

Spurttle

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

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2010**

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DO CITY PLANNERS CARE WHAT YOU THINK?

In Issue 180 we highlighted concerns about the effectiveness and transparency of new planning legislation (Issue 174) as applied by City officials. The public's views seemed to have been sought early then promptly ignored.

In Issue 181 we reported New Town and Broughton Community Council Planning Convenor John Knight's impression that Edinburgh Council officials recognised the problem and would address it. Now, though, a letter from the Head of Planning, John Bury, to Cllr Dundas suggests the mood may be less positive.

Despite contra-indications at the time, Berry claims NTBCC was not a statutory consultee on 34B Haddington Place, and – even if it had been – no requirement existed for the local authority to reapproach statutory consultees after getting initial comments.

Given the City's statement in 'Community Councils and Planning' that, from 3 August 2009, 'we will automatically treat [NTBCC] as a consultee on national or major developments', perhaps the problem arose over the definition of 'major'.

'We know that a development of over 50 houses is considered to be major,' reports Knight, 'but we do not know how big hotels have to be (100 bedrooms, 200 bedrooms?) or indeed the size of office blocks.'

The fear is that senior officials' hair-splitting may conceal deep-seated hostility to community councils' involvement in the planning process. Cllr Chapman, who attended NTBCC on 3 May, asserts that – beneath fine words and noble-sounding aspirations – the Planning etc (Scotland) Act was actually designed to help developers and hinder communities.

For now, NTBCC seeks clarification.

TALENT ON THE UP



Photo courtesy of scottishathletics.

Kimberly Reed, the talented young Field athlete last reported by *Spurttle* in September 2009 (Issue 174), has recently moved up to under-17 level and competed in the Scottish Closed Championships. Her first Hammer competition of the season took her to No.1 in Scotland and No. 4 in the UK for her age group. At the Closed Championships in Wishaw on 14 May she won gold in the Hammer with a throw of 41.22 metres, and also won an unexpected silver in the Discus for the same age group. (She's pictured throwing the Discus at last year's Scottish Championships.) Kimberley, a student at Drummond CHS, was in the middle of her Standard Grades in May so hadn't been able to get out and train as much as she would have liked. But she is fully expected to compete for Scotland before long.

LIB DEMS CLOSE BUT LABOUR CLING ON

Labour retained Edinburgh North and Leith on 6 May with an increased share of the vote but a smaller majority over nearest rivals the Liberal Democrats.

Mark Lazarowicz won 17,740 votes – 3,143 more than in 2005 (+3.2%), but his 1,724 margin of victory was down nearly 20% on the 2,153 he enjoyed last time. He expressed delight and humility at the result before addressing cross-party problems lying ahead.

'This new "hung" Parliament will be challenging for everyone,' he told us, 'but it will also be a chance for Parliament to seize the opportunity for proper democratic reforms of our political system – and that's certainly something I will be working hard for.'

Lazarowicz says he has supported proportional representation since the 1980s, and would have welcomed a coalition with the Lib Dems nationally despite differences over the latter's alleged 'vicious and negative campaign' locally.

Across Edinburgh, Labour won four out of five seats. For full results, further comment and analysis, see *Breaking news* (7–19.5.10).

DONER OWNER SENER A WINNER



Selim Sener, owner of Cafe Piccante in Broughton Street, has won another award for his culinary skills. Cafe Piccante secured one of the 2010 Kebab Shop of the Year regional award trophies, making this popular outlet the best kebab eatery in all Edinburgh.

MISSING POLLING CARDS DEFY EXPLANATION

Opinions differ on polling cards – or the lack of them – in Bellevue Rd prior to the General Election.

Many locals deny having lost them or thrown them away, claiming instead that they never received them in the first place. A Royal Mail insider even claims, off the record, that *most* people in Bellevue Rd did *not* receive polling cards.

