

Spurtle

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

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HOTEL FOR PICARDY PLACE

City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) Planners will let developers build a hotel in the new Picardy Place. However, a local newspaper's account of this (2 Oct.) was misleading.

According to the *Evening News*, Henderson Global Investors (HGI) threatened to withdraw from the adjacent £850m St James Shopping Centre scheme unless they could build in Picardy Place. It gave no date for this apparent ultimatum. In answer to questions posed by the *Spurtle*, Cllr David Anderson (Head of Economic Development) explicitly denied that HGI had ever threatened to withdraw from the project and described the newspaper article as 'well wide of the mark'.

In fact HGI has always needed the Thistle Hotel area for its scheme, but was legally unable to make them move. From the outset, therefore, it needed equivalent local space which the Thistle Hotel would want to occupy.

Whilst ground opposite the Omni is now envisaged for this purpose (extending Leith Street), 'no new agreement has been made,' says Anderson. Despite its size (occupying about a third of the available space after traffic changes), Cllr Joanna Mowat, who sits on the Planning Committee, says the hotel is situated in such a way as to enhance the setting of St Mary's Cathedral and not to obscure it. Hotel, tramstop and revamped St James Centre are still to be linked by a new, high-quality open space (Issue 174).

HGI will fund the masterplanning of the immediate area and design of the hotel building. They intend going out to a limited competition with a small number of leading architectural practices. They have offered a place to the Catholic Church on the design competition panel.

Cllr Mowat added: 'This will all be subject to standard planning applications. With opportunities to object under the new planning legislation, there should be ample opportunity for public consultation.'

See: [http://cpol.edinburgh.gov.uk/getdoc_ext.asp?DocID=129008].

KEEP THE GREEN FLAG FLYING

Congratulations to 2 local entrants in this year's Edinburgh in Bloom competition. In this hotly contested, city-wide event, Redbraes Community Garden was voted Best in Competition – a phenomenal achievement for this once mundane space which was transformed in the course of just one year. The runner-up in the Best Commercial Property section was Real Foods in teeming Broughton St.

Such achievements by Redbraes and Real Foods contributed to a much bigger picture. In the Royal Horticultural Society's Britain in Bloom Competition, 2009, Edinburgh has won a prestigious Silver Gilt Medal, and second place. CEC said the judges were most impressed by the Royal Botanic Garden, community parks and the City's Friends groups.



Real Food's award-winning 'Hanging Gardens' groups.



BROUGHTON STREET À LA MODE(L)

Cecile Paul, owner of Threadbare at 64A Broughton St, is pictured with a friend surveying a delivery to her fabulous retro and vintage clothes shop. The treasure trove inside is described by her as an alternative world in which 'Alice in Wonderland meets Cornucopia'.

CEC PUTS ITS FOOT DOWN

Cllr Louise Lang, Vice Convener of the Regulatory Committee, has confirmed the Council's intention to return Paolozzi's *Manuscript of Monte Cassino* to Picardy Place once tramworks are complete.

'While many short-term and long-term options were looked at,' she told *Spurtle*, 'I think most people would agree that it would be good to have it back in its original home.' The expense and risk of damage each time the statue is moved mean that a temporary re-siting of the work is no longer an option.

The statue is expected to be moved into safe storage in mid to late November, but a date for its reinstatement is less clear and will depend on final redevelopment plans for the area. 'However, it is anticipated that the sculpture will form a key part of the new quality public space outside the Cathedral.'

News of CEC's decision will disappoint those who have campaigned since April for its removal to the Foot of Leith Walk or Hillside Crescent Gardens (see Issues 170, 172).

'At risk' landmark safe as houses?

Broughton Halls at 32a Broughton St is one of 6 capital properties to be placed on the Scottish Civic Trust's Buildings at Risk Register.

The list is maintained for Historic Scotland, and whilst it offers no additional statutory protections for a property, it often concentrates the minds of developers and local authorities.

The B-listed Scots Jacobean-style property (originally built as a George Heriot's school in 1853) has been empty for some years. In May 2009, however, Silvermills Estates & Leisure got planning permission to convert the former club into 6 residential units with a new entrance on Broughton St.

