

Spurtle

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

**June
2009**

No 171

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TRADERS RALLY TO PROMOTE BROUGHTON

For the first time, a Broughton Traders Association has been formed. This was first proposed by the New Town and Broughton Community Council (NTBCC) at its April meeting in response to local traders' disquiet at a planned Tesco outlet in Picardy Place. At a follow-up meeting hosted by NTBCC, 8 traders discussed logistics and practicalities, and determined to establish an active group similar to those in Stockbridge and Tolcross.

Since then over 30 businesses have joined ranks, with Lucy Tanat-Jones of Organic Pleasures (*right*) and Patrick Crashaw of the Bake House Co. as principal coordinators. They aim to achieve a higher profile for Broughton village, to highlight the diversity of everything it offers, to preserve corner-shops, and to promote the area as a special port of call on the tourist map. *Spurtle* keenly supports this initiative and wishes the Association well. Contact: [www.organicpleasures.co.uk].



BOTANIC COTTAGE AWAITS NEW LEASE OF LIFE



James Simpson, conservation architect (left), and Prof. Stephen Blackmore. (Photo by Andy Croft.)

On 7 May in Hopetoun Crescent Garden, Professor Stephen Blackmore (Regius Keeper of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh) unveiled an information panel explaining the role of the Gardener's Cottage in early Botanic history. The carefully dismantled structure is now stored awaiting re-erection at Inverleith, for which Blackmore promised his support in securing funds. Friends of Hopetoun Crescent Garden paid tribute to Shrubhill developers whose backing of the project was worth over £100K. [*Photo by Andy Croft.*]

PICARDY PLACE PRINCIPLES STIR DEBATE

In Issue 169 we reported publication of CEC's draft development principles for Picardy Place. A 'significant number' of individuals and organisations responded.

Mark Lazarowicz, MP claimed extending York Place's south side would ruin views along Leith Walk, and diminish Picardy Place as a gateway. There was inadequate or unclear provision of pedestrian crossings and safe cycle routes. Instead, he would prefer to see an increase of green public space in front of the Cathedral.

NTBCC saw no merit in further built development which, it said, was incompatible with prioritising pedestrians in a high-quality public space. It feared the loss of architectural and topographical vistas: not least 'the superb Grade A listed Palace front of Picardy Place ... revealed as one rounds the curve of Leith Street [which, particularly] when sunlit ... is one of the glories of Edinburgh'. It recommended mature planting, sculpture, seating and a café (as in St Andrew Square). However, to prevent 'night-time misbehaviour', off licences and hot-food takeaways should be banned from the vicinity.

Other comments included warnings against creating gloomy wind tunnels, and suggestions that new retail developments requiring many potentially disruptive deliveries should not go ahead until traffic routes are finalised.

The CEC Planning Committee will consider all comments before finalising principles later this year.

Briefly

John and Margaret Bee, freshly retired from **Something Fishy**, wish to thank their many customers for 22 years' loyal custom. 'We have a wealth of happy memories to warm us.' New Bee family members have taken over the shop.

In Issues 163/5 we reported concerns about **incongruous signage at 57 Albany St** erected without necessary consents and in breach of planning control. **CEC Enforcement** 'discussed' matters with the owner's agents, and occupiers Hardies. The sign came down in November, but now the fixings are also gone and the stonework is repaired.

A new neighbourhood association has been formed. **The Dublin Meuse Assoc.** covers Dublin Meuse, Nelson St and Place. James Taylor is Chair. Contact: Sheila Forbes (Tel. 558 1858).

Spurtle was sad to hear of the recent sudden death of **Spurtle** supporter and **Broughton History Society** committee member **Ian Cruikshanks**. Our thoughts are with Ian's family, and he will be very much missed by **Spurtle** and all his friends at the BHS.

Don't hold your breath. A decision on the future of the No 13 bus (*Issue 170*) was promised for 29 May, after **Spurtle** had gone to press. This was the late-running decision formerly expected on 21 May. We'll cover the result next month, if it comes.

The Broughton Project Group's **Barony Community Garden** (just off Barony St) is nearly ready. To celebrate, **all locals are invited on Sunday 12 July at 3pm**. There'll be food, drinks, games, music and more surprises on the day. If you have suggestions or want to help, contact: Kenneth Lawley (Tel. 556 7762) or Meg Nelson [dagnelson@hotmail.com].

