

# Belle's View



Hi fans

Well, Broughton and the Bellevue area has been teeming with celebs these past few weeks, so many that I could hardly keep count on my celebometer!

But enough of me. There was a huge turnout for the **Spurtle** hustings this month, when prospective candidates for the Scottish Parliament braved the Café Graffiti bearpit, to handle some very tricky questions with great aplomb. It's such a pity that the House of Commons TV broadcasts can't be lit with disco lights too – they made everyone look so much more attractive, didn't they?

My dear friend, actress Helena Bonham-Carter, was spotted shooting a scene for the forthcoming film in my favourite purveyor of continental produce, Valvona and Crolla of Elm Row. Staff of the shop, including Victor Contini, got bit parts playing themselves behind the counter, doing interesting and impressive things with the cheese cutter, etc. However, rumours that Victor is pursuing a Hollywood career after being given acting tips by the delightful Ms Bonham-Carter are unfounded!

I hear that a veritable forest of bluebells has been planted in the new public garden in Hopetoun Crescent. I can hardly wait for those long, languid summer afternoons – to recline on a luscious scented floral carpet of flowers, sipping from a can of Carlsberg Special Brew, and reading aloud from back numbers of the Broughton **Spurtle** to a group of gentlemen admirers. Roll on summer!

Till next time darlings, keep swinging!

*Persephone Belle*

Persephone Belle

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### WOODCRAFT SUPPLIES

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Broughton History Society  
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Safeguarding our architectural heritage  
Protecting the city's amenity

.. join us

THE COCKBURN ASSOCIATION  
(The Edinburgh Civic Trust)  
Trunk's Close, 55 High Street  
EDINBURGH EH1 1SR  
0131 557 8686  
Cockburn.Association@btinternet.com

### 'The Artist's Chair'

23 variations on a theme and  
you can sit on most of them.  
Great fun – but hurry,  
Sunday 2nd May is the  
last day.

The Bellevue Gallery  
4 Bellevue Crescent  
Wed – Sun 12 noon – 6pm  
or by appt. – phone 557 1663

'Going Places'  
exhibition and sale of artwork  
used in publicity for the  
Edinburgh club of that name,  
now about to close.  
8 – 15th May

# BROUGHTON Spurtle

Broughton Spurtle is  
**free**  
and completely  
independent

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May 1999

## Use your votes on 6th May

That was the clear message on 13th April when the **Spurtle** Hustings packed Café Graffiti with the voters of Broughton, to grill their candidates for the first Scottish Parliament for nearly 300 years.

More than 120 people confronted 7 candidates – Ron Brown (Scottish Socialist Party), Malcolm Chisholm (Labour), Anne Dana (SNP), Robin Harper (Scottish Green Party), Tim Hopkins (Civil Rights Movement), Jamie Sempill (Conservatives) and Sebastian Tombs (Liberal Democrats).

**Spurtle** got in first – not that this audience needed any encouragement – on the new voting system. A fundamental change this but, even now, not entirely clear to the voter-in-the-street. In addition to one MSP for Edinburgh North and Leith elected in the usual way, we will also be electing 7 more MSPs for Lothian with our second

Party List. Almost certainly the 'old party politics' will change and new parties and people will be in. How will the parties relate to each other in the Parliament? How will All-Party Committees at Holyrood

### Inside

#### Voters -

What did they want to know?

#### Candidates -

How did they respond?

work? And how will 'our' MSPs (8 of them) relate to us, their electors?

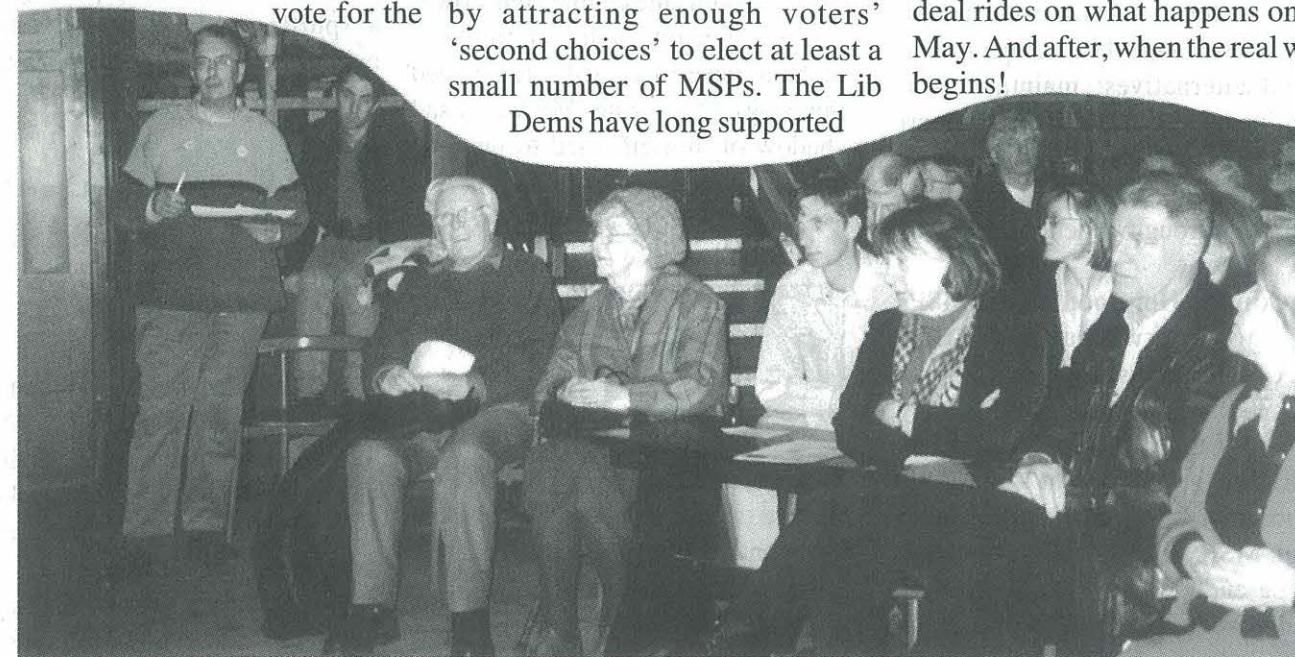
Probably less familiar, the 'smaller parties' had most to gain by attracting enough voters' 'second choices' to elect at least a small number of MSPs. The Lib

