

Spurtle

**September
2008**

No 162

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

POs TO GO – BROUGHTON SAYS ‘NO’

On 19 Aug. the Post Office unveiled plans to shut sub-post offices on Elm Row and Pilrig Toll. It aims to cut costs and rationalise operations across fewer sites. There will now be a 6-week period for locals to respond.

Edinburgh North & Leith MP Mark Lazarowicz was quick to object, saying: ‘Local post offices are still vitally important, not just for those who rely upon them but often as a key business to ensure the viability of local shopping centres.’ Community Council and political representatives of all parties have voiced concern, stressing elderly and disabled people’s reliance upon sub-post offices close to home.

Local Scottish Conservative spokesman Iain McGill commented: ‘Closure of the Broughton St PO was a sad loss for the people of Broughton. I know from my own experience ... the strength of feeling about this.’

Lazarowicz has arranged a public meeting for 6.30pm on 29 Sep. at McDonald Rd Library. PO officials will explain their proposal and answer questions.



NO. 13 – WILL IT BE LUCKY?



The No. 13 bus route is at risk as Lothian Regional Transport and the Council haggle over costs.

Its future is threatened because increased fuel costs and lower passenger numbers across the city (caused by tramworks) have cut LRT margins formerly used to cross-subsidise unprofitable routes.

But the social importance of the No. 13 – connecting Lochend to Ravelston and Blackhall via Pilrig, Broughton, the New Town and West End – means the Council’s Transport Dept may offer an increased subsidy of its own.

Spurtle understands that a further £300K is required to keep the 13, 18, 20 and 38 routes going. The question is: Who will pay how much? This problem had not been solved by 25 Aug. and no outcome was in sight.

BROUGHTON HALLS TO BE REVIVED

At last, the seriously neglected building at 32a Broughton St (known as Broughton Halls) is to be rejuvenated.

In Apr. (Issue 157) we reported that the structure had been placed on the Scottish Civic Trust’s *Buildings at Risk Register*. A planning application has now been issued by Morgan-McDonnell Architecture for a change of use and alteration to form 7 apartments [Ref.: 08/02494/LBC].

The only significant exterior changes to the B-listed property will be a new doorway and dormer extension to the roof. These appear to be sympathetic to the overall design.

We rejoice that one of Broughton’s finest buildings will now embrace its third century with renewed confidence.



Drummond barefoot-for-Burma trekker reaches London



After 37 days and some 400 miles, barefoot walker Ewen Hardie has arrived in London. On 4 Aug. he was met in Westminster by Gavin Strang, MP (Edinburgh East), and delivered a petition to Downing Street calling for greater recognition of the brutal suppression of Burma's popular uprising in 1988, and more active involvement by Britain in promoting democracy there. The next day he met officials at the Foreign Office.

Ewen's trek has caught the attention of local and national media, but he remains modest. 'I'd like to thank again all those people who have been a part of this journey in whatever way ... Whatever success I can claim is yours every bit as much as it is mine.'

'I have always believed that it is the quality of the contact between people rather than the quantity of people contacted that is of importance. I feel like I have walked from one magical encounter to another and I will be forever grateful to all those who have contributed a little bit of magic.'

Bellevue takes rap for Old Town crap

In Aug., Oct. and Dec., 2007 (Issues 150, 152, 154) *Spurtle* reported flash-floods in Bellevue and offered a possible solution: partial replacement of Drummond CHS's playground with water-permeable paving. The North Neighbourhood Partnership was contacted, after which we heard – despite frequent and regular requests – precisely nothing. Until now.

A mix-up among officials slowed the response, but now we learn that research shows internal drainage within the school grounds is fit for purpose and of sufficient capacity. Cameras show no impediments. But the pipes link to inadequate Old Town underground systems which struggle with today's sewage and drainage volumes, especially after heavy rain. Back-ups and floods result.

Steven Cuthill, Environment Manager at the North Team, says the general view among Council officials is that improvements could be undertaken within the school grounds to create soakaways 'or other actions' if they could be proved to be effective. 'However, this has a significant cost implication in terms of undertaking the work, maintaining it, and its impact on contractual clauses between the Council and Edinburgh School Partnership on taking areas of the school premises out of action.'

Any advance will depend upon decisions by the City's troubled Children and Families Dept, where the budget crisis is likely to block progress. We'll keep you posted on developments.

Tempus fugit (for the fourth time)

In April (Issue 157) we speculated about plans for the pillar clock which stood on the roundabout at the top of Leith Walk until recent roadworks forced its removal. Sarah Macauley, Secretary of the Broughton Village Assoc., has done some digging of her own into the local landmark's past, present and future.

According to Iain McFadyen of the Council's City Development Dept, the clock could remain in storage for some time, but the general plan is that it will be reinstated on a broad pavement at the end of London Rd, assuming that no further changes are required for the trams.