Community Council elections

Election day for the NTBCC is 15 October 2009 and nominations must be submitted by 14 September. If you are interested in standing please come to the AGM on 1 June (7.00pm) at Drummond Community High School library, or on 3 August at Broughton St Mary's Church, Bellevue Crescent. Members of the public are always welcome to attend and raise local issues with community councillors. Our website at www.ntbcc.org.uk will hopefully soon be operational, but in the meantime check the community council notice board next to Crombie's on Broughton Street for recent minutes and notices, or email [mowats@blueyonder.co.uk].

Tesco planning application – Community Council responds

Ian Mowat, NTBCC Chair, responds to Spurtle's article about the NTBCC's response to Tesco's planning proposal on Picardy Place:

Tesco's application to convert Reid's furniture store into a supermarket was considered at the March NTBCC meeting, with a response submitted to the CEC in March. The NTBCC understood that as the application involved no change of use from Class I retail use, no material objection could be taken to this under current planning law. We could only comment on concerns such as increased traffic and noise.

We have received a small number of representations about the effect a Tesco's might have on shops in Broughton Street, and this was put on NTBCC's April agenda. This meeting was attended by concerned residents and traders, and we explained that nothing more could be done in planning terms. However, we resolved to strengthen the Broughton Street shopping area by setting up of a local traders' association to promote the area. All Broughton Street traders were invited to a meeting on 29 April to discuss this proposal, and it met with full support (see 'Traders Rally to Promote Broughton' on page 1).

The publicity generated by this issue is welcome – people need to be aware of the work of the community council and its influence. For example, we understand that the Council may also adopt our recent proposals for Picardy Place and neighbouring streets (see 'New Town Principles Stir Debate' on page 1).

Primary pupils focus on Malawi

'Africa Week' will run at Broughton PS from 15 June, with themed lessons and activities aimed at understanding life in their partnership school in northern Malawi. There will be fund raising too, with a target of £500: a sum which could transform parts of Area 1B Primary near Mzuzu.

Children at both schools maintain contact throughout the year via letters. Headteacher Alan Devine is also in regular touch with his counterpart Duncan Tembo, partly because close similarities between Scottish and Malawian Education systems make sharing professional experience straightforward. Area 1B is a happy school facing formidable challenges: lack of resources, 14 staff for around 1,000 students, and roughly a third of the children with inherited HIV/AIDS. Many are orphans. As well as money, Devine seeks cost-effective ways to deliver equipment – e.g. books, computers, paper – to Africa, and asks any locals with expertise or contacts to let him know.

Greenside hotel chain havers

In Issue 168 we reported Dublin-based Fitzpatrick Design Collection's (FDC) plans for a 167-room boutique hotel at 1–5 Baxter's Place. FDC optimistically proposed opening in 2010. Now it seems they may not be so bullish after all.

At the end of April FDC sought to renew CEC consent to a 2003 proposal by previous owners Royal London Mutual Insurance Society Ltd. This involved refurbishment of existing offices at 1–3 Baxter's Place, demolition of the rear office extension, construction of new offices to the site's rear, and a new outshot to No. 5 to create a restaurant and bar (Ref. 03/02635/FUL). Fittingly, revival of the more modest 2003 proposal looks like an insurance policy in case funds are hard to come by or Edinburgh's tourism industry nosedives in the recession. FDC declined to respond to **Spurtle's** questions.

Greenside residents who objected to loss of light and views over Calton Hill under FDC's 2008 proposal may welcome the latest turn of events.

Wood you believe it?

The new St Mark's Footbridge which opened in April, roughly 4 months late, is reassuringly solid. However, it's marred by machine-made scars, split and peeling surfaces, boded-looking grouting and inexplicable gaps at one end – flaws which don't afflict the nearby Powderhall span. **Spurtle** asked why.

A CEC spokesman replied: 'The bridge is constructed from greenheart timber which ... has a coarser grain structure than the ekki timber used for the bridge upstream, so can exhibit a surface roughness caused by the cutting and finishing process. The handrail and infill parapet is constructed from a different hardwood timber to ensure a smooth planed finish.'

