

Spurtle

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

UNITE AND LOCALS STILL MILES APART

Unite Group Plc has appealed to the Scottish government against the Council's decision to turn down its proposal for McDonald Rd (*Issues 155-7*). Locals have responded in kind.

Unite claims its application is supported by the Council's Development Plan and emerging policy which support purpose-built student housing in this area. It says relevant officials and design officers supported the plans before they came to Committee. It disputes the suggestion that the area's residential character would be affected, or that an excessive concentration of students would result. Student housing does not affect residential amenity, it claims, and this 'carefully designed' proposal would improve the site.

Over 167 locals replied in October with fresh objections. Grounds included challenges to: Unite's methodology in counting student numbers and its interpretation of their effect on the area. They put the case for prioritising improved community facilities

and reaffirmed concerns over inappropriate scale and design, parking problems, and disregard of community consultation. Mark Lazarowicz MP and Malcolm Chisholm MSP support the campaign, and its leaders' efforts to have their case heard at a public enquiry.



If the appeal is upheld, Unite will seek an award of expenses against the Council for time and resources spent on the case. A decision is expected by 1 Dec.

MAILED FIST SPARES ELM ROW

Pilrig sub-post office is to close. Elm Row will survive, at least until the effects of major redevelopment at the St James Centre can be gauged.

Post Office cuts announced on 21 October resulted in 11 closures across the city, despite widespread public and political pressure (*Issue 162*). Two branches, including Elm Row, were spared.

A PO spokesperson stressed that its amended plan offers clients 'the best prospect of a sustainable network' given the minimum access criteria it has

been set by the UK government.

Residents who campaigned for Elm Row to be reprieved were delighted, and politicians of various hues were quick to claim credit for their own 'well-argued' cases against closure. But the ground of the reprieve is narrow, and there are fears that Elm Row's survival will last only as long as the disruption to PO services further up the hill. Local services tailored to local needs do not figure large in the PO's national vision.

EAST LONDON STREET A SAFER PLACE?



The pavement outside Europcar's E. London St premises has for years been blocked by vehicles returned by thoughtless customers. Pedestrians – including children from St Mary's RC Primary School – have been forced onto the road.

Last month, Europcar's Sheena Millar arranged for some of the pavement to be hatched and cordoned using a thick wooden sleeper. New signs instructed parkers to keep off. It was a quick, effective and cheap solution which made all sides happy. Except for one member of the public who complained it was a potential trip hazard. Council Roads inspectors agreed and the sleeper was removed 'in the interests of pedestrian safety'.

Jenni Martin, City Centre Neighbourhood Manager, commented: 'We are actively addressing concerns [about this area] and looking into possible long-term solutions. These include: forming a full-height kerb and footway, installing bollards or creating an extra parking space or lay-by for loading. In the short term, however, the single yellow line is still enforceable and any cars parked here can be issued with a parking ticket or could be dealt with by the Police for obstruction.'

Meanwhile, pedestrians will again use the road.

False start for chopped 13

Part of the No.13 bus route has survived after City Transport chiefs backed away from completely axing the uneconomic but 'socially important' service (*Issue 162*). It will continue (half-hourly) along the busiest part of the route between Bellevue and Blackhall, but will no longer extend to Craighleith at one end, or to Pilrig and Lochend at the other. Cross-city rush-hour traffic in private vehicles may increase as a result.

The new service had been planned to start and finish at E. London St (and this is what appears on the revised timetable). But following complaints by some local residents, the 13 reverted to its former stops in Mansfield Place on 10 October. An embarrassed Lothian Buses official told *Spurtle* published timetables would reflect the new reality as soon as possible.

Mon.–Fri.: First bus from Bellevue (Mansfield Pl.), 06:57; last, 18:15; first bus from Blackhall (Strachan Rd), 07:26; last, 18:46. Sat.: First bus from Bellevue, 09:30, last, 17:30; first bus from Blackhall, 09:59; last, 17:59.

For a full timetable see: [www.lothianbuses.com/r13.php].

Hard lessons for MacLaren

Two official investigations have criticised Cllr Marilyn MacLaren, Convenor of Edinburgh's troubled Children & Families Dept.