Royal Mail investigators say that they're satisfied their staff delivered all the cards entrusted to them. Any 'missing ones' were therefore never passed to Royal Mail at the outset.

Chris Highcock, Depute Returning Officer at City Chambers, claims polling cards were despatched on 14 April. 'Incidents of non-receipt' have been referred to Royal Mail, but he is unaware of 'any particular issue' in Bellevue Rd.

Vague accusations and vaguer responses will not serve. More effort is needed to quantify and explain the problem. We urge all readers who did not receive polling cards to alert the Returning Officer and their local MP.

A tale of three cats



Elizabeth Blackadder, *Fred on Top of the Cupboard*, etching.

'The cat went here and there ...
Alone, important and wise ...'

These stray lines from W.B. Yeats's poem 'The Cat and the Moon' must have haunted the distraught owners of two missing cats in Bellevue Road and Drummond Place. Pinsky, a handsome tom, disappeared on 21 April, and Coco, a luscious tabby, vanished on 28 April. *Spurtle* online reported local concern and offers of help from Broughton's army of 'catophiles'. Notices appeared on railings. The community held its breath.

Then – hallelujah – Pinsky was found on 7 May and Coco on 9 May. Both were dishevelled but eager to embrace their next eight lives. Had they perchance been seeking a private, cat's-eye view of the splendid *Fred on Top of the Cupboard*, Elizabeth Blackadder's print donated to the Christian Aid Book Sale up the road on George Street?

The special etching was sold minutes after the opening of the sale at St Andrew's and St George's West Church, contributing to the remarkable sum of over £108,000 so far raised for the charity's mighty causes.

'Crime wave' just an illusion

Crime, it seems, like Beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. Despite strong anecdotal evidence suggesting a recent spike in offences in Broughton (Issues 181–2), statistics released to us under the Freedom of Information Act 2002 suggest overall crime here has actually fallen.

From February–April 2009 (inclusive), 377 offences were reported in a sample of 16 local streets (including Leith Walk). In the corresponding period this year, that figure had fallen to 351. In fact, were it not for a startling rise in offences on Picardy Place (from 35 to 68), the crime figures for 2010 would have been even lower. The statistics can be seen in *Extras* online (1.6.10).

Local streets star in spy spoof

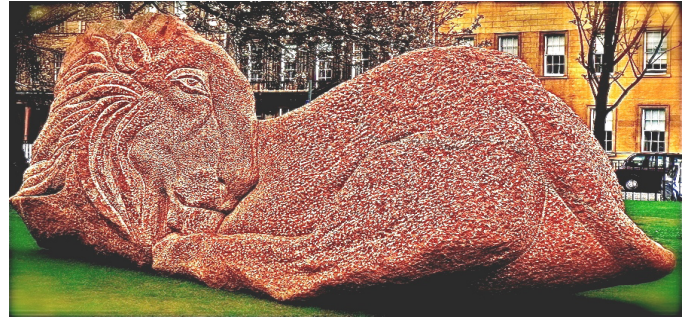
In May 2009 (see Issue 172), Abercromby Place, Heriot Row and Nelson St doubled as 1960s London during filming of the French espionage caper *Imogène McCarthery*.

The movie was released last month in France, and now promotional clips are on YouTube (see *Breaking news* 14.5.10 for link). Blink and you'll miss it, but Abercromby Place is definitely there (as is William Street). Old College, Neidpath Castle and the road to Talla reservoir also feature.

Directed by Alexandre Charlot and Franck Magnier, Catherine Frot plays the eponymous heroine: a Russo–Scottish anglophobe with a penchant for rugby, bagpipes and whisky.

Nostalgic, pawkie, unashamedly indulging every national stereotype and Gallic prejudice going, the film looks enormous fun. London has never looked better.

A lion in St Andrew Square



Spurtle welcomes the majestic leap of sculptor Ronald Rae's 20-ton granite carving, *the Lion of Scotland*, from Holyrood Park to St Andrew Square on 25 April. During its four-year residence in Holyrood, this unique sculpture was admired by thousands of locals and tourists alike. Incomprehensibly, the Parliament's art advisory panel rejected plans to retain it there.