Dems have long supported

a proportional representation voting system which, ironically, may not do them any favours. The Tories are against this system – and could gain by it. Labour and SNP, understandably, were holding their breath, each hoping it would all come right for them.

We had previously been promised deeds not words; a new vision; meaningful government for Scotland. A reasonable hope – or too much to hope for? Were we any the wiser?

Well, not really – yet. The voters provided the fuel – the candidates produced some encouraging sparks. But assurance was still to catch fire. It still could. A great deal rides on what happens on 6th May. And after, when the real work begins!



## What they wanted to know

- X Financing of Public Services** Particularly Education and Health – and Edinburgh's neglected water pipes. A big one this, mainly because of the wide range of proposals to enlist private sector money – or not. Sell-off or reasonable use of market resources? Each party had their own spin on this, agreeing only that it's an issue to be met head-on, soon. Will Edinburgh be paying for the new Infirmary many years on; will Drummond's school funding be assured next year?
- X Student Grants and Tuition Fees** Labour defended the current position, pointing out that 50% of school leavers now go on to Further Education, not 10% as a generation ago. The others did not agree, promising restoration of various forms of assistance.
- X Broadcasting** Particularly that control of broadcasting remains in London. Even the Government acknowledges that this will become a major debate for the Scottish Parliament. For now, still no 'Scottish Six' news on TV.
- X Integrated Transport Policy** All-round agreement that 'something must be done', but how and who's to pay? Discourage the car, but provide good alternatives; maintain rural lifelines; right of access to transport for the disabled and elderly; concessionary fares; how to ensure reliable through timetables. Watch this space!
- X Parking at Holyrood** Could MSPs envisage doing without their 100 free spaces? Nonplussed but sympathetic, was the general reaction. Yes, they should set a good example but: in fairness, the Parliament was for the whole of Scotland, not just the central belt; MSP parents with children had to be encouraged; late-night safety had to be ensured. Still, let's keep an eye on those who do use the spaces.

## The Spurtle Hustings: Take two

*A personal view from Richard Love of Bellevue Place.*

Two years ago, after the General Election hustings, I said I couldn't wait for the sequel. Well, here it was, attracting voters from far beyond Broughton. After the meeting one candidate declared these were the best hustings he'd ever been to; and a Trinity resident berated the chairman for not banging a gong at speakers after two minutes (including himself, no doubt).

There were seven candidates and new constitutional matters to address, so fewer issues were tackled in depth. Were there any stars? Everyone had the same chance to make an impression, and these are mine.

Overall impression: large gathering gave generally polite hearing to all candidates, who got off lightly. We even learned what to do with our second vote!



**Ron Brown**  
(on both ballots)  
Scottish Socialist Party

He likened democracy to a piece of chewing gum; and claimed that power stations generate a lot of things – including spare heat (and hot air, yelled one wag). Our former MP was a sad shadow of himself, tried to interject too often out of turn, but did provide some, rather limited, fun to the evening.



**Malcolm Chisholm**  
(first ballot only)  
Labour

Started off relaxed and confident, but more on the defensive on his dual role in the two parliaments (if he won) and PFI for education. Clearly a man of principles trying to steer a careful line.

In government the questions seem harder when you're expected to do something about them.



**Anne Dana**  
(on both ballots)  
SNP

Definitely on top of her brief, she got a polite hearing on the 1p tax issue, and gave a good justification for the use of the second vote. Well applauded on the state of the hospital system; good defence of why SNP don't contribute to specifically English issues at Westminster. Seemed to impress most people.