An independent report for the Council faulted her treatment of Lynda Flex (Drummond CHS's Parent Council Chair), whom she'd ejected from a consultative forum on school closures over allegations of leaks to a local newspaper (*Issue 160*). It called evidence against Ms Flex 'circumstantial and not incontrovertible'. Because MacLaren did not properly investigate the allegations, and because she barred Flex without consulting colleagues, her actions failed in 'objectivity, stewardship and openness'. It recommended readmitting Ms Flex. A second report, by the Council's Chief Executive, later rebuked MacLaren for exceeding her authority.

MacLaren has now apologised, but faces a further probe by the Standards Commission, which can censure, suspend or ban offenders. Until it reports, councillors will not formally debate the issue.

Consultation over primary-school closures ended on 7 October. A final report is due on 20 November.



Walking the Walk, talking the talk

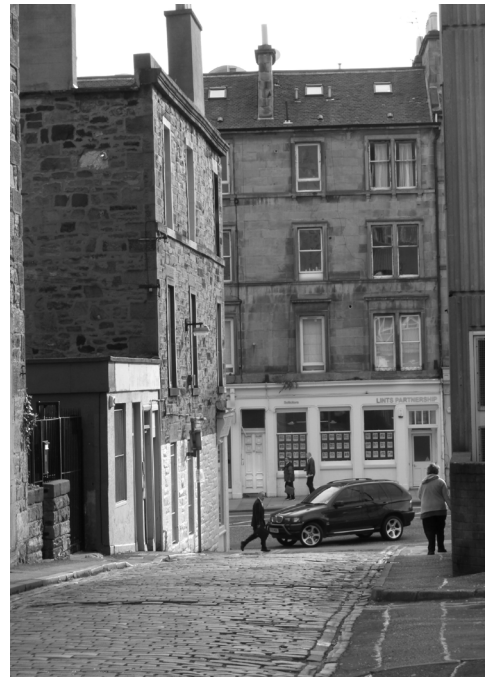
Last month, Harald Tobermann of Pilrig Residents Association met Willie Gallagher, Executive Chairman of TIE. Tobermann was keen to explain that irreparable harm could be done to the character and economy of Leith Walk unless those designing the tram system understand the area properly.

Crucial, he asserts, is recognition that the neighbourhood thrives on dense habitation, low levels of car ownership, and many varied retail/service outlets within walking distance of home. This virtuous circle could easily change to spiralling decline if the public realm (especially for pedestrians) in the four blocks either side of Leith Walk is not preserved or improved.

With this in mind, Tobermann remarked that TIE's consultation drawings for Shrub Place, Shrub Hill and Haddington Place were based on outdated information. He criticised a lack of detail on design of bollards, railings and other street furniture, and sought urgent clarification on whether TIE or the Council would organise and pay for the traffic signal control system. Sequencing and timing of signals will be fundamental to the success of the project, he argued, and the legitimate needs of locals must be taken into account.

Finally, he pointed out that the trams' future profitability is predicated partly on continued high levels of population on this part of the route. Preservation and improvement of Leith Walk and its hinterland are therefore in TIE's own business interests.

Tobermann believes Gallagher got the message. The next step is to convince the Council and make them act accordingly.



Barefoot – the book

Ewen Hardie, who walked barefoot from Broughton to Downing Street last summer, now plans to write a book about his year-long protest for democracy in Burma. He will use it to highlight the kindness of those he met on his trek, to increase awareness of the political situation, and to raise funds for Burmese charities. Even though he's not looking forward to another harsh Scottish winter, he has also vowed to stay barefoot indefinitely. He feels the gesture is important to remind himself and others about the campaign issues.



McDonald Rd – new safety confusion

Campaigners for improved road-safety measures on McDonald Rd (*Issue 163*) have spurred Council officials into action. Unfortunately, it is the action of 2 startled cats panicking in the headlights.

Peter Strong (Neighbourhood Manager North) says a plan has been agreed to widen the pavement at the crossing place outside Broughton PS, reducing the width of the road there. His Roads Manager is to formulate a plan and costing for this work to be done. It will be budgeted as a Neighbourhood Environmental Programme project.

Simultaneously, Paul Murrell (Senior School Crossing Officer) has contacted parents saying that colleagues have settled instead on a plan to raise driver awareness. This will entail more large, grey, flashing boards of the kind found elsewhere around the school, and perhaps black and white chevrons attached to a guard rail.

It is uncertain whether the Council proposes one, both or neither of these plans, and locals now seek clarification. These mixed messages follow a stiff letter written by the Parent Council to Gillian Tee, Director of Children & Families, and an even stiffer response to her woolly reply. The promises to do something are welcome, but their delay after last winter's spate of accidents is scandalous.