'The Contractor will undertake any remedial works required to the structure during the maintenance period as required by the Form of Contract.' So it's not boded, then. Just the wrong kind of wood.

'Partnership is way forward', says Buchanan

Last month we published Robin Lippett's open letter to CEC's Convener of Economic Development, in which he demanded greater support for small independent retailers. Cllr Tom Buchanan replies ...

Dear Mr Lippett,

Independent retailers bring great benefit to our 'urban villages'. Aware of their vulnerability, CEC has implemented measures to boost them.

Since March, a Business Co-ordinator has represented independent traders in the West End, City Centre and Leith Walk, giving them a much stronger voice and helping deliver dedicated marketing, events, signage and parking promotions.

Attractive environments revitalise local shopping centres. From small-scale works to major refurbishments, we have invested heavily in improvements which create unique destinations and increase footfall.

We strongly advocate Business Improvement District (BID) initiatives and are eager to see them across Edinburgh. These allow businesses to shape their neighbourhoods and are powerful in bringing together the private and public sectors. I would encourage all businesses to look into the benefits BIDs bring.

Business Rates are set nationally outwith CEC's control, but we have championed the Scottish Government's Small Business Bonus Scheme: businesses with a rateable value below £15,000 receive a significant rates reduction and those valued under £8,000 will pay no Business Rates at all.

CEC cannot be proactive in changing the retail nature of parts of Edinburgh or take actions which could be deemed to disadvantage the competitive interests of others. It is through partnership working that we will be able to deliver more effective policies on the ground.

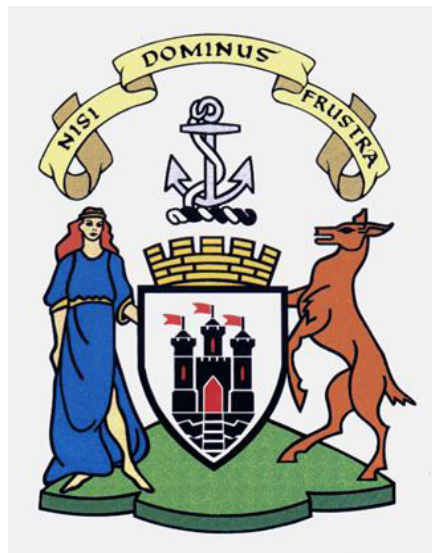
Carillon for a castle in the air

The belltower above Broughton St Mary's Church in Bellevue Crescent is a Mozartian aria in stone. How else to describe this architectural tour de force with its ascending order of Greek pillars, its dome, and its crowning symbol? Many who are familiar with this magnificent building have assumed that its crown is a conventional weathervane, probably in the form of a rooster – St Peter's emblem for watchfulness and humility, established in the 9th century for Christian churches.

However, this is no ordinary weathervane. During recent restoration it has been revealed as an anchor surmounted on a shield of a 3-towered castle elevated upon an orb. Carved steps lead up to the castle. A lightning-rod of recent origin is attached to the whole.

The triple-towered castle is Edinburgh's assay hallmark, while the armorial device of the anchor above a castle shield, granted by the Lord Lyon for the royal burgh of Edinburgh in 1732, remains the City of Edinburgh Council's coat of arms. This reflects the building's status as the last burgh church built in the capital, its baptismal silver vessels bearing the same symbol. Edinburgh archives confirm the weathervane's commission by the city in 1825, and the shield itself has the greenish sheen of weathered bronze.

In 2009, perhaps due to the fixture of the lightning-rod, Bellevue's anchor and castle permanently face south to the castle and north to the Firth of Forth, a striking symbol of endurance and hope which this most elegant and flamboyant of churches has embodied for 183 years. *JRM*



Briefly

On 20 May CEC Planners approved conversion of **Broughton Halls** (*Issues 157/162*) into 6 apartments. Nearby residents had raised concerns about a new roof terrace to the rear and positioning of bins and parking on Albany St Lane.

The former Unite site on McDonald Rd has been sold for £1.8m. A spokesman for selling agents Rettle & Co. said, 'This is a strong site which has attracted considerable interest from student housing groups, funds, care home operators, residential developers and Registered Social Landlords.' The as yet unnamed new owner is understood to be a cash-rich private operator which is likely to revise and rework a residential scheme.