As yet, no obvious work has begun but a spokesman for the firm's agent, Morgan McDonnell Ltd, asserted that the building was wind and watertight, sound and intact. He denied reports of pigeon infestation. At present, the developers are involved in technical discussions with CEC's Building Control, a process which began in July and is expected to take a further 1-4 months. Following resolution of outstanding issues, work will start 'as soon as possible'.

For background see Issues 153, 157, 162. See also: [www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk].

Reasons to be cheerful

Broughton features heavily in a glossy new travel guide called *Edinburgh and East Coast Scotland*. In a section on 'Edinburgh's urban "villages"', Broughton Street is described as an 'arty, lively, cosmopolitan, multicultural neighbourhood'. It's also singled out as 'sassy, edgy and vibrant'. Author and 'local expert' Vivien Devlin asserts there are many 'stylish residents'.

Among local businesses singled out for praise are the Bakehouse Co., Bliss, Bouverie B&B, Broughton Deli, Broughton Hotel, Concrete Wardrobe, Crombie's, Cumberland Bar, Doggerfisher, The Glasshouse, Joey D, Real Foods, Something Fishy, Threadbare, Valvona and Crolla, and Villeneuve Wines. Eight Broughton restaurants get favourable mentions, as do eight bars. Incredibly, there's no mention of the *Spurtle*, presumably because no-one has yet successfully worn, eaten, slept in or decorated their home with it. Stylish residents, pah!

Edinburgh and East Coast Scotland (ISBN 978-0-7524-4647-9) is part of 'The Best of Britain' series, published by Crimson Publishing.

Briefly

Spurtle's AGM will be in Broughton St Mary's Parish Church, **7pm on Wed. 9 Dec.** No guarantee of biscuits but a good opportunity to meet the team and offer your ideas/services/loose change.

The beautiful painting of 'Lady Lavery in Black' by F.C.B. Cadell (Issue 175) fetched a hammer price of £121,250 at Sotheby's on 30 Sept.

Crombie's on Broughton St – aka 'Sausage Central' – closed for a major refit in mid-Oct. It will reopen in early Nov.

Still no news on when CEC will consider a **Tesco at Picardy Place**. Background papers but still no detailed plans online for the **Haddington Place hotel** (see 'Extras' on website for link).

Larks in the park

'Youth Club in the Parks' is the name of a 10-week pilot initiative to provide safe and enjoyable outdoor activities in an area of Edinburgh with few suitable indoor venues.

On Thursdays 7.00-8.30pm until 3 December, supervised but informal gatherings are being run in King George V Park, with games, sports, trips, arts and challenges on offer for up to 30 locals aged 12 or over. Participants are encouraged to come up with their own ideas for entertainment too. All activities are free. Similar events are happening in Inverleith, Ravelston and Drylaw Parks.

Callum McLeod, part of CEC's Inverleith Community Learning and Development Team based at Broughton High School, told *Spurtle* this was not a response to any perceived disorder. 'This is about *positive* engagement with young people – finding out what *they* want, developing infrastructure and facilities.' In time it is hoped participants will join the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, and that some may even be identified and recruited as youth workers of the future. If successful, the scheme may eventually be rolled out citywide.

For further information contact: Tel. 332 6316.

Reasons to be tearful?

In late September vandals stripped foliage and branches from a prominent rowan planted in King George V Park. Planted in June, the tree was to have been the centrepiece of a circular bench, but in the absence of said bench's arrival the rowan stood for 3 months painfully exposed.

While such desecration may have been feared, this still came as a kick in the teeth to all those who have striven over recent months to improve and share the park with different groups' interests in mind. An anonymous writer afterwards reproached the perpetrators with lines attached to the trunk:

*A young tree full of promise,
gladly would I have grown tall and strong
to gladden you who walk here.*

*But in a fit of perversity, young ones of your
own kind ravaged me, stripped me bare –
nipped me in the bud.*

*See me, in my desolation,
and plant for me a weeping willow.*

Reactions to the poem gathered by *Spurtle* concurred that it was a worthwhile *response* to rather than a mute *acceptance* of vandalism.