Partnerships made plain: Part 1

Neighbourhood Partnerships (NPs) are the Council's new big idea for delivering services which are 'more local, more joined up, more flexible to local needs, and more accountable', writes *John Dickie*. They replaced Local Development Committees in 2007.

They aim to keep neighbourhoods: clean (litter, dogs, graffiti): green (parks, recycling, cycle paths): safe (CCTV, youth work, noise): housed (council house repairs, private landlords, homelessness), well managed (professionals in partnership with each other and resident groups, libraries), and well maintained (roads, pavements, street lighting). 'Partnership' refers to Community Councillors, the Council, Police, Health and Voluntary sectors working together on the board of each NP.

There are 12 Network Partnerships across Edinburgh. Broughton is split between two: Leith and City Centre. Each NP falls within a Community Planning Area (CPA). City Centre and Leith NPs belong to North CPA. CPAs are serviced by officials grouped in 6 Neighbourhood Teams (NTs).

Edinburgh comprises 17 wards. 7 NPs cover one ward each, 5 NPs cover 2. Broughton is split between 2 wards, 2 NPs and also 2 Neighbourhood Teams: City Centre (Ward 11) belongs to the City Centre NP and NT; Leith Walk (Ward 12) belongs to Leith NP and North NT.

To find out more and get contacts, go to [www.edinburghnp.org.uk]. *Next month John Dickie describes an NP meeting.*

Patrick Crichton (c.1755–1825)

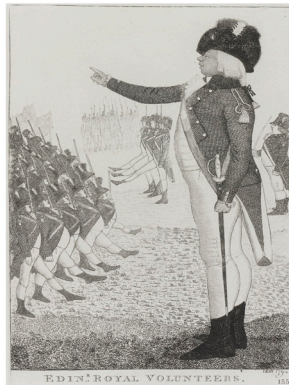
In Issue 162 we highlighted the 'Neptune' at 1 Gayfield Place. Details of an interesting early resident have now come to light.*

Patrick Crichton (caricatured by John Kay, right) was born in Edinburgh c.1755, the son of a Canongate 'coach maker to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales'. In 1776 he was appointed Ensign in the 43rd Regiment of Foot, and served in the American War of Independence with such distinction that he made Captain in the 57th Regiment and received public thanks from the Commander in Chief.

After surrender and imprisonment at Yorktown, Crichton entered partnership with his father. He was chosen 2nd Major and Captain of the East New Town Company of Edinburgh Volunteers, and in 1796 raised a second battalion (1,200+ men) in 4 hours. That year he moved to Gayfield Place, his firm – now Crichton & Field – also transferring to Leith Walk. Around this time he was badly wounded in a duel with a surgeon-snob who'd declined to fight his American business partner. In 1805 he became Lieut-Colonel Commandant of the 2nd Edinburgh Regiment (local militia). He entered the Council in 1794 and later served as Treasurer.

Remembered by Paton in 1838 as a 'fine manly-looking person, rather florid in his complexion, exceedingly polite in his manners, and of gentlemanly attainments', he married the 'beloved and amiable' Margaret Lambie in 1786 and had 8 children, one of whom became a much decorated military surgeon and personal physician to Tsar Nicholas I.

Crichton died at 1 Gayfield Place on 14 May 1825, and his funeral was attended by the Provost and other notables. His own account of ancestors and career, with additions by later generations, appears at: [www.clan-crichton.com/Crichton_1819_bw_intro.pdf]. *Thanks to David Watt. *AM*



Nooks & crannies: Flower of Scotland

Edinburgh's Old Town is renowned for its wynds and enticing twists and turns, but the New Town and offshoots also have their share. Blink, and Hart Street Lane – just down from Forth Street – will be passed unobserved. It is effectively a passage or vennel giving access to 3 private gardens, and to a remarkable building known as 'The Monastery' which is now the premises of Gaia Architects.

The building juts from the rear of 4 Forth Street, which was home from 1970 onwards to the Corries' Pan Audio studio. Here the celebrated folk duo recorded much of their music, including 'Flower of Scotland' in 1975. In 1980–81, the studio was sold to the Corries' engineer, Roy Ashby, who continued to run it as a recording studio. This writer remembers Ronnie Browne and Roy Williamson browsing in the music section of his Broughton Bookshop in 1976–78. Broughton can thus claim to be the well-spring from which Scotland's alternative national anthem flowed.