However, Holyrood's loss is central Edinburgh's gain. Rae's administrator Pauline Macdonald and Essential Edinburgh (which is responsible for the upkeep of the gardens, and for events and exhibitions) have agreed a one-year contract for the Lion's stay in the square. This may be renewed for another year.

'I was initially sad to move the Lion after the kerfuffle at Holyrood,' Rae told *Spurtle*, 'but now I realise this place is a most appropriate one for the sculpture – being named after St Andrew, Scotland's patron saint.'

Pauline MacDonald, Rae's administrator, added, 'I hope the Lion will be bought for the city to give daily pleasure to the people of Edinburgh and to welcome its many visitors from all over the world till the end of time.'

With few exceptions, there is a paucity of radical monumental sculpture in the capital. We, too, hope that this gentle lion will find permanent repose in St Andrew Square after its chequered history. For further information visit: [www.ronaldrae.co.uk/news/arriving-in-st-andrew-square].

Mystery and monumentality

An important new public artwork will be launched on 22 June, with Broughton at its heart.

Commissioned by the National Galleries of Scotland, Antony Gormley's *6 Times Horizon* will comprise six life-sized, metal, human figures along the Water of Leith. The first was installed in Leith Docks last month, near an abandoned pier next to the Royal Yacht *Britannia*. Others will soon follow to the west of Anderson Place, to the west of Powderhall Footbridge, to the north of Stockbridge, in the Cauldron at Dean, and in the grounds (literally) of the National Gallery of Modern Art. Those in the river will also serve as water-level gauges.

Gormley says, 'It is wonderful to have the chance to make a work that connects so many different parts of this great city. When you see one [figure] you will, perhaps, remember another. The idea is to connect to time, weather and place, and play a part in the making of a scene, a picture, a reality, incomplete without you: the observer.'

Gormley, born in 1950, is perhaps best known for his Turner Prize-winning *Angel of the North* at Gateshead. Other works using multiple human figures have been *Another Place* on Crosby Beach, and *Event Horizon* in London and New York (see www.antonygormley.com).



Broughton profile: James Nasmyth, mechanical engineer (1808–90)

James Nasmyth, youngest son of Alexander Nasmyth (Issue 181), was born at 47 York Place, the family home.

Trained to draw and paint, he developed his skills to the highest degree and in later life completed many of his father's landscapes so well that experts still dispute whose are whose. However, it was early exposure to Nasmyth senior's workshop and the smithies of Greenside that captured James's imagination. He soon began illicitly casting metals in his bedroom.

Leaving school at 17, he constructed his first steam engine at home. In 1828 he created a steam carriage capable of carrying 8 passengers a mile, and in 1829 was engaged by Henry Maudslay of London. In the 1830s he entered business for himself, building machine tools initially in Old Broughton (in a temporary 24' x 16' workshop to the rear of his friend George Douglass's foundry), later in Lancashire.

Locomotive construction for the Great Western Railway followed, and in 1840 the challenge to fashion huge components for the SS *Great Britain*. His solution was the steam-hammer, a machine of such power and delicacy that it could bang in massive rivets and shape anchors, or gently crack an egg without breaking the wineglass containing it. He patented the design in 1842 (later adapting it for pile-drivers) and sold great numbers worldwide. Many other Nasmyth inventions are still used, and Heriot-Watt University's Mechanical Engineering Department building bears his name.

James had varied interests. Retiring, wealthy, to 'Hammerfield' in Kent, aged 48, he pursued (and sometimes combined) astronomy and photography. (The black-and-white image of a hand sometimes beside our online masthead is a haunting self-portrait.) His partial autobiography – interesting for domestic detail and early 19th-century Edinburgh's social, cultural and political niceties – is at: [www.nasmyth.com/bio]. *AM*

Time is right to honour local inventor

A plaque will be unveiled on 7 June at the former Brunton Place home of Broughton's Frederick James Ritchie.