Community Council election

On 5 October five new members were elected to serve on the New Town and Broughton Community Council (NTBCC), which now comprises 18 representatives. They include 4 from local organisations – the Drummond Civic and Northumberland St Associations, Lord Moray's Feuars, and Regent, Royal and Calton Terraces Association. Ian Mowat (Chairman), Bill Dunlop (Treasurer), John Knight (Planning Convener), Judy Conn (Environment Convener) and Patrick Hutton (Transport Convener) were unanimously returned to office. Appointment of a Licensing and Social Affairs Convener remains to be decided. Diane Willis was welcomed as NTBCC's new Secretary. Further details can be found in 'Extras' on the website. Announcements of monthly meetings always appear on *Spurtle's* back page.

Briefly

Johnston Press may close its Caledonian Offset Ltd Press on Newhaven Rd, following Scotsman Publications' decision to produce 3 newspapers elsewhere. Up to 100 workers may be affected, but it's unknown how many are locals. The *Scotsman*, *Scotland on Sunday* and *Evening News* have been printed here since 1990.

Locals have reacted enthusiastically to our newly launched website at: [www.broughtonspurtle.org.uk]. For unfathomable reasons, the site has attracted readers from as far afield as Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Canada, Russia, Australia, and Ghana. See issue 175 for competition details.

The Challenger Expedition and Sir John Murray

James Adams, retired Fisheries Scientist and Spurtle supporter, writes: Between December 1872 and 1876, HMS *Challenger* circumnavigated the globe on one of the most famous expeditions in the history of marine science. Due in part to its 50-volume official report prepared over 19 years by an international network, the expedition has an iconic status. Responsibility for sorting the collections and overseeing the publication of the report fell to the expedition's chief scientist, Sir Charles Wyville Thomson of the University of Edinburgh. Those assisting were initially housed near what is now Bristo Square, in what was known as the Challenger Office. From about 1880–90, more commodious quarters were provided at 32 Queen St, although even there the laboratory on the top floor was said to look 'more like an overcrowded scullery than an oceanographic laboratory'. Nevertheless, Edinburgh became 'the Mecca towards which marine biologists from all over the world came'.



Thomson died in March 1882. Thereafter, responsibility passed to John (later Sir John) Murray who had been a junior naturalist on the expedition. It was his 'grit and determination' that saw the successful completion of the task that Thomson had begun. Indeed, Murray became the most famous and influential marine scientist of his day, and apropos the *Challenger* collections, he is particularly remembered for his report (prepared in association with the Belgian, Alphonse Renard) on deep-sea sediments. This became the cornerstone for related studies for many years.

Having spent his later bachelor days at the Caledonian United Service Club (14 Queen St), Murray married, aged 48, in 1889. Eight years later he bought Wardie Lodge, renaming it Challenger Lodge, while in 1903 he bought a second property on Boswall Rd as a research centre for himself and a small staff. This he named Villa Medusa after his research yacht. Both were sold in the early 1920s, Sir John having been killed in a motoring accident in 1914. Today, Challenger Lodge is perhaps better known as St Columba's Hospice.

Nooks and crannies: Summer Gaiety and Anne Redpath

The recent comprehensive exhibition of Scottish paintings at the Mansfield Traquair Centre, auctioned by Sotheby's in London on 30 September, included 4 works by erstwhile Broughtonian Anne Redpath RSA, ARA. She would have been astonished to find them displayed in the body of the kirk, a mere 5-minute walk away from her home in 7 London St. She would be equally delighted to be in the company of Phoebe Anna Traquair, restored to full glory.



Photo courtesy of Sotheby's London

Many New Town neighbours still recall with affection Redpath and her welcoming house at No. 7. She and her family lived there from 1952–65, a period when her richly textured work evolved into a freer, expressionist style, which confirmed her key role in the development of the Scottish Colourist tradition. In the Sotheby's sale, Redpath's exuberant still life – 'Summer Gaiety' – of a vase of mixed summer flowers which features her 'signature' use of audacious white colours, was estimated at £80,000–120,000. It fetched £139,250. *JRM*

Briefly

Broughton Local History Society meets in Drummond CHS at 7pm on Mon. 2 Nov. Alex Hill will talk on 'Weather-telling: Past, Present and Future'. The Xmas soiree for members only will take place (same time/venue) on Mon. 7 Dec.

