* (16.12.10) to answer online, or pick up a form at the library. Responses are invited by 10 Jan.

Pupils at state schools **resume** on 11 Jan. CEC's Children and Families Dept have been consulting with parent councils about **extending the summer holiday by a week** so that young people can make the most of the **Festival in session 2012/13**. See www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/675/consultations_on_education/1229/school_term_dates_consultation/2. Responses by 10 Feb. 2011.

Spurtle's AGM in December was cancelled due to adverse weather and illness. It will now take place on **Wed. 12 Jan. at 7:30pm in Broughton St Mary's Parish Church, Bellevue Crescent**. All welcome.

Road safety around Broughton Primary School has improved. Lollypop guides on **McDonald Rd** feel better protected by the temporary narrowing of the road, although the build-out won't be made permanent until completion of tramworks on Leith Walk. The flashing amber phase on the **Broughton Rd** crossing has been omitted, and this too has led to safer behaviour by drivers.

Calling LGBT artists!

'Get creative! Get involved! We need you!' That's the message from The LGBT Centre for Health and Wellbeing on Howe Street where organisers are looking for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender contributors for their annual art exhibition in March this year.

Professional artists and keen amateurs alike are sought whose original work explores LGBT identities and communities. The event will run from 25–31 March at the Out of the Blue Drill Hall on Dalmeny Street, and is already being billed as 'the most diverse and inclusive LGBT community arts exhibition Edinburgh has ever seen'.

The deadline for submissions is 4 March. For details on how, contact Jules Barnes at jules@lgbthealth.org.uk or Tel. 523 1100. For more on the organisation, visit their website at www.lgbthealth.org.uk.

If you clear it, they will come

Spurtle's outrage about the non-existent/unfindable nature of Broughton's gritbins seems to have had a positive result (*Breaking news* 10.12.10/17.12.10).

Cllr Louise Lang's intervention finally produced a definitive list of citywide locations and the inescapable conclusion that not enough grit was available for use by locals on pavements. Then CEC's Centre/Leith Neighbourhood Team offered to deliver salt and grit, road conditions permitting, and remove piles of snow afterwards (Tel. 529 3717); next it began gritting pavements on local streets without waiting to be asked.

Paradoxically the Council concession came just as a thaw set in, but locals should take up the offer if and when the wintry weather returns.

Now that the infamous flamingo has been found, who can tell us the location of this elephantine Broughton denizen? A book token will be awarded to the successful tracker whose name is drawn first from the shogly hat on 23 January 2011.



Somerville backs local causes

Ten years ago the Water of Leith broke its banks in a summer flood, causing damage to over 500 properties, many of them around Warriston Crescent, Logie Green Road and Bonnyhaugh Lane.

This December Shirley-Anne Somerville, MSP for the Lothians, wrote to fellow SNP Environment Minister Roseanna Cunningham asking for the Water of Leith Flood Prevention Scheme to be prioritised if there is any underspend in the latter's departmental budget at the end of the year.

'The longer the project takes, the higher the cost to taxpayers and the greater the risk of flooding in the meantime,' she wrote.

In another piece of neat footwork, Ms Somerville on 15 December tabled a motion backing Lothian Bus staff's opposition to a merger with TIE. 'It is worded in a way which allows members from all parties to sign up – whether or not they are supporters or critics of the trams scheme,' say supporters.

Local MP welcomes ship-to-ship decision

The Coalition Government in Westminster announced in December that it will after all implement the previous Labour Administration's new regulations toughening standards for ship-to-ship oil transfers.

The regulations – due to be implemented in April 2011 and initially prompted by MP Mark Lazarowicz's private member's bill – seemed at risk over the summer when Lib-Dem and Conservative MPs in SW England successfully pushed for further consultation. (See [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100727/halltext/100727h0002.htm].)

Mr Lazarowicz has partially welcomed the new measures, which ensure transfers will be restricted to licensed ports at which established and adequate safety measures are present. However, ship-to-ship transfers will be possible outside harbours in a 'single designated area' off the UK coast, which – despite promised safeguards – continues to cause worry.

'Wherever they take place,' he told *Spurtle*, 'the same concerns apply: in recent years the number of ship-to-ship oil transfers around the UK coast has risen significantly and an accident would be a disaster for both the local environment and economy'.

Picardy Place Tesco – work starts

Building work began in mid-December at 8 Picardy Place on the creation of a Tesco Express.

In a subsequent development on 20 December, CEC granted the store a licence for alcohol offsales (*Breaking news* 22.12.10). This seemed to contradict previous Council statements on limiting alcohol outlets in the area in a bid to curb disruption. It went against the advice of the New Town and Broughton Community Council and at least one 'rival' trader who claimed there was an oversupply. Reaction by other businesses and individuals was mixed: some expressed concern that the move would reduce shoppers' footfall on local streets; Lucy Tanat-Jones, leader of the Broughton Street Traders Association, expressed surprise at the CEC decision, but thought it possible that a fully functioning Tesco in Picardy Place would actually increase custom to the area.