Ritchie pioneered electric timekeeping, and co-invented the original Time Ball and 1 o'clock gun signal mechanisms installed on 7 June 1861. A master clock was situated in the Observatory on Calton Hill. At 1pm each day, a weight in it would drop and a signal be sent over a 4,000ft electric cable to fire a gun in the Castle. Less dramatic but equally popular was Ritchie's Floral Clock in West Princes St Gardens.

Born in 1828, Ritchie was the youngest son of James Ritchie, founder of the famous Edinburgh clockmaking company. He lived first at 30 St James's Square and later 3 Gayfield Place. Having served his apprenticeship in the family firm, he married Annie Rose in 1856 and lived at 33 London St, then 13 Montgomery St, and finally – from 1869 onwards – 6 Brunton Place. He died in 1906.

Closely involved in the project to commemorate the inventor is long-standing *Spurtle* friend and local historian David Watt, one of Frederick Ritchie's great grandsons. He and fellow admirers now plan to restore Ritchie's headstone in Rosebank Cemetery. (See also Broughton History Society *Newsletter*, June 2009.)



Briefly

In the last week of April, **Lynne MacTaggart of Broughton St's Salon LA** reported another **late-presented Christmas tree**, arranging for its collection from a nearby basement. However, **Time and Dead Conifers Wait for No Woman**, and on 10 May a neighbour, **Bridget Harris**, spotted an even later late-presented specimen outside 19 London St. (Further uplifting stories at *Breaking news* 5.5.10.)

Crolla's, a new **coffee shop and carry-out** opened at 43 Broughton St on 25 May. Mr Crolla told *Spurtle* 'Be sure to mention our ice cream!' **We are always happy to recommend ice cream.**

New Drummond Head **Norma Prentice** took up her post just before Easter. **Her first impressions?** 'Thoroughly enjoyable. I've been impressed by committed, caring staff, friendly and polite pupils, and pupil achievement.' **Students' first impressions?** 'Too strict on lateness and uniform code.'

Judith Dunn of the **Scottish Association of Landlords** addressed the New Town/Broughton Community Council on 3 May. Her **resources list** for neighbours of privately rented property now appears in *Extras* (5.5.10). She was not charged for the use of a chair.

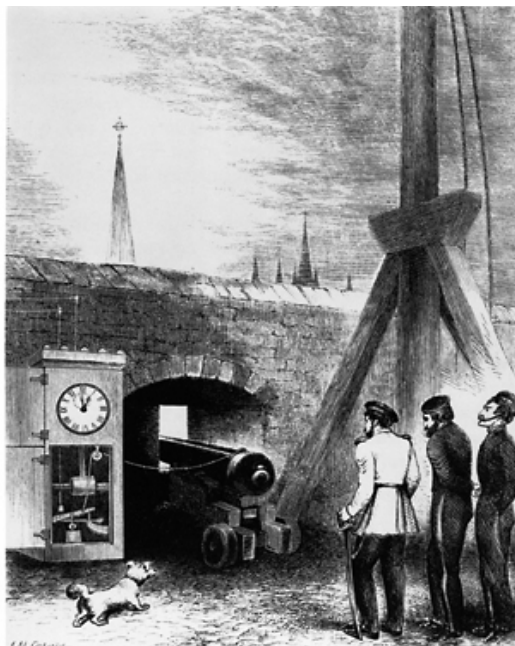
A small portion of the **Phoenix Bar's** pavement roof caught fire around 1.45pm on 7 May, possibly as a result of paint stripping. Fifteen firefighters extinguished flames with two reels, then removed a roof section using '**small tools and large axes**'. No-one was hurt.