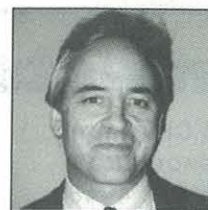
**Robin Harper**  
(second ballot)  
Scottish Green Party

Made many sensible, clear and often brief statements on use of the second vote, broadcasting (Greens need better access to the media like porridge needs a spurtle) and integrated transport policy. Went down well with audience.



**Tim Hopkins**  
(second ballot)  
Civil Rights Movement

Against all odds (new party, not standing as individuals, job-sharing MSPs, lack of expertise on many issues) his sincerity and performance made us take him seriously. Standing for unrepresented minorities, the CRM includes black, gay and homeless candidates. Made some sensible political points, including access to public transport as a right.



**Jamie Sempill**  
(on both ballots)  
Conservatives

After his predecessor's '97 hustings experience, he came well supported. Ironically Tories don't support PR but will probably get seats because of it. Seemed to reflect traditional Tory values, and honest enough to admit he hadn't thought through an integrated transport policy but hoped other candidates had.



**Sebastian Tombs**  
(first ballot only)  
Liberal Democrats

Not quite as grave as he sounds. A recent selection into party politics (and it showed). Improved as time went on, despite some weak jokes against the broadcasting media (narrow-casting?) and current transport policy, which was "freewheeling"; he cycles here, there and everywhere and hopes for cycle tracks at Holyrood.

On the second, party list ballot paper, in addition to the parties represented at our hustings, you'll find five more – Liberal, Natural Law, Prolife Alliance, Socialist Labour, Socialist Party – and five Independents. It's a long sheet of paper!

### Meet your new councillor!

Don't forget the Council! When we go to vote for the new Scottish Parliament we'll get a third, white ballot paper with the names of those competing to become our new City Councillor.

Margaret McGregor is not standing again for Broughton ward: we wish her well for a more relaxed future! As soon as possible after polling day **Spurtle** will be trying to organise an opportunity for readers to meet and question our new councillor. We hope this will be before our next edition: so look out for posters.

## Traffic – "the irrational urge"

*Armin Davies of London Street writes to agree with Michael Dixon's arguments against banning cars from Princes Street (in March Spurtle):*

It is blindingly obvious that strangling one artery will produce distension and pain in others.

An improvement that need not cost a penny but which would reduce at a stroke the oppressive and threatening effect of traffic on our lives would be a reduction in the speed of traffic.

Any cyclist will tell you that they find themselves waiting beside the same car at traffic light after traffic light, although between lights the car has sped away in front every time. In other words, their overall journey time is much the same. The irrational urge that grips drivers to speed along short stretches of clear road, knowing full well that within seconds they will have to brake to get round a corner, or to stop at lights, will have to be educated out of them or repressed by law.

This short-spurt speeding is noisy, dangerous, wasteful of fuel, hard on road surfaces and the machinery of the vehicle, and frustrating to the drivers themselves. It is high time that the rest of us (the majority, as it happens) were protected from the mental disorders of so many drivers.

Alas, the law seems to prevent local authorities from reducing maximum speeds. Perhaps someone could explain the position, which I have been unable to understand despite applying to officials and others for help.

*From last September's 'moving Forward News' from David Begg's office: "The Government is proposing major changes to speed limit policy which will make it much easier for local authorities to implement 20mph zones. Currently a 20mph zone must be backed by traffic calming measures which makes them expensive to implement. The Government is now consulting on giving local authorities the powers to introduce sign-only 20mph zones."*

## BRIEFLY

Pride Scotland's annual **March and Festival** takes place in Edinburgh this year, on 19th June. The March will assemble in Broughton again as it did two years ago, thanks to City councillors unanimously rejecting an alternative route recommended by officials for traffic flow reasons. Pride Scotland organisers favour assembling in Broughton because our area is widely recognised as safe and friendly by gay and lesbian people throughout Scotland.

*Bellevue and Claremont Residents Association's AGM will take place on 26th May, 7.30pm in Drummond Community High School. Speaker to be announced.*

Contact Point drop-in centre in York Place **urgently need volunteers**, to provide support to people on a wide range of issues including mental health, homelessness and benefits. Minimum commitment of one session a week. Everyone works as a team, with a high value placed on training, support and supervision. The experience can be particularly relevant for people considering social/community work training. For further information contact Bernie, Jackie or Colin on 556 9960 (answer machine).

*Mansfield Traquair Trust thanks Pete Simpson of Café Graffiti for all the "spring cleaning" that's been done around the Church – debris collected, and much of it burnt. But what about the two abandoned cars, registration numbers C407 RMW and E967 SWT? If you know who owns them, advise them to remove their vehicles before they disappear to the crusher!*

"On 13th April this bunch of overprivileged clowns ignored the democratic will of the House of Commons and rejected the principle of an **equal age of consent** for all" – April edition of Outright Scotland's newsletter, commenting on the House of Lords yet again voting down the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill. What next? One option could be to introduce a Bill in the new Scottish Parliament. "If we can secure equality in Scotland, that would strengthen the arguments for equality in England, Wales and Northern Ireland."