A concert of **piano and organ music** will take place in St Mary's Metropolitan Cathedral from 8pm on Tues. 17 Nov. Admission free.

Spotted on the pavement at the corner of Claremont Grove and E. Claremont St, an official-looking red spray-canned rectangle and the words: **NOT ON MAP**. What's not on which map? Suggestions, please.

At 7am on 2 Oct. a sportscar driven by an inexperienced driver took the **Mansfield Place roundabout** at speed and lost control on exit. The vehicle spun and crashed into metal railings outside Bliss on Broughton St, narrowly missing 2 girls who had passed seconds before. Broken railings shattered the window and damaged the shopfront. A bystander told *Spurtle* that speeding and aggressive driving on both sides of the pedestrian crossing here are quite common.

On 5 Oct. the New Town/ Broughton Community Council resolved to be closely involved with the as yet rather vague CEC **consultation on 'containerisation'** this autumn. Rigid waste containers were seen off in 2005, and many are still opposed to them. However, the shocking state of **waste-strewn** streets means there is vocal support (even among some NTBCC members) for the introduction of wheelie-bins. See 'Extras' on the website and send us your thoughts.

Work will take place this winter to increase stormwater storage capacity at **Threipmuir and Harlaw Reservoirs** in the Pentlands. Residents in flood-risk areas along the Water of Leith will benefit.

Draft proposals for how **trams** may operate in Broughton's streetscape from 2012 onwards have appeared online. For now, only Statutory Consultees (emergency services, bus and haulage organisations) are being asked to comment on the Draft **Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)** drawings. Others will get a chance to pull their hair out early next year. To view the plans, go to 'Breaking news' on our website for a link.

Local MP Mark Lazarowicz's second-home **Parliamentary expenses** have been given a **clean bill of health** by Sir Thomas Legg's inquiry. In a blog of 12 Oct., Lazarowicz welcomed the scrutiny: 'I thought I was ok, but there was always the nightmare that maybe I had overlooked something.'

Belle's View



Hi fans

Aye, in the words of **Axl Rose**, illustrious bard of American musos **Guns N' Roses**, 'it's hard to hold a candle in the cold November rain'. But enough spandex-clad blues-rock, heavy-metal dreichness! What's for fun in **Broughton**?

Find music of a much more refined nature at monthly **Third Tuesday Concerts** at **St Mary's Cathedral, Picardy Place**. Tuesday 17 November's concert features **Elsbeth Wyllie** and **Simon Nieminski** exploring the unfamiliar and rarely performed (but nevertheless fascinating) repertoire of works for piano and organ by **Marcel Dupré**, **Flor Peeters** and others (8pm, free, retiring collection). Try the pre-concert suppers at the Cathedral's **Café Camino** – a main-course pasta dish with a glass of wine for £6! Bookings – 0131 523 0102. Café open: Mon–Sat 9am–8pm, Sun 9.30am–9.30pm.

Historic! The **Garden History Society Scotland's** autumn lecture by **James Simpson** features our very own **Botanic Cottage**, recently transported from **Haddington Place**. Built in the 1760s as the Gardener's House for the **Leith Walk Botanic Garden**, it was designed by **John Adam**. Find out more about this unique building and the heart-warming story of its rescue by dogged local conservationists! Monday 2 November, Glasite Meeting House, **Barony Street**, 6.30pm, £7/£5 members [http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org/], Tel. 01575 560 259.

Finally, what we've all been waiting for – internet chips! **Bodrum Express Takeaway** of **54 Rodney Street** is now offering a top class online ordering and delivery service of all their dishes, including Scottish favourites black pudding suppers, doner kebabs, and chips with curry sauce – with free delivery on orders over £20! Tel 0131 557 9090 www.bodrumexpress.co.uk.

Persephone Rose

Crombie's sausage shortage ...



Locals keep calm and carry on

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5.00pm Ainslie Park Leisure Centre
6.00pm Constituency Office

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New Town/Broughton Community Council

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

Next meeting on:
2 Nov. at 7.30pm
Drummond Community
High School

mowats@blueyonder.co.uk

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