In unintentionally comic ignorance or denial of local misgivings (Issues 169–71, 181), signs outside the site announce 'Thousands of products on your doorstep' and 'Working with the community to make a difference'. Each concludes 'Thanks for your patience'. No problem, Tesco: please take as long as you like.

Spurtle lore

Periodically, we are still asked 'What is a spurtle?' *Chamber's Dictionary* is succinct as ever: 'Spurtle n. (Scot) a porridge stick: a sword (also Spurtle-blade)'.

It is a wooden stirring stick (right) not a spoon as such, often with a knob to give the stirrer a grip, used to prevent the porridge spurting and sputtering and to ensure a smooth, velvety, perfect texture. It should not be confused with a police truncheon, which is a baton used to ensure a quiet, compliant prisoner prior to arrest, conviction and the serving of porridge.

Both spurtle and the *Spurtle* have featured recently on BBC Radio 5 Live and the World Service. We were also stirred to hear that comedian and local resident Craig Hill referred on stage to the *Spurtle* as his favourite organ. We invite further observations with trepidation.



CEC wants public's views on Gaelic education

In Issues 186–7 we covered the controversial expansion of Gaelic education in Edinburgh, with Bonnington Primary School perhaps reopening as a dedicated Gaelic school. Councillors voted in December to put options out to public consultation with a view to implementing one of them in August 2012.

In a report of 14 December, Education Director Gillian Tee states that refurbishing Bonnington would cost £1.46m (£860,000 more than previously estimated), and its running costs would be £1.1m more over 8 years than those for an expanded Tollcross. In a budget crisis, these figures would probably be enough to scupper its chances. However, the Scottish Government is willing to contribute £700K towards the upgrade.

Sceptics argue that Gaelic education has proved popular with Edinburgh parents because it entails secondary placements at James Gillespie's. It is unclear how parents will react to a mooted transfer of secondary Gaelic to Tynecastle.

Briefly

Neighbours are relieved that permission to **change the use of premises at 21 McDonald Place** into a motorcycle repair and sales unit was refused on 14 Dec. (Ref. 10/0291/FUL). Five letters of objection cited potential noise and strain on parking provision. Planning officers found the proposal was contrary to Hou 8 of the City's Local Plan and would lead to an unacceptable increase in noise, disturbance and on-street activity that would prejudice local residential amenity.

It is roughly 3 years since **James Ritchie & Son** – Edinburgh's horological hub – relocated from Broughton St to 35a Dundas St. Now they're offering *Spurtle* readers a 10% discount on **watch battery fitting** until the end of this month.

The **National Library of Scotland** has recently launched an online project whereby 19th-century **Ordnance Survey maps** are accurately overlaid across current Google **satellite images** of Scottish towns and cities. In Edinburgh, maps dating from **1849–53, 1876–7 and 1893–4** are available. The system is very easy to use and the results are **absolutely fascinating**. Go to [<http://maps.nls.uk/overlays.html>].

The next meeting of the **Leith Central Community Council** will be at 7:30pm on Mon. 17 Jan. in McDonald Rd Library.

Developers again seek permission to convert properties at **26–8 Albany Street** into 4 flats and a townhouse (Ref. 10/03518/LBC). See *Breaking news* 22.12.10.

Broughton Primary School **Parent Council** next meets at 7:30pm on Wed. 19 Jan. in the staffroom.

Anyone who has ever searched for **CEC agendas, minutes and reports online** will probably agree it can be **maddeningly difficult** to find what you want. CEC have acknowledged the problems and are now reading 'a **more user friendly, efficient and advanced service**' for early 2011. We applaud them for listening and taking action.

The **New Town and Broughton Community Council** does not convene in Jan. Its next meeting will be on Mon. 7 Feb. at 7:30pm in the Library, Drummond Community High School.

Drummond Civic Association's AGM was cancelled in Dec. owing to bad weather. See *Events* online for new date and venue when confirmed.

A pre-application notification has been lodged to vary plans for the rear block in the development next to **Beaverbank Place** (Issue 159, *Breaking news* 22.11.10). Extra student accommodation is proposed instead of office space. Neighbours may see this as a dangerous precedent, or welcome less traffic entering and leaving via **Logie Green Road**. A public meeting to discuss the issue will be held on **26 Jan., 4:00–8:00pm, in St Philip's Church**. NTBCC will attend. Locals should pay close attention.