The Monastery is quite another story, as is the saga of a highly controversial Richard Murphy structure intended for this fascinating location with complex historical associations. We shall return to it in the next issue. *JRM*

Briefly

Broughton History Society will meet on 10 Nov. at 7pm in Drummond CHS. Sheila Szatkowski will talk on '**Antics and Antiquarians in the East End of Edinburgh: Famous and Infamous Edinburgh Medics**'.

Henderson Global Investors seek planning permission to **flatten the St James Centre and start again** (Ref. 08/03370/LBC). Retail, leisure, culture, hotel, offices, car parking, financial, professional and other enormities are envisaged.

Lothian Buses has been granted planning permission for its new 4-storey HQ at 47–9 Annandale St. (*Issue 161*). Hopefully, building will be complete by the time the tram control-room starts operating in July 2011.

Children who'll be aged 4 by 28 Feb. 2009 can start school in Aug. 2009. Registration will be in Broughton PS from 24–27 Nov. during school hours. Take along your child's birth certificate or passport, Council Tax assessment letter/book, and a recent utility bill to prove your address.

The Council wants further spaces for its **City Car Club**. Two spaces opposite the Drill Hall on E. Claremont St, and one at each end of Powderhall Rd, will probably be in place by Dec.

A sale of jewellery, pics & autographed 1st editions by Scots writers will be held from 10am–noon, 15 Nov. at St Andrew and St George's Church, George St. Proceeds to Christian Aid.

Readers are invited to guess the **total number of languages spoken** in homes by pupils at Broughton PS and Drummond CHS. There will be a £5 prize for whoever comes nearest, and a £10 prize for anyone accurately naming the languages involved. Cheats will be detected.

Congratulations to local star **Kyle Houldcroft-Doig** (*Issue 155*), an S1 pupil who's been picked for the City of Edinburgh School Sports Academy boys' football team.

New: disabled access, reception area, sauna and steam room with relaxation area, showers and WCs, tiling to pool and surround. No, not secret plans for a mysterious sub-basement at St Mary's, but some of the improvements recently announced for **Glenogle Baths**. One member of the public has objected to the introduction of full-length doors on the gents' changing cubicles. Others are fighting to preserve the nearby 'Snakey' as a public right of way. Glenogle closed for refurbishment on 19 Oct.

Spurtle's AGM will take place in St Mary's Church at 7pm on 10 Dec. No tea or biscuits. Fresh blood welcome.

Belle's View



Hi fans

All the leaves are brown (la la la) and the skies are grey (doo bee dooby doo) – what's for fun in leafy autumnal Broughton?

Legendary! Hands up who's old enough to remember **Glen Michael's Cavalcade**? Glen, host of one of STVs most popular programmes ever, has just published his tell-all biography **Life's a Cavalcade**. Locals may remember that **Cavalcade**, which ran for an astonishing 26 years from 1966, was filmed at the **Elm Row** STV studios, with **Glen** being a regular quaffer of a cheeky Vimto at **The Windsor Buffet**. Co-stars **Palladin** and **Rusty the dog** had to stay outside due to Health and Safety Regulations!

Juicy! Short days and loooooong nights are making you want to hibernate? What about a rejuvenating swally at new juice 'n' smoothie bar Sejuiced on **Broughton Street**? Choose from individual juices such as orange, apple or carrot kicking off at £1.75 for a small serving, or try fusions of exotic juices, power smoothies, and sorbet-based fruit crushes – summer sunshine in a glass! And for busy-busy-busy people, drop in for a juice booster shot – said to help everything from weight loss to curing hangovers!

And what about a bit of glamour to add sparkle to a dark evening – get along to **Absolutely Dragulous** at **The Claremont Bar, East Claremont Street**, and join **Miss Miranda** and friends at this most congenial club on Saturday 29 November [www.abdrag.info.]. It has an open-door policy for open-minded straight/gay/inbetweensies, so everyone welcome – have fun!

Till next time!

Persephone Belle



New Town/Broughton Community Council Vacancies for 5 Community Councillors

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

Next meeting
3 November at 7.30pm
at Drummond CHS

For details please contact:

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Malcolm Chisholm MSP Edinburgh North and Leith



Constituency Office:
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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



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Friday advice sessions:
4.00pm Stockbridge Library,
42 Hamilton Place
5.00pm 92 Pilton Drive
6.00pm Constituency Office

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