The plan to reinstate the clock as near as possible to its previous position probably applies to several other monuments around Edinburgh, including the Sherlock Holmes statue in Picardy Place and the 3-piece Paolozzi 'Manuscript of Monte Cassino' opposite St Mary's Cathedral.

It is not the first time the clock has been moved. The pillar was first installed in 1857, as a 5-headed gas standard, at the junction of Princes St and Waverley Bridge. In 1885 it was removed, put into storage until 1897, then reappeared as a clock (probably manufactured and installed by our own James Ritchie & Son) at the junction of Princes St and Queensferry St.

In 1955 it was removed at the same time as the tramlines were ripped up, and was later relocated to the roundabout on Leith Walk where we have known and loved it ever since. In Dec. 2007 it was moved again to make way for ... a new set of tramlines.

For 1885 and 1918 photos of the pillar, see Items 2136 and 7072 in the Central Library's Edinburgh Room; or search for 'Waverley Market' and 'Maule's' at: [www.capitalcollections.org.uk].

Annandale Street planning application

Outline planning permission is sought to demolish 2 properties at 12 and 16 Annandale St currently occupied by an architect's and car-rental firm. Replacing them: a tenement of 16 flats + 1 commercial unit extending to the rear over backyards now used for parking. Annandale St Lane would be reached through a new pend. See: [08/02679/FUL].



Redbraes residents aim for green shoots

A hidden wasteland full of rubbish and old bonfires has been transformed by Redbraes residents into a fertile green space overlooking the Water of Leith. Locals of all ages now have a new place to meet, enjoy the flowers, and grow their own food.

The scheme, brainchild of local Community Policeman Simon Daley, began in Oct. 2007 when the Redbraes Residents Assoc. agreed to create a wildlife haven, outdoor classroom, and larder in their midst. Garden designer Rebecca Govier translated

their dreams into reality, Edinburgh Council built a path, and volunteers set about preparing the site and securing funds for plants. The garden was officially opened on 2 Aug., with a BBQ and music for locals and invited guests.

Helpers are still needed to complete the scheme, in particular to create and maintain allotments. Anyone interested should contact the Redbraes Centre in the park off Broughton Rd (Tel. 467 3879) or email: [redbraes@blueyonder.com].

Mansfield Traquair Centre's hidden depths

Many *Spurtle* readers will have admired the wonderful murals by Phoebe Anna Traquair in the Mansfield Traquair Centre, writes *Bill Dunlop*. Some will also know the building is available for functions. Fewer may be aware that the floors below contain the HQ of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO).

The 'AA of the voluntary sector', SCVO offers a range of services to a diverse and geographically scattered membership dealing with many aspects of contemporary life, from school playgroups to activities for the elderly. Even if you're a sturdily independent urbanite, the management boards of the theatre or concert hall you attend probably comprise volunteers in a voluntary organisation. (Around 5% of Scottish workers are employed by voluntary organisations.)

SCVO advises members on finance, organisational procedure, and employment law, as well as providing a forum for policy and representing the voluntary sector to the Scottish Parliament and local government. Recent developments include a telephone helpline and brokering free advice through 2 major legal firms. SCVO also organises an annual meeting of voluntary organisations, and publishes *Third Force News* weekly.

SCVO works with a wide range of organisations, and its own workers' interests are similarly varied. A CEO who enjoys golf is not unusual, but senior staff who play the bagpipes or are involved in art installations on Portobello Beach are more rare. SCVO thus maintains Broughton's tradition of uniquely useful diversity.

Nooks and Crannies: Gayfield Place



This venerable gentleman should feature in a tome devoted solely to the faces which gaze from the city's many effigies in stone and bronze. Unlike that of Lord Melville on his draughty pillar in St Andrew's Square, this stern but benign image is easily accessible. It adorns a keystone above the doorway of 1, Gayfield Place. It is said to be contemporary with the building, which dates from 1791, and may represent Neptune. It may have been the architect's bravura signature or the owner's choice of *genius loci*. Neptune certainly befits this location on the highroad to the port of Leith and the city's gateway to his boundless realms. *JRM*

Any further information on this fascinating but obscure piece would be gratefully received.

One tram thing after another

TIE – the people building the tramlines – may completely close sections of Leith Walk to speed construction later in 2008, the *Evening News* reported last month. Vehicles could be diverted onto Easter Rd to shorten building works by over 50%.

But a TIE spokeswoman contacted by *Spurtle* said no decision had yet been reached on this, and could give no definite date when the decision might be made.

Hard-hit local traders have given the idea a guarded welcome so long as strict deadlines be met. Others fear even more spill-over congestion in residential streets, some of which host schools and others are part of the UNESCO World Heritage site. There has already been an upsurge in buses and HGVs seeking shortcuts.