2010: Review of the year

January/February: Drummond CHS's headteacher Jon Reid returns to Larbert High in Falkirk after 3 high-profile years. Schools across Edinburgh brace for budget cuts. Broughton St Mary's opens doors to new rooms. Blenheim Place resident makes unilateral declaration of independence. Magne Furholmen of A-ha exhibits at Printmakers Workshop. Tesco win planning permission for shop on Picardy Place. Axolotl opens on Dundas St. Norma Prentice announced as Drummond's new Head. Duke of Edinburgh visits Broughton St Mary's. RIP Canonmills bookseller William Smith (1929–2010).

March/April: Controversial plans for new housing at Heriot Hill. Moo café robbed at knifepoint. Record attendance for hustings: 9 candidates stand for Edinburgh North & Leith. RIP broadcaster, Arts administrator, preacher Tom Fleming (1927–2010). St Andrew Square hosts *The Lion of Scotland*. Norma Prentice in post.

May/June: Labour's Mark Lazarowicz retains seat with majority reduced by nearly 20%. Local field athlete Kimberley Reed's *annus mirabilis* begins. Launch of Antony Gormley's *6 Times*. CEC insists bin-bags must go. Broughton stars in *The Illusionist* at the Film Festival.

July/August: Refurbished Glenogle Baths reopen. HM the Queen opens John Hope Gateway at the Botanic. Planning permission sought for 132 McDonald Rd. War breaks out in Rodney St British Legion. Flood flattens local Gormleys. Flood of plumbers in Bellevue House.

September/October: Dance Base extends to Thomas Morton Hall. Jazz Festival in Bellevue. Peace declared on Rodney St. Kimberley Reed's summer ends with haul of 10 medals. His Holiness the Pope narrowly misses visiting Broughton; Narcissus send flowers. Multrees Walk security back down on photography. Trafalgar Day signals resume at RN and RM Club, Broughton Rd.

November/December: Locals campaign to retain postal services in Brunswick Rd. Leith Against the Biomass Plant campaign gathers momentum. Two new books launched by Broughton authors. Edinburgh shivers.

Spurtle seeks new team members

Around 30 people contributed articles and images to the *Spurtle* in 2010, with scores more supplying ideas, letters, news tips, layout skills, shanks ponies and support. We thank them all. If you'd like to become part of the team in 2011, please make contact (see p.1) – we'd love to hear from you. *Mush!*



Photo: Union Gallery.

Moreover ...



Given the prospect of a long, hard winter, London St reader **Hugh Lockhart** urges locals whose properties front the street to at least try and **clear pavements** of snow and ice. Those without frontages or on upper floors could, he suggests, regularly spread salt. For advice on technique and legal implications, see [www.direct.gov.uk/en/N11/Newsroom/DG_191868].

However, as revealed in *Breaking news* (16.12.10), there are **insufficient grit-bins** in Broughton (a mere 26) to allow pavements to be cleared. There is not one listed between the top of Broughton St and Canonmills.

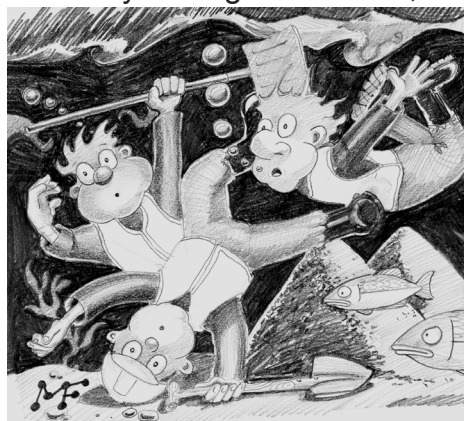
What is the etiquette for cleared parking spaces? *Spurtle* witnessed one local's Herculean efforts to clear snow and ice from around his car. He drove away, and within 5 minutes an opportunist parker had nipped in, leaving the vehicle in situ for over a week. Is it wrong to build **defensive ice ramparts** around hard-won clearances? Is it even more wrong to entomb interlopers' cars beneath piles of snow 'thoughtfully' cleared from adjacent pavements?

When CEC brought in members of the armed forces to dig out Edinburgh on 8 Dec., City Chambers media staff announced the news with a rather alarming tweet: **Military to clear streets of the most vulnerable.**

Bin collection disrupted by weather? Extra skips citywide are listed at [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/718/emergency_planning_and_information/1167/severe_winter_weather_information/8]. One is in CEC car park on **Broughton Rd.**

Spurtle tweeted on 8 Dec. about an unfortunate muddling of **elastic crampons**. A reader has since told us how she mistakenly asked for 'foot yashmaks'.

'Plenty more grit in reserve.'



Council reassures Edinburgh

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

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.

Maria's Kitchen

Deli & Sandwich Bar
46 Rodney Street

Simply delicious food
Home cooked
For your special event

Carry-outs - Events Catering
Office Lunches & parties
Sandwiches, paninis & wraps

Call Maria on:
079415 32142
mariaskitchen@hotmail.co.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