Broughton, Leith Walk, and St Mary's RC Primary Schools will close on 4 June as locals flock to vote in **European Elections** (7am–10pm). For a full list of polling stations, visit: [www.edinburgh.gov.uk].

The **Met. Office** predicts a hot summer but staff at Pearce's on Elm Row aren't convinced. A sign beside their pavement tables reads: '*Enjoy something to eat, and a refreshing drink, in the 'sunshine'.*

Broughton History Society AGM and Members Night is at 7pm on 8 Jun. at Drummond CHS. Tea, coffee, and **chocolate biscuits!!**

Drummond CHS's Prizegiving and Celebration of Achievement night is at 7pm on 16 June, with guest speaker get-fit-kwik entrepreneur and philanthropist **Tom Farmer**.

Brace! Brace! Brace! Summer term at local schools ends on **Thurs. 2 July**.

Apart from your fridge, do you know of a **neglected green corner**? CEC is preparing a 5-year open-space strategy (details/questionnaires in libraries; www.edinburgh.gov.uk/openspacestrategy; Tel. 469 3411). Responses about parks and other areas/corridors are sought by 10 July. Nearby consultations are scheduled for the Assembly Rooms (2–8pm, 4 June), Stockbridge Library (6.30–8pm, 8 June), Leith Academy (6.30–8pm, 18 June).

Staff at **Broughton Place auctioneers Lyon & Turnbull** are donating time and space to raise money for **Samaritans**. The charity's local branch is 50 this month, and will celebrate with an **art auction** on Mon. 22 June at 7pm (doors open 6pm; viewing on 21 June from 2–5pm and 22 June from 10am–5pm). Lots – including part of **Ian Rankin's manuscript for his next book** – can be seen at [www.samaritansart.org.uk].

Belle's View



Hi fans

Sufferin' sausage-sizzles, it's getting so claggy I've had to cast off a clot! What's for fun and frolics in the shimmering oasis that is Broughton in June?

Bloomin' heck! **Sharon Nugent's Narcissus Flowers and Plants of Broughton Street**, who make bouquets with a big slushy dollop of leurve, are now blossoming in cyberspace, with their own online shop. Choose from funky bouquets such as *Unusual and Interesting*, *Bright and Cheerful*, *White and Sparkly*, *Wild and Earthy*, and *Orchid with Tropical Ginger!* www.narcissusflowers.co.uk or 0131 478 7447.

Feel like eating al fresco – or outdoors, even? **Hawke and Hunter's restaurant in Picardy Place** used to be an exclusive members club – but now anyone can get in – they even let in my dear friend **Felicity Featherboa** last Saturday night, even when she was accompanied by a troop of Her Majesty's Royal Marines! Check out their *Secret Garden*, a sumptuous hidden retreat for lunch or dinner (daily 9am–1am, kids welcome until 18.00) And if it's raining, you can enjoy a game of billiards!

Scintillating summer sounds? **Guilty Lily** of 284 Bonnington Road (formerly Bacchus) has Lorna Brooks hosting a new acoustic music club **Sapphire** (named after **John Martyn's** album) every last Thursday of the month, featuring the finest local, national and international performers, playing acoustic blues, jazz and Americana music. **Martin Stephenson (The Daintees)** takes the stage on Thursday 25 June with his eclectic range of pop/folk/bluegrass and punk, with special guest Brighton's **Helen (And The Horns) McCookerybook!** (£5, 8pm) www.thesapphire.co.uk.

Till next time!

Persephone Belle

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Saturday surgeries:
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10.30am Royston/Wardieburn
Community Centre
12pm Stockbridge Library

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Friday advice sessions:
4.00pm Stockbridge Library,
42 Hamilton Place
5.00pm Ainslie Park Leisure Centre
6.00pm Constituency Office

**New Town/Broughton
Community Council**

**Vacancies for 3 Community
Councillors**

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

Next meeting
AGM on 1 June at 7.00pm
at Drummond CHS

3 Aug at 7.00pm
at Broughton St Mary's Church
For details please contact:

mowats@blueyonder.co.uk

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