Scott Stevenson's wry observations on the '**theatre of everyday life**' continue to amuse and sometimes enchant. See, for example, his **photographic farewell** to a family home or his formula for a **successful Scouts evening** on 12/13.5.10 at [www.blipfoto.com/scobes].

Broughton History Society's **AGM and Members Night** begin at 7.30pm on Mon. 7 June in Drummond CHS.

The **New Town/Broughton Community Council** will meet in Drummond CHS at 7pm on 7 June. Business will include approval of annual accounts, and a Q&A session with **Mike Penny, Manager of the City Centre Neighbourhood Partnership**. Elephant in the room: **containerisation**.

Aesthetically intrusive parking poles (often full of rainwater that leaks into cellars below) have had their come-uppance on **Regent, Royal and Carlton Terraces**. Working with the Edinburgh World Heritage Trust and Historic Scotland, CEC removed them, repositioning signs on lampposts. Now residents elsewhere may seek street furniture cuts. On E. Claremont St, for example, **28 parking poles and 4 meters** have long posed problems for over-refreshed residents, and add 1 minute 43 seconds to the round-trip journey-times of local dog-walkers. (Based on male Springer Spaniel.)



Waiting for the 1 o'clock Bang.

Briefly

In November 2009 (Issue 176) we reported the destruction of an **unprotected cherry tree in King George V Park**. In April, an attractive, circular metal bench was installed on the spot by Parks, and at its centre a new tree planted. It is a **Judas-tree**, native to the Mediterranean and Asia Minor ... an imaginative choice for this **unforgiving Edinburgh frost-hollow**.

Simon Nieminski will play organ music **chosen by the audience** on Tue. 15 June from 8.00–9.10pm at St Mary's Metropolitan Cathedral. Email your requests to [organist@stmaryscathedral.co.uk] or write to him at Cathedral House, 61 York Place. Do not just turn up on the night and shout out the names of your favourite show tunes.

Conservative candidate Iain McGill was an aid-worker in **Albania, not Bosnia** as reported in Issue 182. Proper Balkans have been administered as necessary.

The late **Bill Smith** – bookseller, 'menace to machinery' and flawed custodian of the net (Issues 180–2) – would quote **Confucius** when issuing vocational guidance: 'Find a job you love and you will never have to work for a living.'

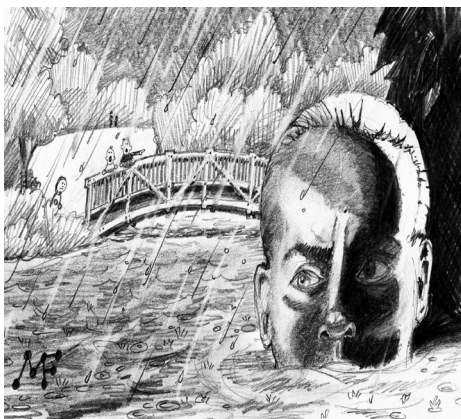
'**Jaundiced of Claremont**' suggests tweaking the emphasis of Broughton Primary School's plan to **cultivate** land on **Bellevue Rd**. He believes young Edinburghers would learn more from developing 'a **sustainably sourced, biomass-fuelled**, 12-storey, mixed luxury residential, retail and leisure hub including off-site affordable housing in Dundee, underground parking for 600 vehicles, and a permanent **Festival of Supermarkets**'. He is passionate about retaining 'some sort of landscape element' at roof-level.

On the **fourth Wednesday of each month** from 9 May–22 Sep. in St Andrew Square, 'Dr Bike' (Edinburgh charity Bike Station's superhero) will offer **free checks** between noon and 3pm: a boon to bicyclists baffled by ball-bearings.

Drummond CHS's annual **Celebration of Achievement** is on Tue. 15 June.

Staff and pupils at state schools finish for the **Summer Holiday** on Thu. 1 July.

Flood of local interest



in new Gormley sculpture

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

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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:

7 June
at 7:00pm

Drummond Community
High School.

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