TIE commented: 'All traffic management diversions are modelled by Faber Maunsell, consulting engineers, to ensure that residential streets are not over-run by displaced traffic. All traffic management designs are approved by them, TIE, CEC, Lothian Buses, and the emergency services.'

Leith Walk Councillor Angela Blacklock said: 'There is little point in denying that the tramworks are causing an inconvenience to local residents and traders, but closing one side of Leith Walk will mean short-term pain for long-term gain.'

Briefly

AGMs for the **Parent Forum** and **Parent/Staff Assoc.** at Broughton Primary School will dovetail on Wed. 3 Sep., starting at 6.30pm.

The refurbishment of **Glenogle Baths** will be discussed at 7pm on 4 Sep. in Stockbridge House, Cheyne St (off Raeburn Pl.). Architect Don Mackenzie will talk and answer questions about the £5.3m project.

Broughton History Society will meet at 7.15pm on **8 Sep.** in Drummond CHS. Graeme Cruickshanks will talk on 'The Show in the Meadows: the Edinburgh Industrial Exhibition of 1886'. Members free, visitors £2, with refreshments.

Doors Open Day – the annual opportunity to have a good neb while pretending to be interested in architecture – is on **27 Sep.** Nearby participants include: Calton Hill Observatory, the Nelson Monument, Calton Old & New Graveyards, St Mary's Cathedral, Gayfield Police Station, Glasite Meeting House, 16 Waterloo Place, 16 North St Andrew St, St Bernard's Well. See [www.cockburnassociation.org.uk].

David Watt writes: Your Aug. issue mentioned the **Russian graffiti** on the Stafford Centre. You will be glad to know that the Council was busy at 7.30am on 10 Aug. removing the offending lettering. I don't know if it was the *Spurtle* article that invoked the speedy response or whether the writing made **derogatory remarks** about the Council!

Neighbours of **Drummond CHS playground** have complained to the Police, Council and media about late-night/early-morning disturbance caused by youths. We sympathise, but 4 points are worth remembering: (1) **Locking gates** will not stop access; (2) Youths meet here because there isn't **enough to do elsewhere** (see Issue 161); (3) Many so-called youths gallivanting at 4am are not youths at all but **antisocial adults**; (4) **Out-of-hours disturbance has nothing to do with the school.** Outraged letters to the headteacher are irrelevant and pointless.

Interested parties met on 27 Aug. to discuss an **umbrella body** for local residents associations. An **EH7 Group** would try to share concerns and information, partly via a magazine and website: [www.spanglefish.com/EH7CommunityNoticeboard/]. The area covered would be: Montgomery, E. Clarendon and Annandale Sts, Bellevue, Hopetoun, Sovereign Court, Hillside and Calton, and possibly Redbraes and Powderhall. For more information contact: [jajerosa@hotmail.co.uk]. An early aim is to find a **local community centre.**

Belle's

View

Hi fans



Ahhh, its soooooo nice to reclaim the pavement now that the torrential rains have cleansed the tourists from the streets of Broughton!

The Fringe did not pass without excitement, Dear Readers, as bona-fide celebrities have been in our midst! My dear friends **Barrie** and **Bertie**, residing in uber-posh **Royal Circus** were excessively intrigued by the comings and goings of a mystery blonde woman in the flat below. Every night she sat in the window applying layer upon layer of make-up - **Joan Rivers?** **Dame Edna?** No - it was The *Wickerman* star **Ms Britt Ekland** and handbag chihuahua **Tequila**, preparing for their **Assembly Rooms** debut *Britt on Britt!*

I would like to heartily congratulate the organisers of the successful **Edinburgh Free Fringe**, for putting on hundreds of comedy, music and drama shows in local venues. Highlights included London's Harry Potter lookielikey **Ivor Dembina** at the **Edinburgh Football Club**, and that den of iniquity and downright bizarre **Heresy** at the **Jekyll and Hyde pub**, compered by the effervescently pneumatic **Rick Molland**. The last night of the Fringe there included San Francisco's most saucy septuagenarian, the gorgeous **Lynn Ruth Miller**, who thrilled the audience with her geriatric striptease - beat that, **Cambridge Footlights!**

Finally, if you fancy some rousing **Gaelic** singing, the **Edinburgh Saltire Gaelic Choir** based at Drummond Community High School seek new members - Gaelic speaking not required - *sealbh ort!*

Till next time!

New Town/Broughton Community Council Vacancies for Community Councillors

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

Next meeting
1 Sep. at 7.30pm
at Drummond CHS

For details please contact:

Chris Richardson 07952 755 854
chris_richardson1001@hotmail.com

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

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,
42 Hamilton Place
5.00pm 92 Pilton Drive
6.00pm Constituency Office

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Printed by DupliQuick, 22A Great King Street, Edinburgh EH3 6QH